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.