

# QUADRANT online

[Home](#)
[Magazine](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Arts & Letters](#)
[Quadrant TV](#)
[Shop](#)
[Su](#)
[Current Edition](#)
[Recent Editions](#)
[Archives](#)
[FAQ](#)
[Guide for Authors](#)
**April 2012**

Volume LVI Number 4

## QUADRANT

April  
2012

Quadrant magazine is the leading general intellectual journal of ideas, literature, poetry and historical and political debate published in Australia.

You can subscribe to the print edition of *Quadrant* or *Quadrant Online*, or both versions. See our **subscription page** for more information.

Subscribe to email updates



### POETRY

## Dearest Val

*Marilyn Peck*

The river has risen to the tops of its banks.  
I can see the river clearly from my desk.  
The island in the middle of the river,  
usually almost covered with Bird's cattle,  
is showing patches of gathering water.  
The soft steady downpour is not letting up.

Some cattle are marooned on the highest part of the island. They know, in the worst of times, the safest level above rising water, and stand and wait, stand and wait, heads down. The saturated grass, boggy, soggy, is not necessarily disturbed. The cattle

have been here before, calmly ruminating and then, necessarily undisturbed. Last week, calves were leaping about, head butting. Nothing small is on the island now. The cows knew in time to remove dependent beasts from the danger zone

when rain started, in its serious manner. The weather bureau had been forecasting dire predictions all week. We waited and waited, and now it is here. The rain is as predicted. *Local flooding begins as rain sets in. A house in Jacob's Well has half*

*an inch of water running through. A mother and a four month old baby will come home to a wet house, her husband says. It pays to live out of flood in a la Nina year, in South East Queensland, in Australia, a land of flooding rains in monsoonal weather.*