

Short-list

- 'Power Laws'  
MTC Cronin, QLD

## POWER LAWS

'Things that obey power laws become less likely  
with increasing size according to a characteristic formula.'

*World Science*

And so dictators over thirty foot tall are rare,  
Statues of, less so, but then they obey no laws  
Unless the laws of birds and salt and wind  
Are laws but I know the sparrow carried none,  
No laws on its final journey to what was  
Remembered by the city, so large that any laws  
There had so tired themselves that their only  
Chance for survival was to multiply quickly,  
To turn into five times themselves or a hundred,  
To be more than the winds passing through  
Or the salt grains if counting continues with  
The flip of each passing hour or day, but then  
The city's laws became so numerous, their  
Number so large, that they are all the time more  
And more unlikely, more unbelievable, like  
A cement foot taking a step or a general sleeping  
Soundly, dreamless on retreat with a brow  
Smoothed by breeze and the shush of birdwing,  
Cheeks streaked black with salt's tears as  
Around cities crumble according to the smallest  
Law, the law of obedience to itself which is found  
Untroubled at the core of all that exists and  
Which becomes no more or less likely regardless  
Of existence, despite dictators and their statues,  
Despite the one bird that disobeyed the winds.