

## Outside the Concentric Circles of Work

Tim and I are going to gather and stack the wood sawn up from the colossal limbs down during the big summer storm months ago – they have dried out and are ready to enter their half-life in the red shed.

The art of making a wood stack is one thread to the afternoon's activities, but so are the birds and a jewel beetle rising into nothingness on a stick lifted from the ground. The earwig overwhelmed by ants is beyond our saving and thus

our intervention, and the cavernous interior of the red shed with its stripped-out stables and rolls of fencing wire and flat-stacked sheets of corrugated iron, and the air pump cobwebbed and silent but ready to draw water up from the very deep bores

we rarely touch in order to protect the aquifer. The cavernous interior of the red shed which has long been a mystery to Tim with its planetoid redback spider egg sacs, its smell of stale hay, its eternal twilight.

While Tim works small pieces of wood into the spaces between barrels of

eucalypt, I search growth rings  
for the break in genetics, aberrant  
patterns that will tell an alternative  
tale of life on the hillside – spirals

from the tree's beginning to its gross  
shedding, its hand forced in high winds,  
all jewel beetles and earwigs and ants  
that have climbed its outer skin,  
one layer away from the next season,  
one away from the old season, a helix

ride to life longer than the span  
written into their bodies, that perverse  
endgame sold as identity that's just  
'bad code'. And Tim full of the outdoors,  
frolicking as he works, singing the Dandy  
Warhols, building infinity, eternity, spirals.

John Kinsella