

## Geological

The earth buckles and folds its memory back.  
It's settling its facts down in stone,

concealing trapped death

from the light.

In time  
layers rise and crumble in the dry and the heat, unrecognisable

as ever having been a thing of ground or actual stone.  
Sediments have splashed against each other,

compounded and split the truths  
they might have somehow preserved.

River-deposits dribble out at the mouth of the ocean after rain,  
they become wet black facts only the ocean can know.

What gets trapped there are things we wouldn't remember,  
a small species of lizard,

the opal-blue-bodied dragonflies the soft weight of an inch of silt

refuses to let the air recover.

For two hours I have watched rail cuttings cut out of a world  
unimaginably old and forgetful dash by.  
I cannot say

whether here it had once gone molten, or there,  
flowing out over prior sediments,  
cancelling out the brittle stories trilobites or the first backboned fish

might have told.

I can recite words like *Devonian, Carboniferous*.  
They unpeel from my tongue  
like words I can't bring myself to forget.

I'm returning to where what's left of my family now live,  
though I'm finding new ways to avoid having to sift  
through the layers of lies and absentness  
they cover me with.

Without ever meaning to.

Greg McLaren