

## The Colour of Hope

High up in the Papuan tropics  
a rustling of feathers  
a tick ticking  
a whit of a call echoing again and again  
the male flashing a wide arc of ebony plumage  
as he quicksteps up the russet branch  
side stepping then bowing  
side stepping then bowing  
shocked with an electric blue smile of skirt  
insistent  
demanding that the female arrive  
there's no one to watch just yet but  
his chest is puffed out  
he's sure of himself

She comes and looks  
startled, she flies away  
unimpressed but unfulfilled

back to her den  
to the quiet of the forest floor  
where the main sound is  
the rhythmic drip drip from wet fronds

The sky is sharp  
piercing its way through great palms  
casting bright stripes onto the foliage below

where she waits  
dusting her feathers in the cool shade

Just then she thinks she hears  
a soft ticking  
in the thicket nearby  
an outline of dark wing  
a solid curved back  
striking headdress

she likes the sleek line of him  
no masquerading

and she keeps still  
he tilts his head and seems to pick her out  
his jet black feathers begin  
to tremble and spread  
then to shimmer and dance in the light  
the azure fan shows itself at last

for her it is  
the colour of hope