

*Dear Pastoral*

You were cutting lemons when the child rushed in  
and banged against your arm.

We compared the red line  
spread across your knuckle to that of a coxcomb,

while the child sulked in the other room,  
an edge of the tablecloth in his mouth.

When we sat down, you passed out the dinner plates  
with your good hand.

We talked of the child's face,  
its never-ending whiteness.

Afterwards, I went with the child for a walk.  
You stood at the window and waved, hand still in its bandage.