

Chapter Nine

On a dark stage struck: the prose poetry of Ania Walwicz

1

Freeze your fountain and you will always have the frozen waves shooting into the air and falling it and will be there to see – oh, no doubt about that – but there will be no more coming.

Gertrude Stein

Little Red Riding Hood opens Ania Walwicz's first book *Writing* (1982). The image recurs through the books that follow, *Boat* (1989) and *Red Roses* (1992):

I always had such a good time, good time, good time girl. Each and every day from morning to night. Each and every 24 hours I wanted to wake up, wake up. I was so lively, so livewire tense, such a highly pitched little. I was red, so red so red. I was a tomato. I was on the lookout for the wolf. Want some sweeties, mister? I bought a red dress myself. I bought the wolf. Want some sweeties, mister? I bought a red dress for myself. I bought a hood for myself. Get me a hood. I bought a knife (p.7).

Right from page one there is inversion. Little Red Riding Hood doesn't need a woodcutter's knife: she has one of her own. It is she, knowing and cute, who seduces the wolf. Little Red Riding Hood is bad. Or perhaps it is the fault of 'Colours': 'Red is tense and sharp. Red is danger to itself' (p.52). Little Red Riding Hood tempts, threatens, buys and finally becomes the wolf, the turning point perhaps being hood, a term for 'thug' in the fifties in Australia, as well as a link with the masked comic heroes of that time. The whole thing is pop culture, the moment when the tale becomes the stage or screen *act*. 'Good time' is archly ambiguous: innocent fun, sex at a price. With 'Want some sweeties, mister?' she has the wolf at her mercy, because she has entered his throat and knows all his lines. Everything is confused. Sweeties are not what a wolf wants.

Why bung the piece all together like an office memo? Walwicz was told once to make her writing more 'available.' Her response was to excise from her next book even those few signposts we find in this one, capital letters and full stops, and to double the length of the pieces. 'My work can only exist in this form,' says Walwicz, 'as a rush of language.'¹ Critics speak of the 'dazzling honesty' of its 'confessional speech.' In contrast the confessional style of Lowell and Plath's lyric poetry, spaced out in both senses of the phrase, seems unreal, grounded in nothing, clinging to a leisured-class airiness of the past. This is what Walwicz confronts. Even the famed final lines of Plath's 'Lady Lazarus' – 'I rise with my red hair/ and I eat men like air' have too much of the 'poetic' about them. Treating the same dramatic subjects, Walwicz's dug-out language seizes space, takes no prisoners. It is like baffling prose translations of a foreign poem. It is more rhythmic and breath-borne than 'prose,' more threatening than 'poetry.' 'I bought the wolf'?? She means, not just the gear but also the other party in the dispute, the whole deal. This way you can have two sexes and two victories. The confessional 'I' is a trick. The message from this first entry in a three-volume *journal intime* is about genre/gender. The gender is both/not feminine and masculine. The form is both/not poetry and prose. Go for one and it will turn, with irony and glee, into the other.

Writing is strong brush strokes of words between fullstops, classical Jungian associations based on often non-classical words: Baby, Sitting Pretty, Marcel Proust, Flip, the Great Elvis, Glowing World. It takes up the avant-garde challenge to literature that runs from Lautréamont and the *coupages* of Dada through the automatic writing of the Surrealists to the borderline texts of Artaud and Kafka and Beckett. But technically it is Cubism which frees these texts from the twin constraints of narrative and the poetic. Narrative depends on syntactic structures, and the poetic on the usual assortment of tropes. Cubism allowed us to see together what otherwise was not seen together, to be everywhere but only partially. Walwicz talks of the greater willingness of visual artists to experiment with language. 'In art you seek the new, you look for original performances, as in sculpture.' This density on the page recognises the solidity of sculpture, but is more plastic. 'I slip out of wherever they place me. The *avant-garde* can never be placed.'² Another reason for indivisibility: to be structured is to be cut up with a knife and fork by naïve and colonising critics. Which may be why the work gets ever denser, moving from early segmental pieces to the indivisibility of 'no speak:'

...where is where is where is john street is where is john street where is i no speak
teacher teacher i no speak mary has a dog mary has a house i no sorry i no i no
teacher school pencil bag i no speak sorry we go to school good morning good
morning bus ticket and sixpence is this is a bus this is my bag this is a school this
is hello this is good morning is i no speak i no speak (p.34)

In performance fragmented forms find powerful completion in canonical recurrence. On stage, controlled by breath and tempo, writing becomes drama, its surface tension so tight that no other, it seems, can break in. A movement which leads back-

ward as well as forward, a repetition-compulsion re-enacting pain, the text exposes the beginnings of art. We also see the reduction of the *I* to *i* under the pressure of massive psychic events. The speaker is facing the audience like a child facing a mirror, making this strange other that is *i* come and go with her words. The self is threatened by this other that may reflect nothing. Further, the *i* is a broken stroke, an upright with a gap in the middle, a migrant pronoun whose intertextuality reminds us that in other languages the *I* is not capitalised: je, ich, etc. Faced with the master other, one's language may always be child language.³ Walwicz's experience of several Western cultures and languages reveals any given language as a transparency.

How is language-as-transparency to go with language-as-mark? ('I don't want to tell how. I want to do. I want to make. A mark.') In two ways. The first is through ironic inversion. 'i no speak' is a page and a half of single spacing, ending with 'i no speak.' But what else has she been doing for two pages? And the practised speaker of English knows that 'speak' is different from 'talk.' Talk is interaction, but 'speak' has two meanings, one being what you do with different languages, the other *uttering*, getting sounds out in the most basic way. 'Speak to me!' you say when you fear someone is dying. Can this tumble of words be confronting another sort of death? Walwicz's control of these functions together in 'i no speak' means the face value of the words is both affirmed – 'I don't speak English, I'm other' and denied – 'I do speak English, here's my mark, *I have survived.*'

The other way language-as-transparency meets language-as-mark is through *red*. Out of fear that 'I was becoming invisible,' it seeks effects: 'I had red shoes on. Red dress. High as high.' A new thing is made through damage: 'The broken window. Gapes a star.' And 'I cut my finger. This red mark.' Red is solid. But red is also flow: 'I read my work aloud. I am the fire eater.' Language isn't stopped up, it is Gertrude Stein's fountain – but it has to be two-way, the fire has to come in. Where from? So far, only from dramatic inversions of the images of others: 'I'm Little Red Riding Hood in red light – big bad wolf jumped into my mouth long ago.'

Writing closes on a high note:

I'm new born... I'm first mark on my page. I'm just spring. I'm dawn light... Yesterday I was heavy with me. And today I give birth. I give me birth... The afterbirth hangs from my back... I'm shaky leg young horse

'New World'(p.67)

i take the world little globe in my i take the world and put it in my pocket i was at me and out of me now i'm in me i take the world i took it

'Think' (p. 64)

These forms recall the close of Beckett's *Unnamable*: 'you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on', but without the sober recognition of necessity.⁴ Rather, an elated child, all freedom-from-cognition, thinks she *has* what she sees in the mirror. When 'i take' becomes 'i took' it is as if the child ego has indeed taken flight. Abandoning sentence

structure – but the impeccably placed apostrophes are a sign that this abandonment does not come from *incapacity* – the self has floated the 'i' like a currency, trusting that *flow* will not lose colour, nor *mark* stop up the fountain. And so it moves on to *Boat*.

2

typography is brilliantly ending its career at the dawn of the new methods of reproduction, the cinema and the gramophone

Guillaume Apollinaire, trans. Oliver Bernard

Boat is legato rather than staccato, its pieces longer and more abstract, spinning more elaborated dreams of words. Greater softness goes with sinking and swimming:

...you just wait red sails come around corner she told i'll be done with travels... i'm in middle oceans boat takes me to futurelands from badlands i'm in transit how to be a sailor my my way ... you have to fold in half make sails fold flaps open and fold over open one fold and open my boat i fold i make boats over and over i'm a boat and i float i'm a sailor and i sail away...

('boats', p.26)

...take grey hat off and put third boat hat on my head put black hat ... it falls put my blue hat fourth on wear on pool in floater blue water fill full bit less tilt on float eyes wide-open scared...

('boat/hat', p.29)

...if hat boat on a tilt boat then can go under ...must wear my hat boat on in oceans said oceans of feet ... if again then needs again never over if in deep water ten hats pull me out...

('how hats turn boats,' p.31)

It is hard not to perceive a *migration* sub-text when each of these widening pools of words disappears under the edge of the next. The monometers advance then fall back, the repeated elements recurring in part or in full, now verb now noun. Broad ripples are undercut by items thrown in, one stimulus-word engendering another stimulus-word, which brings us back, and so on. Inversion means *boat* becomes *hat* then *boat* again. The tilt of the hat, going with the colour, determines state of mind and thus survival, since the hat can *pull up* morale. The exercise is a surrealist one because automatic writing, though incoherent, expects the emergence of a psychic truth. Boats and hats seem to be signifiers, like Rushdie's 'translation as metaphor,' but the fold itself annuls meaning. It is no more than cubism itself, it can only stand for visual art's function of folding coloured cartridge paper and creating illusory objects.

Like the paper shape, Walwicz's technique is fold and ripple at the same time, expanding outwards through incompleteness, sometimes resembling the folding sentence pattern developed by Elizabeth Jolley in her trilogy.⁵ But while Jolley's device appeases human connections, Walwicz's *breaks them down*, with boat and hat as fundamental particles. However, there are reversions to the brittle playfulness of stage performance:

I was the most beautiful girl in the world. I guess it just went to my head. They brought me up to be ugly and ugly. To be clever and useful. To be a drone. I'm queen. I've got the beauty on me and in me. Only when I left home. I got beautiful. They were keeping me under. They were not letting me be as I really... I had this glossy all over me... (p.1).

I saw Walwicz read this to a delighted auditorium of mostly women students. The words go on and on, adding cliché to overstatement to undercut the omnipotent fantasy. We listen avidly because it we increasingly expect some final confession, some shameful public avowal. What will all this *justify*? But fantasy has no shame. Walwicz's delivery is acute and insinuating, the words flicked in like darts. Charm and cheek, Dietrich and Monroe and Bette Davis. Irony uproots not the Cinderella story itself but the longing and anxiety with which Cinderella must pay for her beauty. 'Every man in every car was after me. I could tell by their eyes. The dilated pupil.' This voice notes charms like an ad-man. Yet, rapid and elliptical, it is all desire. Against performance Walwicz says 'It's digesting it for them, seeing I'm an actress as well. I'm giving it rhythmic positioning.'⁶ Yes: the meaning and structure often come from the breath. But she has also said there should be an 'authorial statement' from the writer to keep the work hers.

The social satire of 'Vampire' could come from a male voice:

You don't look australian to me you look a wog to me no offence meant he's probably a nice bloke really i'd watch out for him if i were you ooo oo he's got bad eyes you got bad eyes you got bad eyes that's what you're not going to live long i reckon (p.93)

The recurring 'eye' stitches up the cruel vision: 'i'm a needle now i'm sharp tip with a little eye.' The eye is a keen, schizoid fragment. The book's appropriate climax is in 'write:'

....oh please greedy a love thing come on quicks... this does me i do this this is doing me this grows i let it want to hug... words fill me in was an empty... please stick me makes me big i keep me fill me in do gush a gush tell to fingers boogie woogie just want to do makes me want me born in mouth to good noisy done goodie how's darls what you dong... this plays i play with this... just wipe white away...fill me all up... dance tongue words take me in a field of grass by my arms and legs...make flow this is ploughing... oh glad blood do more of what you do...oh do (p.223)

It is indeed a dance of words and tongue. Inversion sends the migrating subject into a *chiasmus* between self and other: 'this does me i do this.' The space between is

blood, both flow and mark, both *i* and not *i*, a red language. Walwicz's affectionate – and affecting – tribute to Molly Bloom makes the point that just as women need only their fantasy to make love with, so they need only fantasy to *write* with. The final piece from *Boat* is 'harbour:'

i'm a coming in now in my boat about to land in head land i'm harbour and i wait for my sailor where are you... finish aus mit zee that's all end travel put my off roll trousers i'm in she was wait for red sails to come in here to my sail in will come on my red boat i welcome sailor i'm harbour... i've been around my world (p.264).

It is clear why a Sydney choir sings Walwicz texts set to music ('like Schoenberg') and another composer is considering an opera. The cut-off cadences are musically suggestive:

who is that's me over in my sailor on here he i comes to me who is that's me over in my sailor ... i'm wait girl for me i return (p.265).

The strength of the English language is its relative freedom from case paradigms and verb inflexions. Accentual monometers free it further, like Hopkins's diction or old English poetry: moreover, short English is both migrant English and the *best* English. The use of pronominal cases in 'write,' – *this does me i do this* – keeps the two clauses from doing anything but abut; frequently in her work, however, one slips behind the other with a common term used as a fulcrum: 'who is that's me.'

At first 'i' seems to be a sailor but instead becomes the harbour and waits for 'my sailor.' 'Harbour' can now receive the whole world, at a mythical level – with the boat and its sailor coming in at an angle, the water folding in its wake. Any sailor/girl opposition is ruled out: at the end of 'all travel,' what *was* and what *is* are rolled together, as are the three parties, with added touches of Eliot's Prufrock and the Flying Dutchman. The movement of the waves is held for a moment by the form of the harbour. The chiasmic structure suggesting *harbour*, again a boat-hat ideogram, is half fold half ripple.

3

*La beauté est comme un train qui bondit sans cesse
dans la gare de Lyon et dont je sais qu'il ne va jamais
partir, qu'il n'est pas parti.*

André Breton, *Nadja*

Post-structuralist criticism has talked *ad nauseam* about transgressive desire subverting the forces of repression. In Walwicz's work we actually see it blasting away at the sentence, that verbal model of the integrity of the personality. The fiction of the later James and of Beckett showed greatly increased linguistic *cohesion* – that is, the intratextual relations of ellipsis, repetition, substitution (*do* and *so*) – and *reference* in the form of personal and other pronominals. Excessive cohesion, with its overload of anaphoric ties between sentences putting constant strain on reader memory, opposes the *coherence* we expect from

texts – clear differences between things and characters, and relatively simple treatment of actions, affects and speech.⁷

Walwicz texts seem to follow these novelists' foregrounding of connectedness over content, and all these instances of cohesion are strikingly present in her work. But she has developed new stylistic forms – I am going now beyond strictly linguistic categories – of a radicality envisaged in English literature by Joyce, Stein and Cummings, although in French such experiment had been going on since the time of Mallarmé. Let us look at inversion, chiasmus, the half-tense and syntactical displacement. *Inversion*, the predicament of the migrating subject, says 'I love Elvis and I am Elvis' and 'the big bad wolf jumped into my mouth.' *Chiasmus* says 'the first of April Fool's Day' and 'on a dark stage struck.' The *half-tense* I have not mentioned so far. It says 'i'm wait for zoo,' 'i'm wear her dress,' 'she was wait for sails.' In English the simple tense – 'I wait, I wear' – is a wide angle view dealing with habit, normality, *gestalt*, whereas 'I'm waiting, I'm wearing' are simply *now*. Walwicz's in-between formation might represent, in Lacan's terms, the '*gestalt* in conflict with the child's fragmentary, disorganised felt reality.'⁹ The half-tense is the elusive relationship between the *now* and the *always* which inhabits the mirror and indeed the stage. It is related to migration: it has an added overtone of passivity.

The fourth form is *syntactical displacement*: 'put my off roll trousers,' 'i make my pull face,' 'thing takes his out,' and 'i'm never just here at the right time.' They are stunning infantilisms, fragmentation linked with the denial of both responsibility and the everyday. Subject and verb are in turmoil, wiping out the strict cause-and-effect order of English syntax over which the ego normally has control. How graphically front-focused is 'thing takes his out'!

The four configurations are like four dimensions, seemingly three of place and one of time. In a Lacanian mirror, inversion comes across as *I become you*: chiasmus as *I overlap you*: the half-tense as *I'm half here*: and syntactical displacement as *I'm all over the place*. Lacan would say that they record 'the child's first recognition of lack or absence,' (but we should not of course conclude this to be its first *experience* of them.) In any case these quirks of language do not stop there: they show a self who cannot stay for more than an instant full frontally before the mirror, yet cannot leave it.¹⁰ Even 'i'm wait,' using the lack to grab at the awaited other, denies that it *can't* wait. These forms declare their migratory conflict, their overreaction to the other, their longing to be in the one place at the one time: or, failing that, the ability to say, as Walwicz will in *Red Roses*, 'i'm explaining where i don't come from.' One recalls Tzara's 'motionless dance' as well as Breton's characterisation of beauty as convulsive, like the train bounding in the station without leaving or having left.¹¹

4

O Eiffel Tower shepherdess the bridges this morning
are a bleating flock

Apollinaire, trans. Oliver Bernard

Walwicz like Janet Frame uses surrealism to explode the text and save the self. But she goes much further since in much Frame fiction mother and father are retained whole. Walwicz singles out the mummy-daddy-me not only as a site for exploration but for detonation.¹² 'Family' and 'past' talk of parents quarrelling, phoney harmony, the other sister who is 'good,' the self who is 'bad' and 'casts spells' (*writing*, p.39). The mother had a child to keep her and her husband together. 'So he wouldn't leave her.' In 'past,' the first husband is killed by the Germans, and the second husband, the father, 'marches to berlin in russian army to kill them all i catch adolf hitler i cut him with gilettes' [*siz*] (p.78). Perhaps the identification with the father is due to the mother's association with the 'last nazi in town helps my mother in her orchard he looks after my baby sister he pushes her pram he gives her his boot to play with.' Another absence of father Agamemnon at the war leading to mother's dubious dalliance; another Duras heroine fraternising shamefully with the enemy; another Electra full of bad wishes. As in Duras we have hostile and split-off voices, and confrontation of melancholy. In a language of regression Walwicz not only opposes a Lacanian/Kristevan Name of the Father/Third Party, but shamelessly blends back into the maternal abject, in part to preserve a close earlier time but also to preserve the *young* mother, the beauty. Identifying with her creates a strange pull between unruly infant and glamourpuss – 'I've got the beauty on me.' The image is ideal, but the language shows the discrepancy. The envy and greed of the child who feels deprived is the dark shadow of idealisation: they are 'the sharp tip with the little eye.' *Red Roses* is parts of many mothers and many fathers all swimming in a vast single womb, taking the 'harbour effect' of *Boat* and stretching it to novel length. The opening lines:

she sings me a sing me lullabye mum does sing a sing for me now sing
me lull lella lulla byes goo song to clam dell to lull me loll do song me
in my mouth in my voice she her hers that die she sings me baby on
dark stations ... worlds in dark worlds for wait for her to come
where are you she is dead ... it's all untrue then tell me it isn't so ... she
sings me in my head is where centre ... she is learning to play a
grand piano she is living with my dark dark man ... they said she said
bad things about stalin they interrogate her bright bright lights while i
am at my swimming in her stomach she is in kick (pp. 1-4)

The avant-garde defies paraphrase and quotation, those critical practices whereby 'ownership leaves the writer.' Perhaps the mother-daughter relationship that is the book's subject relates also to writers, critics and that *alma mater* the academy. Walwicz's celebrated baby-talk recalls the opening of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Impossible for colonising critics to ignore a direct mention of the unruly 'semiotic' text Julia Kristeva calls feminine – 'the amorphous text of Julia is writing me' (p. 46). But inversion means that daughters can become mothers: 'i don't know now everything is becoming my mother.'

You do not see it for a good while but there is narrative here, a flight towards and from separation, written in response to the mother's death and completed nine months after. The adult narrator, reliving memories of childhood and her mother, goes back to Europe – England, Poland, Paris – seeking the reality of Nazi and Catholic and Jew, diverted by a post-modern dazzle of stars from Vera Lynn and Josephine Baker to Blake, from Mickey Mouse and Dizzy Miss Lizzie to Madame de Pompadour, from St Teresa to Indiana Jones and Noddy. Other people's hair-raisingly ordinary texts slot into a modernist European gabfest reflected by a popular culture with Attention Deficit Disorder. In *Boat* Europe was lost:

i'm europe de luxe nougat bar i'm better than most i'm really special
rich and tasty black forest cake / they took my europe away they took my europe
away they took my europe away they took me they stole me they boat me (p.71)

Repetition pushes away the lack, just as ellipsis calls for completion from the other. 'Red roses' again raise the question of flow and mark, Red Riding Hood innocent or aggressive, birth memories, the lullaby linked with the 'far away trains they took her' during or after the war:

where are you she is dead will you send me a letter or a telegram will you tell me
where i now am send your address / it's all untrue to me it alab lies to me it's all
untrue then tell me it isn't so tell me that she comes back (p.2)

'will you tell me where i now am' displacement and inversion confuse mother and daughter, and the lullaby words that grew out of the first separations have to be gone over and over to fill the gap:

there was a king she said sang that there was a king there was a king once there was
a king now there was a king once there was a princess and a page there was a king
there was a king once there was a king (p.5)

Poetry has escaped into narrative, since narrative is the dominant twentieth-century mode, the story that conceals our horrors. Soothing pages follow, about the hills and the palaces and the happiness and the gold goblets and the red roses. But then a dog eats the king, a cat eats the page, a mouse the princess. It soon turns out that the king was *torte*, the page ginger, the princess marzipan, so it's all right. But the child is not consoled: 'it's all untrue nothing's real.' Lullaby becomes lie. So is death real? Is birth real? 'My head comes out in my blood.' These first, close, abject experiences of self and other blur the idea of *person* in a warring engagement – 'my teeth were cutting hers.' This image shocks like 'big bad wolf jumped into my mouth long ago.' Before long the lullaby mouse has

become 'the mouse that ate my mother.' Mouse eats, mouths eat, mouths sing, mouths have children. To break up these disturbing intimacies the narration shoves into the text children's fiction – 'In a flash Biggles was on his feet' – and enough pop songs to fill a juke-box. As well as marking place and time they are escape routes from deep questions about mother's death, her contact with the Nazis and the contradictions of an upbringing with one parent Catholic and the other Jewish. The need for separation is mixed up with the question from *Boat*, 'who is the culprit?' Fantasy speaks in: 'She is gone all gone now and not gone away.' The question is whether the relationship between reality and fantasy can be understood.

Gradually *Red Roses* is moving towards an absence of absence, a reduction in the elliptical structures so common to *Writing*: 'Such a highly pitched little,' 'Wanted some good moments,' 'This one time spot life.' That compaction registered confusion about who was speaking within the adult restraints of the sentence. Ellipsis is the prerogative of the child – no authoritarian sentence, no brat. But increasingly now the language is resting on a longer, organic pulse, again like Beckett's *Unnamable*, running freely despite the odd snag:

in a gothic little town where i am now the evil jews drink the blood of christian
children the evil drinking i am scared of being drunk i cross myself in every church
to be hid she asks the nuns to make her come the first saint in breslau the assimilate
i prepare my first communion she makes a dressmaker do flouncy from a german
book die kunst handbuch der kunstgechichte (p. 70)

the neighbour says i'm so sorry didn't do nothing no-one knew about her the ger-
mans have a picnic and invite me they're guilty about her but i won't tell her then
or talk about her why should i it's all very long time ago / she is buying a black
dress of velvet for her training as an opera star the singer what tall you are what
big teeth you have (p. 138)

This new long text being fiction, it is taken in subvocally, not projected on a stage: no need now to call on audiences across the mirror for completion. The self says what it wants: 'i want to see her all and all of me now.' Less partial in the Cubist sense, it incorporates, without assimilating, the voices of New World others:

it was just like my plane was jinxed ... my my that's too bad guess i better go get
somethin t'break thuh lock with don't fret i'll be right back gosh i'm sleepy say my
bag looks like somebody gone through it can we leave the lantern burning all night
mickey don't be silly goofy omigosh (p. 151)

Europe is now the actual as well as the remembered, the all, not just split-off fragments. It is increasingly a syntax accepting melancholy rather than biting it off into angry fragments. The language no longer needs medieval guards to act as capital letters and fullstops, interrupting the flow. The charm of the proliferating English red roses contrasts with the discovery of historic Jewish massacres near Lincoln Cathedral. There is

a crescendo of feeling and clarity, the language rolling along like the sea. Finally in Paris the writer goes towards the Eiffel Tower, like a child, passing under its skirts: then

– the famous eiffel tower my mother is standing in the wide sky and sunny i am moving away from her now i want to see her so i see her from a distance then from years away then that's the only way to see her now the eiffel tower all splendid now i am walking away then i am turning my back (p. 214)

After a hugely difficult book – though less difficult than the late Joyce or Gertrude Stein – this is a wonderful and moving conclusion. Is it a cheeky dig at Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum*, where the Eiffel Tower is a phallic radio transmitter at the centre of Europe's 'telluric forces?' Walwicz explains that the reference is to Breton's *Nadja*.¹³ It is a reconciling image of sexual and textual power. The language like Stein's becomes limpid, but also linear:

i can take her in at a glance i am walking away now the eiffel tower my mother grows small and smaller i am walking away now i see her from a train she gets smaller and smaller and she is gone (p.214)

French psychoanalyst Irigaray approves of Alice in Wonderland for having gone through the mirror rather than submitting to its contingency. The Eiffel Tower, Europe, mother (Melbourne Arts Centre spire?) – each is a mirror you can walk through, a stage you can walk under, part curved like Luce Irigaray's 'speculum', that woman-centered way of looking at women's experience.¹⁴ Its uprightiness, 'all splendid now,' bisects the splayed curve of its skirts and divides into the firm short lines of 'i am walking away' and 'my mother grows small.' We begin to see the tide turn towards coherence rather than cohesion. *Red Roses* moves towards reconciling 'boat/hat' and 'harbour:' the Eiffel Tower is harbour and sailor, ripple on fold, curve on the cut. Switching metaphors, we might say that Red Riding Hood is out of the woods.

When the train moves off, the tower – *i* – is just a place where Ania Walwicz has come from.