

Dearest Val

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.

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