Baking Bread

by Jane Flett

We are waiting for the bread to rise the way a bushwalker may wait for the moon.

But our skies are black.

The yeast yowls a toast, raises a glass and a serenade. Beneath the dishcloth there is revelry:

whoopee!

and the champagne foam cascades like cherry blossom ensuared in the first gales of spring.

The bubbles snicker. The hands grope beneath the Jacuzzi foam, the roof is rising. We have not exchanged a word.

The skin of the dough quivers like your sullen lip and I ball a fist and wallop, knock the wind out, wallop again,

with a WHAP and a BAM and a DOOF.

I pound, eyes down, until my forehead beads sweat, my knuckles bruise, until the dough is limp and cowed. I don't stop until your hands are on my wrists.

I look up, and there is flour on your nose. You kiss me dustily.