

## **Trans-Tasman**

*Sam Morley*

### 1. Messmate

the messmate seeps out  
afternoon shadows as  
the tree feller flags a fall path

a chainsaw clatters  
a barking bare toothed frenzy  
shivering the scrub scrawl

when the feller first scars  
the messmate skin  
winter is scented

a sclerophyll squall  
the saw rattles ecstasy  
through tree knots

and bark shards  
breathing a spindrift  
of dying

the messmate moans  
letting all its birds free  
in a bark scatter of grief

In Queenstown  
in an internet café  
I type out everything  
I remember  
your laugh  
your hands  
the day  
I lost you  
and that spare look  
that unending hunger  
on a park bench  
while your father  
cleared your things  
from the house

## 2. Tasman Glacier

walking beneath a crevasse comes the thought  
that time will inch over all you've stood for  
and never open up again  
antique dust carpets phthalo blue walls  
black streaks banded together

we are poised to hear the sound of chafed stone  
scoured hum of granite gouged into milk  
but all we hear is the lake and the quiet  
release of boulders held tight for so long  
as that is what time requires

And you said  
*I need a man now*  
that's another thing  
I remember  
as I tramp alone in  
unceasing fjord land rain  
across the watery years

3. Spider rain

above a drenched earth  
a slack web swarms  
a slow lifting fog  
festooning dead branches  
with sagging trip wires

there is something celestial  
in the shape of this gown  
a gossamer of synapses  
a net hauled without luck  
the mess of a finished festival

beaded strands link beaded strands  
in a gauntlet of sky chandeliers  
a boulevard of bush where if I  
cast out lines they come back  
with nothing but thoughts diffused

**Sam Morley** is a poet whose work has been published by a number of journals including *Cordite*, *Red Room Poetry*, *Canberra Times*, *The Australian*, *Overland*, *Westerly*, *Southerly*, *Plumwood Mountain* and *Antipodes*, and has appeared on noted shortlists including the ACU Poetry Prize. In 2022 he was the recipient of the Tina Kane Emergent Writer Award at the Mildura Writer's Festival and his debut poetry collection, *Earshot*, is due out in July through Puncher and Wattmann. He lives in Melbourne.