

## New Poetry

### Marcella Polain Boiling jam at Christmas

This year it's Spring up to Christmas. Daily, Jacarandas burst  
and I stand surprised along the fence-line between us and the  
abandoned house:

our plum trees are still burdened, their slim arms bowed by the  
weight of fruit.

Above, a white screech of cockatoos splits the blue.

At my feet, the long grass rustles.

I tumble scores of purple plums into my skirt,  
take to others with a spade,  
walk home slowly, my belly rolling.

Under incandescent light, I prepare the sink,  
inspect each one, bath them all,  
pat them dry and lay them on the cool steel bench.  
The firm are packed inside the body of our fridge;  
the soft and broken set aside.

Over the greased preserving pan, I press two fingers into them, flick  
out their stony hearts  
and make a red flesh heap.

My jam boils fast and thick.

My hands run red, red, red and I clean everything,  
set out the jars, snip lengths of silver ribbon,  
circles of gold paper.

I do not think of the abandoned house,  
the rustling fence-line in the failing light  
or the night-garden, busy with its shallow graves.