Drifters

Bruce Dawe (1960s)

One day soon he'll tell here it's time to start packing,
and the kids will yell "Truly?" and get wildly excited for no reason,
and the brown kelpie pup will start dashing about, tripping
everyone up,
and she'll go out to the vegetable-patch and pick all the green
tomatoes from the vines,
and notice how the oldest girl is close to tears because she was
happy here,
and how the youngest girl is beaming because she wasn't.
And the first thing she'll put on the trailer will be the bottling-set
she never unpacked from Grovedale,
and when the loaded ute bumps down the drive past the blackberry-
canes with their last shrivelled fruit,
she won't even ask why they're leaving this time, or where
they're heading for
– she'll only remember how, when they came here,
she held out her hands bright with berries,
the first of the season, and said:
"Make a wish, Tom, make a wish."