

The Dancers

by Lin Edwards

As I walk through the newly sprinkled woods I feel fresh and new and ready to face the world, while wishing to escape from it nonetheless. The breeze is fresh and the scents of washed gum and softly rotting leaves mingle with the lingering smell of soap and shampoo.

so clean and fresh now
smells of my clean skin and hair
mingle with washed bush

My mind wanders to my glazed clay figure of dancers in my bathroom, and since I am relaxed, my body takes itself for a walk through assorted gums, wattles and messmates, while the images meander lazily through my mind. In the corner of my eye I see a kangaroo bounding away, followed by another, and then more.

The sight of kangaroos always lifts my spirit, but the dancers linger in my mind. I've called the dancers Susan and Michael, after characters in a play I acted in. The dancers were a gift from a fellow actress in the play.

on the bathroom shelf
two figures locked in embrace
remind me of her

Walking through the fresh woods with Margaret and the dancers in my mind, I'm uplifted by the memories, which refuse to fade. I laugh aloud, suddenly and unexpectedly, as I remember her. For example—her first entrance as Mrs Reece playing Einstein, when she came on stage resplendent in a headgear of condom with fluffy cotton wool peeking out to represent the great man's hair. Unable to

control our laughter, we turned away from the audience, but our shaking shoulders betrayed us.

I am suddenly brought back to the present by a ballet of pelicans heading for their afternoon lake, and the sky is pink. The receding pelicans lead me now to an unexpected orchid. Planted by someone? Or one of nature's miracles of surprise? The flower takes me instantly to Margaret's funeral and its flowers.

She knew she was dying of course, and planned her funeral while she still could. She recorded herself singing and demanding we all sing along. We were given flowers to wave and petals to toss to form an old-fashioned quilt on her coffin.

I stoop to pick the flowers of the bush and put them to my nose. There's no more smell than there was with her flowers, but also no more disappointment.

The image of the two dancers locked in clay-embrace flashes in my mind again, and the memories prompt laughter.

remembering her
the memories make me dance
in the soft green woods