

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black dress, is seated at a dark wooden upright piano. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dark, patterned wallpaper with a repeating floral or leaf motif. The piano has sheet music on the stand.

Maisie

*and*

The Black Cat  
Band

E. A. Gleeson



## ***Interactive Press Maisie and The Black Cat Band***

*E A Gleeson was born in the town of Coleraine but spent most of her childhood on a Soldier Settlement farm at Camperdown in Victoria's Western District. She has travelled extensively including two years working as an Australian Volunteer in the Pacific. She has received degrees from Monash, La Trobe and Australian Catholic Universities. Her professional life has encompassed fields as diverse as Education, Media, International Aid and the Funeral Industry.*

*Anne's first collection of poetry **In between the dancing** was published in 2008 and received the Interactive Press Award for 'Best New Manuscript'. Her poems have been published in Australia, Ireland and the USA, her essays in **The Age, The Australian, The Sydney Morning Herald and Island.***

*After a lifetime of moving, Anne has settled into living in the Daylesford region with her husband Steve. She divides her time between walking the trails of the Hepburn Shire, writing, community involvement, enjoying the company of those she loves, and working as a Funeral Director and Celebrant.*



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*for Josh, Siobhan & Ben*

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Transubstantiation

Transience

## Joshua

Before we thought of it for you, we had hardly used the word. We tried it in our own mouths, the roundness, the swoosh, the up and down of it.

Three strong syllables. We called it from ladder height as we turned the back room into your room.

We spoke it in the womb of our car. In the lifts and corridors of the hospital, we tossed it to each other, and, in the still morning of the sixth day of the twelfth month, we whispered it to you.

You outstripped this long name, abandoned two-thirds of it, settling for the onomatopoeia of your loud days, hours of bursting activity and talk, until the final collapse when you sank onto anything, the explosion of energy dissipating into the crumpled heap of a sleeping toddler.

The word became everyone's. Your mates kicked it round the schoolyard, put it on hold for cruder nick-names. Girls gossiped it.

Sometimes the whole word of your name is brought out for special occasions. It falls and rises, like a path of life. And then it was she trying out its shape, testing its rhythm. Now she speaks your name, whispers its softness, laughs its joy, states its strength. Calling you, she reminds us of who you are.

## **Found Recipe On the edge of this template of shiny leaves**

on wet black bitumen, a fragment of paper  
disturbs the storm. I pick it up, note its contents.

*Rocket, mushrooms, pine nuts, cucumber, lemon, fetta ¼ piece, cheery (sic) tomatoes, two candles.* I glance at the houses and wonder if somewhere a sad salad of guessed ingredients is being served. I pocket the fragment and later take it shopping. That evening the sky rages.

We sit by candlelight, our plates brim with rocket salad. We give thanks for the bounty, spare a thought for the household eating in the dark.

**In Praise of the Colorbond Fence I have noted *Colorbond* fences slicing urban neighbourhoods and wondered if the local planners thought *The Australian Ugliness* was a “how to” manual.**

When it was our turn to move into one of these suburbs, the City Council insisted we could not have a ti-tree fence not even a row of tidy pickets, and the fence was to be beige.

The fencers installed the posts, screwed on the flat steel walls, capped the posts. I became sixteen again, an angsty teenager hitching her dress high outside the bound of the front gate.

I planted found objects close to the fence, draped ceramics, encouraged the trespass of vines. A clutter of bikes and bins, the dark squat of compost carrel and worm farm lined its edge.

Now my yard is full of us. Borders of healthy natives fight out the drought. Rusty mesh blooms, a scramble of roses over its frame. A scatty vege-patch yields bumper crops of potatoes, paper dry lettuces, pegs and dog bones. We sit in the square of sun, slurping on home-grown peaches,

tossing scraps to the birds, scraps of humour to each other.

A circle of us squared in tight, a suburban amphitheatre separating the ticket holders from the passers-by, the easy recklessness of our days bordered in *Colorbond* beige.

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