

# A Visitation

All night wild fire burned in the tree-tops  
on the other side of the river – now  
it's morning and smoking embers  
from the angophoras are landing in a clearing  
on the near shore. A yellow-footed rock  
wallaby limps in from the bush,  
dazed with mucked fur, its tail hardly able  
to support its weight. Although  
wounded, it seems miraculous  
as the morning sun catches the yellow hue  
of its feet above black claws.  
It's the first yellow-footer I've seen for more  
than 40 years – and reminds me  
of a time as a kid when I rowed  
my grandfather's tallow-wood skiff across  
Big Bay. There was a mob of four  
rock wallabies, standing there as the boat  
was pulled silently by the tide along  
the shore. One I noticed, by the mottled fur  
on its back, seemed to have mange,  
like the river foxes of those days.  
A panic suddenly ran through them  
and the largest buck almost flew  
straight up an enormous rock. It was sheer wildness,  
so fierce it shocked me. Afterwards  
the atmosphere was thick and I could smell  
an odour unlike anything I recognised.  
This morning, once again, that scent was in the air.  
I turned to look but the wallaby had gone.

**Robert Adamson**

*This is the second poem in a suite, From a Bend in the Euphrates, which appears  
in sunweight: The 2005 Newcastle Poetry Prize Anthology*