

University of Canberra

Penelope Layland

Prose poems, written by members of the Prose Poetry Project, November 2014 to July 2017, compiled by the editors

Biographical note:

Penelope Layland is a doctoral student in poetry at the University of Canberra. She has published two books of poetry: *The Unlikely Orchard* (Molonglo Books) and *Suburban Anatomy* (Pandanus Books). She has worked as a journalist, speechwriter and as a communications professional.

I'm planting for the next people now, hoping they'll believe this has always been so 'cottage-garden', so carelessly crafted. The clay will squeeze the annuals upright long enough for the auctioneer's hammer, the pungent mulch freshly shovelled should disguise the exhaustion beneath.

When did I grow so bored with it all? Windflowers bobbing and bearded irises; cuttings gift-wrapped in gladwrap by a mother-in-law; bulbs in brown paper bags in the fridge; seeds, small as dust, catching in the corners of their paper packets; sticky forget-me-nots, not forgotten, just neglected to death. Now, I am strenuous. Next autumn, when the first early frost crisps the lawn yellow, a stranger's child will slip, running unknowing for the swing that hung from someone else's ancient plum, the one we cut down to make way for the deck we did not use.

(from *tract* 2017)