

16 Years & Under Championship

Diamond Snake Peter Skrzynecki

Taken from your keeper's bag
you lie coiled along my arm,
tongue flicking at a kerosene lamp
and moths that night released.

He tells me you are harmless.
Nodding, I disbelieve.

The crack of a branch
and you turn at the moon – stabbing
the darkness I cannot touch.
My arm caressed by a stream of cold water
I wait for you to fall off.

To forget you I look
at the ground – piling shreds
of leaves on to a piece of glass.
The men have stopped dealing cards.
Night has camped itself around us.

With you staring away from me
I turn towards the hut,
watching, from the corner of my eyes
your skin:
 and a thousand tiny fires
burning in the prisms of your scales.

Gleaming like a scythe
you sweep and cut through shadows of grass.
Each time, face-on,
I see your eyes like stains of water
on the pages of a book
I must find and read.