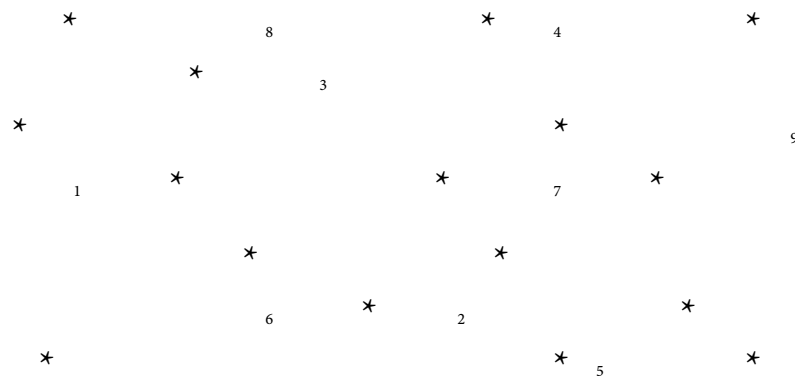


bila, a river cycle
Jazz Money

what became of the river
who rose up
and called them-self human
stepped upon the land
containing the memories of snow melt and well spring
smooth worn stones along their ribs
and with water curiosity sought to know more about the humans on the land
whose invasion of the waters choked the river



bila never sleeps for forwards for foreverness
for flow and gift and on and on ...
and yet had become stagnant with
cruel touch a non touch and toxic intervention
dams rose where new humans demand
and irrigation sucks dry
to nourish not the plants of this land but those with poisonous intent
yes the pesticides and all those carried in canola yellow plastics
in turn run this and that towards sweet water and so
bila is transformed to the one you see today
here la look la
to water not clear with flow and laughing bodies
small mouths and delicate fronds
but a sludge of gasping fish carp muck cow shit
don't drink from here no more no good
and when rain returns a moving sick comes across the land

—

but a river is always a river ey even when submerged
even dispelled even poisoned or damned
cos spirits walk this land and ancestors placed bila
just so with cause of course

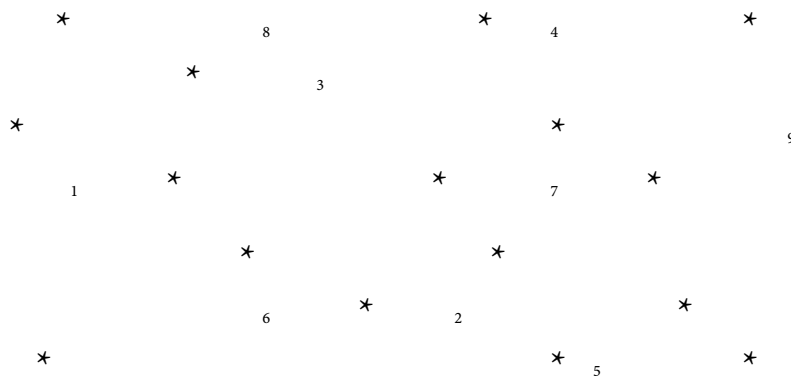
(ngarradan watched) (bilbi and budharu and dinggu watched)
(even bunyip waawii had not seen rivers walk upon two feet in this world)

and so

not dripping as the fish that leaps
but as a mist will rise from a dry river so the mist turns solid rain
so bila became a human
skin shimmering a cool flesh green
walks tumble glide over rocks
or else some misted enormity
fish swim under skin
dangur flash of scale
along veins wrist and throat
yabi out of sight under
a lover can see in still morning light tails fins scales
dawn moon reflected in muck around
dropped branches collecting decaying
damp cool flesh with the grey mud smell

(all folk love rivers despite their erstwhile intentions
following in their mazdas nikes adidas they follow where bila moves)

and bila moves now towards the sea
a cut stream known
by banks winding
slow river ways and fast river ways
until under streets submerged a wide swamp of suburban delta
and the city appears upon aquifer disturbed
water under concrete through pipe and channel and drain
redirected rerouted and dispelled
and yet bila continues



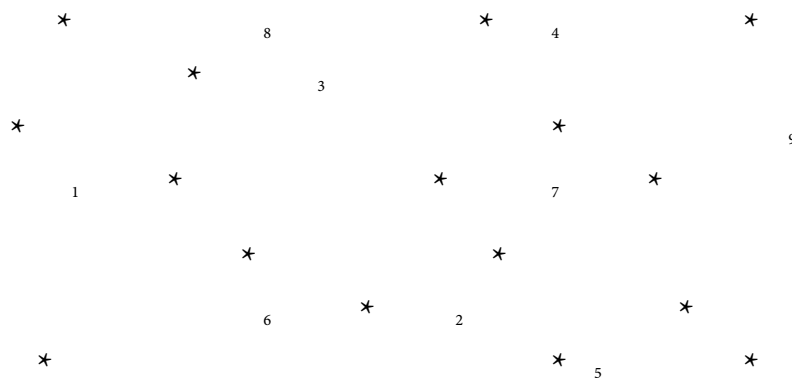
and so

*what becomes of the river who flows out to see what became of the people of the land
and what became of the river who rose up and
called them-self human*

a river is delight to behold all smooth and welcome with the flow of places beyond horizon
and so too bila was in the form of one
climbing out of the beds and cars
of men women and all
trying to find people soft
trying to remember them as when
they leapt joy and free into cool depths splash of hot day river sweet
saw the drops suspended in yellow light of blurred dream vision

—

but a river can learn it all and still
must flow on and on to new mist and like the delta
where all is fertility and possibility
bila seeks the mangrove to clear the silt cycle
to move towards the sea
to dive into a world known as kin but always one hard to hold
to flow out and out to be reimagined as rain
and rejoin the lands of all rivers
of all stars
welcomed again into bilabang



1. bila - river
2. ngarradan - bat
3. bilbi - bilby
4. giralang - the stars
5. dinggu - dingo
6. waawii - bunyip
7. dangur - catfish
8. yabi - yabby
9. bilabang - a pool of water cut off from the river / the galaxy that contains our solar system, the 'Milky Way'