

the **telling room**
SARAH HOLLAND-BATT

Your first
episode,

not the time
you crawled up
the wall, cockroach-
style, when

between calving
shivers you halleluiahed and
darted for the Bible,
moaning
Jesus
Saves; but when

the table beckoned
sun creeping along it, and
brittle salamander dreams
floated into glaring wakefulness.

The wind
made insinuations—

a cat's howl shook down
worms from she-oaks
and they danced
like skinless
toes making
dry *phutts* on
limestone;

oranges
rearranged themselves, swooning,
the bowl furiously
winking
at the wax faces
of the fruits;
all the pregnant apricots
made dry chucklings on the counter.

(These were the first signs.)

Then the television
made you mistrust it.
News anchor Marlie
dropped your name in,
reporting robotic a-bomb planes
punching clouds the colour of wet
violins.

Green swarmed through the open door
like an enormous locust.

Your arms were a centrifuge
of vengeful garnet,
and voices dug
into your smooth walnut brain
buried themselves in its vaginal
folds.

The invisible (latent)
grid of television snare-wire
tightened;

and you filtered it,
culled broadcast gibberish
from the real Word,

found information beaming
from the eerie cube
pure as soaked driftwood
struggling shorewards, whittled
into true units of meaning

that poured
and spewed
and gushed out like
ejaculate—

and you drank from it
you drank from the broth of eternal epistemologies
you drank from the story of stories

and the headline was
death.

SARAH HOLLAND-BATT lives in Sorrento, Queensland, where she is poetry editor for the literary magazine *Vanguard*, and a freelance arts writer for *localART*. Her poetry has appeared most recently in *Aesthetica: A Review of Contemporary Artists* (UK), and *Ideation*.
