

## A History of Opals

*Annamaria Quaresima*

Flash, precious multitude: play – your luminous tricks  
with Arlecchino’s moving cloak of stone, vivid squares, dancing  
light-capturer, water-holder, liminal hard space – where  
life becomes landscape, time piece prehistoric, stories and law  
meet memories. Sky-show beauty refracts, touches land,  
turning: pebbles prismatic, perpetual in their shimmering  
kaleidoscope in silica, arising – from ancient ocean, death  
and sinking. Clay burial for belemnites, deep waters recede  
down, leaving: only orange rock behind, radiant harshness,  
the dry heat of Andamooka, of Coober-Pedy-Umoona,  
and cephalopod-shaped rainbows, under earth. Gemstone,  
stable matrix, yet – inherently prone to fracture; no guiding plane  
of separation, just gentle, concentric curves, conchoidal – this form  
recalls the gradual, stepped slopes made by waves washing steady  
onto molluscs, morphed – by aeons – into torpedo-pencils,  
before becoming modern, boneless. Distant descendants swim  
in Spencer Gulf; all petal-edged frills waving, sleek-gliding  
bright bodies, the Giant Cuttlefish flash their intent in shades  
reminiscent: a rainbow viewed underwater; iridescent, opalescent.

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