

A Canberra Summer Garden, January, 2020

It's really quiet in my backyard.

The few birds you still see are scrawny and emaciated.

Their lungs must be full of smoke.

They are hungry;

dehydrated;

gasping.

It's very hot. The air is sepia and there is a very fine ash falling.

The summer's deadly fires that have missed us so far

are now at our doorstep.

Everyone in Canberra is being asked to have a Bushfire Plan.

And a "go" bag with all of your life's essentials

in case you have to flee,

And your house is not there when you get back.

The only good news is that the smoke might still be here

when our politicians come back to Canberra.

That way they will be able to see it;

and smell it;

and wonder how it got this bad.

We were warned: hotter and drier; more fires, storms, and floods.

Did they mention famine and biblical locust plagues?

They maybe didn't mention the tragic loss of life and property;

towns running out of water;

rivers with dead fish;

fire grounds with dead animals;

the never-ending choking smoke;

the eerie quiet as our biodiversity fades away.

They are still warning us:

that this is only the start

if we don't really act on climate change.

I ask all our politicians to go outside into the smoke,

Into the drought and floods and the millions of dead and stinking fish.

Go out into Australia and look, and listen.

Then commit to really doing something.

Now.