My Curious Plague of Flowers
In the voice of Ellis Rowan (1848-1922)

By the winter lake I will write the death-date of hawk-moths and botanists on swamp bark.

Twice, I count my father’s giant Himalayan cedars. The mouth of a cloud opens, our house disappears.

A wind throws darts into eyes of pigmy bats. Barmy as the spotted orchids, I paint by candle light.

Quiet! The earth-scratch of creatures, the ten legs of insects climbing the summit of my easel-rock.

Catkins hang like old cobwebs from pandanus. Why is dew like sorrow-frost on the infant fern?

Here, there are no blank pages. Mud travels up my trawling hem, creeps into sketch-book seams.

Watch a flesh-eating mist madden the air. Why must fish leap, the swamp impart, swallows seldom return?

Decades of nets and nests. Yet, I keep my appointments with spores and petioles, invite the untremble of leaves.