



This is my country: I've lived it more years than I care to recall. Now here, on this suburban rim, listening to the crows call and call again across the scrub (the sun going down on a summer landscape); or then as a green stick novice living out on soldier settlers' dry cast-offs with frosty stars at night (the foxes coughing) and in the mornings crows in the lambing paddocks picking the eyes.

So many years, but still the black wings straddle the road that links that clean skin kid to this verandah. All those miles, road kill by night I tried to avoid, by day the sun grown less forgiving of those who tried to find the tracks the crows had not yet colonised. But crows will not be denied: those yellow eyes unblinking know the path you stumble down and they have patience. They wait for you indifferent. Would probably prefer a lamb but are content to flop from dream to dream and dodge your sleeping bullets as easily as lorries.

CROW COUNTRY

Ron Pretty

Ron Pretty's most recent book is *Where the heart is* (2009). He has edited the literary journals *SCARP* and *Blue Dog: Australian Poetry*. Until 2007 he ran the Poetry Australia Foundation and was director of Five Islands Press.

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