

Commended

- 'An Argument'  
Suzanne Edgar

## AN ARGUMENT

The massive bulk of our ancient Red Gum  
cast its shade on the neighbours' fence.  
Born in the bush, she'd lived on farms:  
*Sooner or later a branch will fall.*  
*It's a widow-maker, for sure,* she said,  
The day was cold with a dirty fog.  
I said, *the tree's as good as gold!*  
and threw a few loud oaths across.  
Marching away, I slammed my door.

We lopped some errant branches off  
to pacify the pair in there  
but the tree itself then let us down,  
began to wilt and rot inside.  
The flaky heart just crumbled out.  
An expert came along to check  
and more old limbs were cut away  
till just the trunk and arms remained  
raised up, stark, against the sky.

The day tree surgeons finished the job  
it rained and rained; that tree was tough  
and fought three men till the light had gone.  
They left the chopped-up limbs behind  
so we heaped them up and lit a fire  
that burned for hours like a funeral pyre,  
ashes still lie thick on the ground.  
The workmen broke a hole in the fence,  
now next-doors' son climbs through to play.