

His Name is Pac-Man by Stephen Page

I ride a Man of War named Pac-Man,
A roan with a forehead mark of white whale
And fetlocks that beard nobly. He grazes
Where he pleases, when he pleases. He
Is ridden by whom he chooses. He is saddled
By kings. He saddles a king that rides
Herniated and allows him free graze.
He set his armor aside to let his pelt
Breathe. He makes summer sun spring
And leaps fence in search of rain.
He cuts cattle and runs errands
Only for the Don. He unhinges barn
Doors and watches stars crystallize new
Leaf dew hooved by the Five that follow
Him. The moon haloes his mane
As he learns the phases of grass.
After months of war, he has found place.
The Five now bow and beg permission
To move. He has found life in the vision
Of ranch, and eats it voraciously.

Tree Root by Stephen Page

I have holstered my gun and sheathed
My knife and got down to the business
Of grass.

The orange blossoms smell sweet

The business of all ranchers is grass.
Cows eat grass. They fatten. Ranchers sell
The cows.

The drizzling rain quiets the wood.

If grass is shorn too short, the roots
Suffer, cannot extract energy from leaf
Blades which extract energy from the sun.

Sunset is a zillion gallons of orange paint.

I sit on one side of a tree root
And cows curiously face me,
Looking over an electric fence.

The sky is so large.

I sit on the other side of the root,
And a line of eucalypti face me,
Showing between trunks the wood.

Patched bark.

The thing you have to deal with
When you have cow pastures is shit.
Shit on your shoes, shit on your
Pants legs, shit on your truck, shit
On your hands when you open gates.

Silence is the owl about to take flight.

My business partner who farms
Lots of my land, wants to plow
Away more of my grass, shoot
The quail, trap the armadillos, flit
Away the mockingbird, spray

To death the flowers, plant
Genetically modified soy, sterilize
My herd to nothing.

The migrating butterflies fill clouds.

In the fattening lot, a calf
Suckles a tuberculate cow,
And in the bull paddock,
A sheep lies on her side,
Cycling air with her hooves,
Diarrhea coruscating her tail.