

## Nieu Bethesda

We walked another hour  
    before we spoke  
and then we spoke  
    of the trees  
by the roadside,  
    the red tin roofs,  
the knee-deep furrows  
    carrying water  
from the river.

Across the river  
    windmills turn the air,  
cows bellow, voices  
    lift in song into the distance  
into the bright—  
    blue midsummer sky. Karoo midday:  
birds ride the wind like light  
    itself, careen  
across the open fields.

From the fields  
    the road is quiet.  
Acacias lace the grass  
    with white, and red stars  
blossom by the roadside.

The displaced Dutch cathedral lifts its spire above the trees,  
casts no shadows.

IAN TROMP