

# THE QUARRY

Leanne Wicks

## The Dainty Line

I want to see  
beyond my borders  
over the entrenched lies.  
I am the Australienne  
submitting to her husband  
in this land of sweeping pains.  
Two dead women every week  
at the hands of men  
stained with green and guilt.

My mother told me so  
after the horse had trampled.  
Where are the examples,  
frontline warnings  
from matriarchs who *knew*  
the battle that I would gallop into?

Granny's general memories  
refused to retrieve files  
but crossing the dainty line  
I asked about feminine care

*Oh, we didn't talk about anything  
down there! Girls were frightened,  
ignorant. Our mothers never said.  
We used a belt and cotton rags.*

Bleeding's what we've always done.  
As I grew, I never knew why  
she didn't talk to Grandpa.  
Maybe it was the war  
that tore them. He was as tall as a gum,  
RAAFed in Borneo.

After Granny's funeral I sorted her things.  
On the highest shelf  
at the back of the laminated wardrobe  
behind precise pink and elf-green  
hand-knitted jumpers it  
was hidden:  
A douche kit.  
Bottle of Lysol (used for bathroom tiles, floors  
and uterine walls)  
stood constricted  
by the laboratory-red hose  
wound within the wash bowl,  
pump primed and funnel fanged  
still ready to wash him away,  
fifty years after her final child.