**THE BIRDS**

Our pallid winter days are marked

Like commas on the sky’s blank page

By passing strung-out flocks

Of yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

Bold and clamorous they fly —

Towards the sun at first light,

Back through the western sky at dusk.

We wake to the sound of squeals,

Contact calls as they beat a path

To the forest rim on Mugga ridge.

Moving and murmuring,

They work through tree after tree,

Stripping the bark for grubs in red gums,

Gorging themselves on monkey nuts.

As the day draws in we hear them again,

Shrill and sweet as children’s play.

The sated birds go flapping home

To gullies behind our house.

Their journey’s arc defines our limits,

Warns when it’s time for the other world

Or when to lower blinds , build up the fire

And crowd together in the roost.

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Suzanne Edgar

from *The Painted Lady*, Indigo (2006; & 2007).