PART ONE
DOWN AGAIN
Looking on the streets
for the hangers-on

never know
who’s lurking round these parts

seen me leave his house
round the back

pale and sweaty
what have I done?
Walk the twenty minutes home
from his to mine

to his to mine

these paths I remember
all too well

happy for the busted streetlights
tonight

done with the letters
to council

keep the lights out.
Didn’t mean to do it

now I’ve wasted
years of getting back
on track
now I’ll spend years
getting over it

tell myself
it was the only way

he made threats

on my life
on Indie

my kid sister
c caught up in
my mess again

not too different
to Mum after all.
Back to my territory
the Gabba lights
illuminating the sky

good old Park Rd railway
no one round these parts

not at night
no one so stupid

pull myself over the rusted wire
they forgot about this place

grass grows too high
enveloping the weeds

rotted sleepers
that would split
if you kicked hard enough.
Haven’t seen rain in months

grass looks like wheat
scratching at my legs
as I tramp through

gotta get out of here
before the 11 o’clock train

take it out
of my backpack

throw it into the overgrown scrub

wouldn’t look here
won’t come looking for me.
Fields of wheat
seen on family car trips
we hadn’t taken
since

I was too young
to know what I’d turn into

since
Indie was still
falling at my feet.
Best bit about Park Rd
walking through the side streets
where no one’s looking
out for you

on any other night
it would have me
looking over my shoulder
but tonight

I’m slumped into myself
like I’ve just been
kicked in the stomach.
Stumbled home from this train station
too many times

with a girl
but mostly

alone
wasted
forgetting.
I haven’t ever done
anything like this

will that hold up
to the suits?

and the yes please
no sir
pass the water thanks?

got a history
but who doesn’t?

self-defence

they’ll find holes in my story
but I’ll cry poor

didn’t mean to see the bastard
dead

just a warning
one he was never gonna
forget.
Been in trouble before
petty stuff

stolen
from petty people

got mixed up
with the kind of crowd
I’d take home to my mother

something pulled me out of it
slapped me hard

Indie

working two jobs now
stumbling among
dead weeds

took a long time
finding my way back
from what I used to be.
The nights aren’t
normally
cold
like this
wrap my arms
round my trembling body
might not be the cold
after all.
Guess us girls
got Mum’s luck

shit
that is

cops on the doorstep
our Saturday Disney
tell myself
Mum tried hard

I tell Indie anyway
kid’s too young
to know otherwise.
Usually find me
flailing
in my own shadow
	onight’s no different

got me caught up
two doors down

jumping at the sight
of the dark behind me.
Lights still on
what’s my excuse
worked back

someone has to pay the bills
don’t say that though
Indie’s heard it enough

‘Hey, Ana’
she’s watching Rage again
‘Where you been?’

‘Work, keep it down
don’t stay up late’
this kid’s too smart

head to the bedroom
dump the backpack
lock myself in

how am I gonna get out
this mess.
Indie rages
’til one

start to sweat again
thinking

she’ll come in
for her clothes
or to sleep

keep thinking

pull out the sofa Indie
don’t check on me
don’t get changed
just go to sleep

don’t want you to see me

lying in the dark
wet-eyed
heart-wrenched.
Listen to her routine
peels herself off the
cheap vinyl couch

turns off the TV
listen to the static crackle

flicks the switch
remembers what I told her
saving power is
saving money

another switch
awful sound of
the sofa bed

limbs stretched.
3 a.m. and I’m tired
already
of the feeling
that these walls
just got a whole lot smaller

gonna wrap
around us

any day
any time

take Indie away
back to the shit
back to Mum

couldn’t do it to her
done it to myself.
Run my fingers
down my legs

still brown from last summer
still tired
from all the running

trace the scratches
skin already raised and red

have to stop stumbling.