

## **Immigrants**

*to Bob Fagan*

If my Grandad had seen the future  
he would have said, small acts of care  
are worth leaving. He'd have painted  
imitation grain on window casing  
and planted Crystal Palace lobelia.  
My bride stunned us in faux fur,  
he'd have said—I didn't expect her  
to outlive me by sixteen years.  
He'd float like spume on Jervis Bay  
and under casuarinas at Sanctuary  
Point and say, now I know paradise.  
He'd make tea for Mum and Dad  
before breakfast, Tang at lunch  
and shepherd's pie on a Monday.  
He'd enlist to fight fascism and stand  
straight backed. He'd cross the Suez  
on the Castel Felice, watch comedy,  
say he wanted a daughter like me.  
He'd bounce on his heels and organise  
mints at the phone table. He'd hear  
pneumonia coming and live until  
Cathy Freeman won gold. He'd walk  
on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin  
and say, not everyone will love  
this town. He'd shoe horses  
at Sezincote, flood an orange orchard,

lug for the MSO, cry in a dorm  
at Fisherman's Bend. He'd be stoically  
sentimental, gravely proud of his son.  
He'd kiss my children and clutch  
their shoulders, too modest to say  
my brother's boy resembled him.  
He'd tinker in sheds, hum over  
weekend newspapers, buy bacon  
at Vincentia butcher so Nanna  
could fry us holiday sandwiches.  
If my Grandad had seen the future  
he would have said, at Monte Cassino  
some things were lost forever. He might  
take back that year but no others.