

*Jukurrpa* on bark

You weren't a painter then. Just a dancer in Alice  
moving to the Warumpi band, weaving & sliding  
across the floor, crossing & marking the boys  
around you, never settling, unsettling me.

I slipped through your mob, got talking when George  
was on a break. You told me you were spending time  
in the Todd with the long grass mob: 'Lots of fellers  
there on vacation, safer than Gubba town eh?'

I didn't know then about *Jukurrpa*, spirit journeys back  
and forth across country, circling and looping,  
coming home to go again.

The coroner followed custom. She didn't say your name  
aloud. Time has passed. I can ride in Land Cruisers now.  
But I still can't use your name.

Your canvases have taught me a little. Today, looking  
with half way eyes, I see a bark net in a desert wind  
-open weaved, strong, sometimes open,  
always moving.