David Campbell Prize:
Commended: Dr Elizabeth Lawson - ‘On the Undoing of Buttons’

**On the Undoing of Buttons**

*Pray you, undo this button*
*(King Lear V iii 307)*

But no, I mean button-heads
creaming nameless slopes,
that blur at railway sidings,
whites, yellows rippling alps
to echidna satin. Heads too small
to turn heads, everlasting we say.
Yet do not, do not undo these
subtle threads rethreading

stream, muscle, sinew, nerves
of earth. If you drift into sock-burr grass and bend to see,
you may jolt at abrading air,

query lace-wings, plash of eel,
corroboree frog, gone where?
bacteria, fibre, moth, wing,
hammering sky mute of birdcall.

Desert claws at snow gums,
ploughs burrows tuned to
fur, to moist and cool-
fires the red unravelling.

And Earth will shrug us off,
turn dryly to her punctilious sun
warming to next time round.
No tragedy will play.