

One Last Poem

I was going to write one last poem
 but nothing came out,
 only lightning & red sand
 & a campfire that speaks
 at least fifteen Aboriginal dialects
 as it stirs the embers with a stick.
 Even a whitefella can understand
 two or three sentences
 if he's prepared to press
 his ear to the flames.
 The Pintupi have forgotten more than
 I'll ever know about the Land –
 its ways & names.
 Too much to remember,
 other than the warning:
 don't eat *kuka* in the rain.
 “Proper cheeky bugger, lightning.”

Today a friend told me,
 "everything's a metaphor for something else."
 But what I don't understand is:
 why, when I wanted to describe you, was
 the only metaphor that came to mind
 the sound of wind blowing in from the desert?

Billy Marshall Stoneking

* “kuka” - meat