Pam Brown (born 1948) is an Australian poet.

Brown was born in Seymour, Victoria, and her childhood was spent in on military bases in Toowoomba and Brisbane. Since her early twenties, she has mostly lived in Sydney. She has made her living as a silkscreen printer, musician and film-maker, has taught writing, multi-media studies and film-making and worked from 1989 - 2006 as a librarian at University of Sydney. She lives in Sydney, Australia.

From 1997 to 2002 Pam Brown was the poetry editor of Overland and since 2004 has been the associate editor of Jacket magazine. She has been a guest at poetry festivals worldwide, taught at the University for Foreign Languages, Hanoi, and during 2003 had Australia Council writers residency in Rome.
Anyworld

Artworld Theoryworld Mediaworld Infoworld Touristworld Olympicworld Foxworld
Bushworld : Oneworld
Susan Buck-Morss, Art in the Age of Technological Surveillance
setting out,
    a scarlet flower
    behind an ear,
into the wide
    world into
    banner-adorned cities
faking
    permanent festivity

*

the road
    turns an angle
like the dateline does
    near Tuvalu

*

once, it’s said, anticipating promise,
    they murmured
    as they crossed,
‘Bush’ like
    ‘ boo schh  boo schh ’
and
    no reply
    came

*

sprained westoxified
    all-signed-up
    for ‘NightTalker’,
    ( the wine is under
    the table somewhere)
crying becomes
    a critical criterion
    (the flower
the public sphere
is
newly perceptibly losing memory

* 

remember Bam,
Arg-e Bam
ancient city of sand
and mud
  collapsing in an earthquake,
the cultural heritage building
  slipping subsiding,
  consigning
  any record
  of the archaic ruin
  to dust

* 

the memory
is 
ruined

* 

who can accept 
a given world,
who can
live in it ?

Pam Brown
City

a yearned-for somewhere
adverb-physically
as lost as now
gazing across
the chunky valley
to a hill
of quivering lights

there is no
destination –
just a place
no site
not olympic
village site
not harbourside
casino site
nor section
of expressway
just east
of where
coincidence
has determined
your residence

in a city
you returned to
to remember
why you left

inventing
nostalgia
for elsewhere –
you’ll live there
in the future

Pam Brown
Cubists In Suburbia

monday’s twilight dimming
    on the last few brown leaves
of dreary autumn,
thin branches jut
    like grissini
from camouflage-patterned trunks,
it’s the plane tree the tree
    the Cubists loved the most,
the light, green grey,
    they loved that too.

Pam Brown
Darkenings

born in a de-mountable, there you are now,
    fifty-something years gone by not a disaster,
    in the centre of the car-lined road,
a paper bag
    tucked in the crook of your arm
    with two paperbacks
    and a poetry pamphlet.
no longer having much idea
    of earlier versions of yourself
today bewildered
    by some invented crisis
      apparently necessary
      for a cowardly killjoy
(whom you wish, of course,
    to soon forget)
but not so sentimental
    as to crank the handle
    once the rust has dusted the debts.

*

you go on vacation
    to an unmodified landscape,
towards a blackout, the cause impossible to source,
to candle and fire,
    to night’s proper darkness,
you go to the bay
    where sooty grey shearwaters
come down from Siberia
    to bob stiff on the waves,
    dead from exhaustion,
    a flight from zero to infinity.

taking the news
    from a smart eco liftout —
(international features
    delivering “all you need to know”)

www.PoemHunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive
of war dunes and sand dunes in deserts far away —
camels superseded by four wheel drives,
date palms blown into blue yonder
    and uranium-flecked scrapheaps
        mapped as oases

* 

there you are, back again,
at the printer as covert,
    reading the back of the recycled paper,
cipher and sign,
vigilant under fluoro
    scrutinising discarded files of dissent -
a single fist raised to the world

expressionist texta
    “greetings from the resistance”
but nobody’s watching, just shadow,
nobody’s thinking
    that you’re here reading reports
on indiscriminate transmissions —
    avian flu, Hendra virus, lyssa virus —
insensible species’ leaps,
    no-bargains-pandemics,
no clues in the notes from darkening science

* 

no further treatment nothing to lose,
man with cancer carries his son
to lay him down in the contaminated ground.
    nowhere left now,
        moon ripple on the tailings dam
            where he used to skip stones.

Pam Brown
Do What

with oxygen,
it’s the cylinders.
with collage,
the bit
of crinkly
adherence

with poems,
(though poems
are so ghostly
in their way)
it’s the leap
taken

‘art & life’
I ask you,
should I fret?

with philosophy
it’s equilibrium
(is it ?)
(no it’s not)
detached
from im/possibilities

the solution,
a bit late,
but unqualified,
arrives –

...to get ahead –
it’s neutrality
you want,
like
frozen food
to decomposition
Pam Brown
Fall To Float

I’ve forgotten what to do
and I should be keeping that
to myself
not to be too lyrical
yet I’d plunge
into a field of flowers
on earth’s fat crust
shake my petalled brow
filter every speck
of pollen from my fringe
the woman who fell to earth
like david bowie did
but with my luck
and if the dead do sleep
they’d be sleeping there
where I’d land
I’d land and lie
until the pleiades
start to blink their signal
that the time is right
to plant the herb
to cast the seed
to go home to bed
but there’s so much light
in this hydrocarbon wonderland
the night sky is hard to see
by day I’d float
on the tyrrhenian sea
surrounded by a haze of ghosts
moaning of failed crossings
gazing up at a wide sky
thin white cirrostratus sheets
stretching all the way
back to tunisia

Pam Brown
sliding along
before vanishing
they keep
the lights on
through the night
I slip by
like a whisp
of toner dust
eluding dreams,
rasping inhalation,
hypnagogic flecks
disperse,
I lie waiting
for the 2 a.m. foghorn,
a cargo ship entering
Sydney harbour.
barring sleep
for night’s duration
television sound
or dvds
droning on
til early light
pinching through
the wooden slats
outlines the furniture.
on the top floor
a baby wakes
and wails for morning.
my scurf and scraps
and scattered nerves
begin their daily cycle,
two packed buses
to and through
the indifferent city
to work where
nothing makes sense
on the databases,
released by flexitime
from a short routine,
late afternoons
in the cinema’s womb
dozing through
jarhead
casanova
capote
syriana
transamerica

Pam Brown
**Front**

immaculate facades
   will crumble

the ludicrous pageant
   of history
      falters,
grotesque and absolute

there is nowhere
   further
      to go.

relieved
   to live here
in the sluggish flux
   of the quotidian

with a poor memory

happy
   to give up
applying for visas
for forgotten countries

hoping
   only to continue
   to barrack for the losers

to live here where I live
   where it’s always matinee,
      where love matters

where everyone knows
   Freud’s big mistake –
considering adult love
   in terms
      of babies
         and small children.
only a poet,
pissing for pleasure,
I strive to appear
   as normal as possible
      in the face of
         gigantic
surrealist tendencies –

give the shibboleths
   a drubbing

drub the placebo
   while you’re at it
( make mine real)

blow torch
   the crème brûlée !

to suffer only
   the usual fears

being
   suddenly stricken
      with a fatal disease
or doomed
   by hypocrisy

knowing
   everyone dies
      of something
(it’s natural)

dying of boredom
in the queue
   at the consulate

dying of laughter
in any
   foreign clime

watching
my friends
form
a drunken
committee of two

they’re
ganging up against it
   like Chinese troops
      on speed

maddened
   by moral superiority.

arranging
   yet another
little altruistic project

just like
   a dreamer
with a separate destiny

I flaunt the rules
   and never anticipate
      capture.

between
social behaviour
   and authentic feeling
irony
   becomes
the modus vivendi

then, possibly,
   a pain in the spine
throbving in the head
unpredictable blood
   from the womb

the pesky irruptions
   of time
In Europe

I’m leaning
on a pillar
under a high
squinch arch,
breezy
brown leaves
swirl along
the colonnade,
dust my sandals.
dear palermo,
bella palermo,
dear trastevere,
I’m covered
in commas,
I’m wasting water
roman-style,
cool chalky water
I’m letting it flow,
I’m in science road
by the sandstone
devil fountain
that spouts a trickle,
imagineing
I’m walking up
viale di trastevere,
I point
to my ‘wound’
my shoulder
my ‘sin’  like
an early christian
martyred
for a living,
bones bound
with fraying rags.
my one year
in a thousand years,
dear chrono,
your iron cross
upright atop
a potshard hillock,
I’m there
on the summit,
it’s flat like a mesa,
there I imagine
my balm,
my beauties –
in a kitchen
in europe,
licking
the harissa
in europe
anywhere,
white tiles
to the ceiling,
a sprinkling
of soap suds
glistening
in a dark
autumn sink.

dear cerveteri,
I’m standing, quiet
and still,
inside a tumulus
covered in grasses
and wild flowers.
the bus
has broken down,
I’m walking back
to ladispoli,
in the distance
a bird flock swarms
in folds & turns,
in geometric patterns
like a screen saver.
swift evening rain
coming across
from the coast.

Pam Brown
In Ultimo

leaving nature’s barbarism (spider in a glove) behind me I enter my paved city – pocked concrete & traffic carbon – sky’s all coppery night’s coming up

I follow the man-in-the-dress along a lane littered with litter where Carlo & Zanzi have signed the sub-station roll-a-door – more than a tag – a declaration – white strokes wide brush

no lights on, no one home – downstairs short striped rows neatly arranged, more organised than the library I work in – I stand before my bookshelf – wonder if I’m a little crazy.
anyone on
the answer machine?

up to the third floor
for a lean
& a musing –
what colour’s my posture?
what colours my posture?

here’s the view
from the balcony –
grey & darker grey
brick wall office
windows computer
screens & tv screens
nearly always on

an office cleaner’s
smoky silhouette
gently inverting
wastepaper bins
under large
cibachrome photos
of American
stars

look skywards
imagining –
every passenger
has taken
the holding pattern
to heart

I should
show some vim! –
drive the car
somewhere,
walk into Chinatown,
loop the city
on the mono-rail,
decipher
an ignoble idea,
cook dinner –

toss
the colander of penne,
careful
not to steam
the B. Smith
& B. Holliday records
stacked
on the dish drainer –
all washed up
‘n’ ready
to spin.

Pam Brown
heavenly shades of night
are falling it's twilight time,
thinking outside the tick box
on the last day of the past,
to ready my selves
for an inurement of toil
I'm sauntering over
to a cheap eats turn
at the food court,
a bit of a do and a bite to eat,
something to help stave off
hollering inertia

everything’s
in the planning stages
but I really should leach the gel
that carries the signal
from node to screen,
add some figures
to this year's calculations,
then add some lines
to the homilies

as follows

Dear toddlers I loved the 80s
(my true thoughts)
drinking ginger beer in Uzbekistan
beside huge black and white photos
of mosque restoration
along a corridor of murals
a corridor of communist heroes

jumping up and down on the spot
in time to a band called Soft Cell,
papering the walls
with posters of pink champagne,
re-registering on the electoral roll,
ah, the heady 80s
but later, tonight,  
knowing this is the last century  
of which I'll partake,  
   (my lassitude,  
       my disbelief, and  
          mon dieu, my grief)  
I'll lie on the laboratory couch  
(I'm looking forward to it too)  
m Ravelling  
   at how my little egg doth pong

Pam Brown
throttled and threatened
with being thrown
from the third tier
of the bricked-up block.
the kids dumped
in the camper van
out the back
for safety’s sake.
the statistic in Japan
90 people suicide
every day,
matchmaker websites
arranging catastrophic
rendezvous
to suffocate together
in a car.
nothing like that
happens
in a compound like this,
the stale odour
of a plebian estate
on a hot summer day.
a man in bare feet
dismantling a car
with his cracked hands.
the bumper bars
the doors the grill
prised off and filed away
in a shed full
of buckled chrome
and brake discs
and greasy cable.
amateur wrecker
“nothing happens here
nothing gets done
but you get to like it”

Pam Brown
Patti Smith Was Right

dan graham

these cold, known objects
are not very likeable –
aluminium frames
& curved glass with optical tricks –
but I am ‘at ease’
at this show,
there are some nice little-grin ideas –
like television
screening outside
on the suburban home’s front lawn,
& time-delay verité videos
to amuse the usually uncrackable
hardened gallery-goer

* 

have I flipped? into a strangely placid
political zone a lack of clutter
and environmental concern –
these things are so simple,
two hours here & I begin to enjoy
Dan Graham
more than Soutine, Braque, Delaunay,
Bourgeois, Basquiat, Sherrie Levine,
Agnes Martin – although
I can not deny my memory
of her beautiful mid-1960’s picture –
‘Milk River’ –
nor her small collection
of pick-up trucks – the green Chevie
glinting with polish – the very driveable
Dodge parked
outside her desert home.

* 

I spend over an hour watching,
surrendering to
Dan Graham’s big “Rock/God” video
that makes a simple
  anthropological connection
  between US tribal & religious ritual –
group dancing, shaking, speaking in tongues –
  and mosh pits and rock music –
  so when Patti Smith sings
  “Jesus died for somebody’s sins
  but not mine”
  I am converted.

*

Patti Smith was right,
  twenty-five years ago,
to say that rock music,
  meaning, then, for her, punk-rock,
would replace painting & sculpture
  as representative of untranscended life itself.

Pam Brown
Pique

no one
  on the corner
    here

silent,
  not spiritual,
the city is empty

antispectacular
  & as
deodorised
    as heaven

no sleeping boys
  no density
no belching
  pissing bodies
no spitting
  in the street

utilitarian –
  make one step
    another step
      follows

the pace set
  by the tedium
    of the blessed

  *

demolishing
  half the house
    to make room
for the truck

bashing the bricks
  with
    a blunt tang
aiming  
   the air rifle  
      anywhere

blasting doves  
      from  
   telegraph poles

shouting & strutting  
      down  
   BBQ lane

setting fire  
      to lakes

   *

once  
      in a while  
the coprophiliac  
      makes a deposit  
in the library

where,  
      absorbed  
in poetic gesture,  
      arrivistes paraphrase  
         biography –

& animate  
      early C20  
heroes & heroines

maybe  
      that way  
something  
      rubs off

as when  
   quotation
embarrasses
the text

& here am I,
nibbling
  my jejune nourishment
with the laxity
  of a cultivated
    & singular minority

languidly
  erasing
    all legend

flick flick flick

  *

Pam Brown
Rehab For Everyone

hands so cold
    fingers cold
tucked under legs
    sitting in insect hiss
        low white noise
gas heater undertone
    no other sound
        nothing

almost asleep,
    a car pulling up the hill

    a currawong
does that shrill thing
    into pink air

a huge open yawn
    almost breaks my jaw

    the pen that makes the marks
    alters the angles of the letters

a patch
    of yesterday’s chocolate
    stuck to my corduroy sleeve –
a signal
    imagined and interpreted

we look back
    at the years in the tops
    waiting to be taken out of time

red brick
    wall map of Australia
    grass green carpet
mustard coloured plastic chairs
    clumpy piling on the mittens

mitts on the keyboard
pushing thoughts and jingles out
to Dublin to Seattle, Adelaide, Kane'ohe, Faversham, Glebe

dsadly notating dim trivia
   me-minus-you
       outside community

literary festivals
   can’t help anyone
       like a rehab book sale

making mistakes,
   so different
       from being morally wrong

in an unsettling world
   it’s a rabbit life,
built the walls from Castrol cases

black tyre ribbons
   strewn
       like a giant’s licorice
under the striated cutting
   siding on the highway,
say goodbye
   to the Woodford bends

sometimes the clunky
   can incandesce
       but I want to know
how to vitalize gawkiness,

   sometimes
I’m in my no-mind sometimes
   in a technological mindlessness
sometimes nowhere near limber,
       although that’s unusual

some people
just float along all the time
accumulating the placid

sometimes
when you think you’re going down
you’re not,
you’re going straight ahead
to a utopia of modernity.

Pam Brown
the millennium train
    whips past
    the tollway to the Harbour Bridge
CHANGE GIVEN  CHANGE GIVEN  AUTO COINS ONLY
    in bright orange
    against a saxe blue sky.
the gigantic matchsticks sculpture,
    one burnt, one phosphorous red and ready,
jutting up
    from a closely trimmed mound of couch.
a bronze frieze in capital letters, on the corner
    of the NSW Art Gallery —
    CHRISTOPHER WREN, (old cosmopolitan),
    (Thomas) GAINSBOROUGH —
    flashes by,
seventeenth and eighteenth century ghosts,
    glimpsed like brief suggestions, or notes,
as I enter the drab tunnel
    towards Martin Place
on my way
    to advance automation,
    to sort a set of bookbinding cards
(discard, edit, or keep,
    according, of course,
    to a method)
cards detailed with
    pencilled handwriting,
    traces of colleagues
    now moved on.
    I remember most of them,
more, I remember their memos,
circulated notes —
    our names listed,
    stapled to a corner,
    memo read, name ticked, then passed along
    to the next name —
pre-email,
    and computers then exclusive to data,
the binding card
mimicking book spines,
a card index
the instrument of record.

the train squeals into Redfern
I emerge from the dim light
deep under the city
to see the saxe blue sky
look smoggier,
pale grey-brown on the horizon,
from here, in the inner west,

the way I walk to work,
the block — the aboriginal housing co-operative —
demolished, gone.

another set of glimpses, whisps,
traces of people
now moved on.
on this frosty thursday morning

only a small group of revenants
warming up around
a smoking 44-gallon drum.

Pam Brown
Scenes

what's graspable
on the starless night
of the blackout
as the gleaming cars
snake cautiously
up around
that hillside curve
is the way
the absence of street light
suggests the past –
not a past
I ever knew,
but one I make up, tonight

a boy slides through it
on a silver scooter,
coming back
from synagogue,
curly tails
dangling beneath
an embroidered yarmulke
perched like a lid
to imagination’s
reckless feats
or dimmer prospects –
sets of fraying notebooks
filled with scripture

*

over the road
two very stoned spectres
can’t figure out
how to turn off
the one
working headlight
on their old
silver BMW
so they leave it on
& hurry off
on foot,
jerkily,
on pills probably,
fags attached
to lower lips,
flat battery
a portent

* 

an intense white light
shines down
through folding greys
on the isolated city –
it transforms
to a plastic model,
to a distant maquette,
like toys on my horizon

that white plastic bag
has been drifting
from the gutter
to the road
for three days,
when the rainwater
carries it off
to the Tasman Sea
I think I’ll miss it.

Pam Brown
if you haven’t been lost
    at the showground,
in the bush,    in Westfield Plaza,
on an island

you may not know
    the perpetual present
is exhausting,

way too many
    concurrent points of view,

– something too free in aleatory –

and further,
    a burden – a century
    of hortatory Steinisms,
Yes, that’s how I read it –

          famously, she says
          ‘a sentence is not emotional, a paragraph is’

the ‘difficult’ Stein at her best

    ‘Think carefully of nouns.
    Vary and think very think very once
    and once more of a noun a noun they like’

DRINKING STRAW — there’s your noun, mrs!
    hope you like it

* 

discussing Immaculate Conception
    on the landline
&
    Original Sin –
    who knows what it is?
does an individual matter?
      (immeasurable)

*

boys own rumbles by
      on a rusted bicycle
ruining the dawn’s bleak dream,
      the flattened one,
      where you emerge from the lake
and wave, almost languidly

*

there’s the dribbling bronze boar
      outside Sydney hospital,
      its snout shiny from stroking

dwelling
      on isolation (don’t dwell)
      and other sad feelings (shouldn’t dwell)
like a detainee in this,
      the inadequate body

red bumps
      bigger than goosebumps –
but not exactly pimple size
      more weals than whelks

who can understand the nurse
      when she phones
      with the laboratory test data?

*

No one ever here, no footpath crowd,
   every knock of a hinge is creepy
   crack of a floorboard,
   rustle and gust

perhaps it’s revelatory,
   or will be
can the past catch up with you

*

problem – how to begin the music,
harder than beginning a poem?

the ringtone
was the sound of that decade

if you just keep turning up
on time

eventually

might rain photons

*

that’d be good

*

you’re embarrassed
by my slurp
when I’m
guzzling spirulina
but
I’ve been to my personal best
and back —
I’m not worried

*

early intervention buys time,

how much is time these days?
(a cheap question)

*
if you see something
    say something –

This is everything I could want
    in a lifetime of products

*

pulling on another shirt
    over two shirts
as weather
    sets in

standing in the clothes
    that you once wore

*

hours sitting in one spot

a rosetta fell, lodged dead in the branches,
    I took it down
    and buried it behind the begonia

    a new cicada began to chirr

*

I’ve been coasting,
    a clown visiting a conservatorium,

    time now for application

I want to reach the inhumans,
    find the kind of poetry
        that appeals to them,
    to their original intelligence,
        and then,
    struck by enargia, Propriety Limited is us

*
Unable to afford
   the G’Day Highway Motel,
I sleep in a car in its shadow

while

the town that makes
   the world’s supply
      of plastic drinking straws
   is booming

*

dthe dendrite moves slowly
      towards the synapse –
   arrives two weeks later

   WISHING YOU
   A SPEEDY RECOVERY

   the light here is so dim

*

an indestructible host organism
   has the softest touch

strike another match, go start anew

Pam Brown
The Long Years

We act as if being alone were a problem, perhaps it is a fixed idea like the fear of dying in summer when you decompose more quickly

- Peter Handke

these are the long years and these years are the years which pass quickly.

these are the middle years.

driving at night
along Coronation Drive,
beside the river.

remember this as I remember it

as I remember the canvas fans
on the ceiling of the Renoir Café.

I was sick with influenza,
you were going away to France
or, maybe, that time, you were going elsewhere

and as I remember the shade of the shabby fibro verandah
where you handed me your notes,
written closely in pencil
on small pieces of paper, each page
a different size, your notes
on existentialism which I kept
in a small black folder in a cupboard
and which were lost, later,
when I looked through the house
after everyone had died,
as I remember.

these are the long years
when conversational moments stretch
into stories repeated and repeated
until everything, the whole lot, falls
into a kind of overwhelming sincerity
and it is then that I become
so self-conscious that I can
no longer hear what is being told to me.

remember the auditorium
in which no one believed,
in which they performed,
and the boy who had an erection
halfway through his song,
the clock on the classroom wall,
the mustard colour
of a particular summer dress,
the patches of sweat behind the knees,
the stifling afternoon heat,
the terrible poems that you took seriously,
and the way we caught ourselves
remembering.

remember, if you wish,
that I meet with with you, each time,
these days to honour
the spirit of torn-up letters.

these have been long years –
the unwritten letters would tell you this –
that, once, I was so very upset
that I hit myself on the head
with a shoe,
and that, just before then, before
becoming distressed,
I had been thinking about
the electronic staircase in Japan
where each step plays a musical note
when stepped upon,
and, earlier that year,
I had placed a postcard on the windowsill
above my table –
a detail from Lorenzetti’s painting
‘Allegory of Good Government’,

www.PoemHunter.com - The World’s Poetry Archive
which I had seen in Siena in an earlier year.
it is the part of the picture
   where Peace, Strength and Prudence
       sit together on a patterned couch –
they look relaxed, as if bored by government,
   Peace is so laconic she looks as if
       she will fall to sleep
       and drop the olive twig she idly twirls.

as I remember something
viewed from the back seat of a taxi –
   a woman stood facing
a cyclone wire fence,
   tears made damp spots
on the straps of her sun dress,
the man placed his hand
   on her pale bony back,
it was so very sad as serious
   as if they might kiss.

remember the present or yesterday
as I remember the idea of our lives
   and our actual lives,
and your use of that term, again
   and again, ‘re-invention’
as a cure for loneliness –
like watching a woman
   with a string of pearls slowly
      testing each one
      in the wine.

here we are waiting for the natural end,
   for some future winter as I remember it,
and in these long years
we may eventually locate the places
   beyond memory in imagined countries,
where English is the last language.

Pam Brown
This Is All

this is all I will bring to you
from the deep humidity here
where everything about this evening hurts,
from the helpless beauty of the pale orange sky
to the darkening wall of the cemetery.
tonight it seems we were never here,
that we never slept here.
that the dust gathered in a brand new house
and it became a museum overnight.
this evening short involuntary gasps
interrupt my practice of abstinence
and hurtle me across the equator across the world.

Pam Brown
Ultradian Rhythm

oppspinn,
   I think that’s
Finnish for ‘made up’

places to go    like Sarcadia
or Sfax
   or here, just across the tram-track
from Bingo
       on the top floor next door
           to Blockbuster
(a kind of
       pre-cognitive landmark)
under the antenna-nest
     of the dream bird
that hatches the egg
     of experience, boredom.

also ‘made-up’
     & performed –
optimism, like
peacetime’s modern luxury –
       having a grave
          all to yourself

down below
     the traffic
     sounds like the sea,
like the Pacific (perhaps)
rising under
     a pall of poison,
    islands sinking
as morning’s white moon
    still dangles
in the sickly blue
     behind the mobile phone tower.

sherbet-brained,
     fizzily beginning to feel
like Nietzsche spake –
nothing is worth anything

insects frolic
    in my hairs,
I open another dusty book
    in the weak Roman shade

seems like    Brisbane
    summer grey
and I’ve come so very far
    to make this small comparison

Pam Brown
Up North

night is a nuisance
when you’re sleeping
on the floor

thirteen hours
in the same shoes
and hours yet to come

I pack Xing,
a slim volume,
for the plane trip to the tropics

*
spotty faded photos
of personalities at tea
framed on the cafe wall

trendy bakeries called
“Bread Story”
behind me, at last

paw paw, avocado, lychee,
banana, bread board and sockettes
on the window sill in the sun

*
this morning, hazy mauve pink
washes the wooded ravines
of the indigo range

noisy birds, ibis and egret,
shit white splotches
onto the utes below

two men in singlets
removing green coconuts
wave from the top of the tree

*
kestrels prey
on toads and rats
on furrowed cane fields

Welcome to Mareeba
Gateway to Cape York,
cloud blankets the tableland

rodeo clobber,
de rigueur
on Main Street

*
returning through rainforest,
the Kuranda boys
do the cassowary dance

“zamier nuts”
that's what they’re called
round and brown on the musty ground

last sunset in Cairns
across the port a ridiculous rainbow
rising from the foot of the range

Pam Brown