

## TWO POEMS BY JUDITH RODERIGUEZ

### Beach Lagoon

They have drained the lagoon. For our good  
where our sewage fouls the stream  
Flinders' men provisioned at,  
and the beach sand held it,

the council tractor ploughed a channel.  
Seven dead toads, bloated  
and gesturing, whisked out to ocean.  
Wind scours the fetid

ditch drained to brown scum, toad-spawn  
taped between grass-tufts, lost rings,  
plastic lids, chunks of surf-board.  
Moon-set, then new tide,

kids bring down nets, spear shallows  
for tiddlers and trevally in a bucket.  
Moon back at dawn, and high water,  
sea-waves will enter —

Sludged with a life's mixed seepage  
mind burrows warm behind  
the sandbar, fine-silts its broken shells,  
thinks Pacific.

## Day With One Cloud

The size of a man's hand.  
This little spade, bright red,  
bought as they went to bathe  
and broken at the spathe  
has become what she said,  
the stepmother on the sand

(and nobody thought it funny)  
over her toddler's play  
to the seven-year-old not hers:  
You will replace it, of course,  
as he gasped at the break,  
with your own money.

Exact in her dealings  
she accounted for the day  
though his Dad has a hand for each.  
She took up the shards from the beach.  
She has never touched the boy  
unless told to. As for feelings —

eyed from above,  
graceless, dumb with dismay,  
he needs. He can't yet see  
her recoil as kin. They agree  
on the babe's intelligence and grace,  
the child of love.