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2013

Carlton

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Publication Details

Cole, C. "Carlton." Online: *Mascara Literary Review*, Issue 13, June, 2013. 1-2.

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Abstract

A late dark comes down

Cardigan Street

crows call from London planes.

By now you will be chopping at the sink

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Keywords

carlton

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Law

Publication Details

Cole, C. "Carlton." Online: Mascara Literary Review, Issue 13, June, 2013. 1-2.

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Professor Catherine Cole is Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Wollongong. She has published novels and two non-fiction books. She is the editor of the anthology, *The Perfume River: Writing from Vietnam* and co-editor with McNeil and Karaminas of *Fashion in Fiction: Text and Clothing in Literature, Film and Television*, (Berg UK and USA, May 2009). She also has published poetry, short stories, essays and reviews.



Carlton

A late dark comes down
Cardigan Street
crows call from London planes.
By now you will be chopping at the sink
cat at your ankle,
pestering
ABC news
bushfires and floods.

Our friends live in separate cities too
we talk distance
of soldiers sent to war,
migrant workers
Stapleton in the Antarctic, five years between letters.
Too tired by the time we call
to describe the crows' black flash against red walls,

or how the drought has turned
all the grass
brown.

When next you come here
I will walk you past these trees
past the crows gnawing at plane tree pods
past the promise of Florence in the south.
I will sing sailor's songs
Compose letters from the trenches of my heart
and hide them in your luggage
to read when you get home.

And while I wait
I walk past Victoria Street
past walls red radiant with heat.

I look a starling in its cruel eye,
step over the bleached bones of dead flowers.
And on Exhibition Building's dome
a crow,
my heart in its beak.