3. Lightning Ridge

With energy well restored, they set off before dawn,
flip-flapping their wings, to keep themselves warm;
"Where's our friend Dhinawan Dan?" said Kass, with concern,
"Don't worry" said Billie, "you have so much to learn!"

"What's that up ahead Kass, a strange looking bird?"
said Billie, uncertain, but by no means deterred;
"That's not a bird Billie, it's a sculpture it's art!"
a beetle car turned on its head for a start!"

A quick dip of their wings and an unplanned detour,
they hit the ground running, with a bit of a roar;
no word of a lie, yes immediately they knew,
that 'The Ridge' was a must, on their list of 'To Do!'

Then from nowhere at all, Kass was looking at Dan,
he'd appeared so sudenly, this wasn't the plan!
Kass eyed him off closely, Kass' brain went zing-ping,
as she suddenly realised, Dan didn't have wings!

She was clearly confused; she had not said a word,
never ever before had she seen such a bird...
"You have no wings, Dan! Don't you think it a shame?"
"Oh no, not at all Kass, we can't all be the same!"

"Yes, it's true I can't fly, and I can't walk in reverse,
but I'm kind and I'm clever, my talents diverse;
I am grateful, I'm lucky, for there's much I can do,
I can even run the pants off a fast kangaroo!"

Our Billie, too wise, to be in this conversation
was studying the sights with great concentration
"If you two pay attention, I can now inform you,
the spots we should visit and the things we should do!"

"There's swimming and diving, a wave pool and water park,
VERY VERY hot bore baths, brilliant stars after dark,
the Chamber of Black Hand, and underground mines,
home of famous black opal, not easy to find!"

"Oh, I must look at opal, before I leave here,
opal worn with my lycra, what a dazzling idea!"
"Kass, Kass do we have to?" came that high sing song voice,
"Just kidding," said Billie, "Up to you, it's your choice!"

Well Dan, rather sensibly, said "Why not take a vote?
Let's do something different, come back, compare notes."
"Agreed" said Billie, "We'll meet up at the school;
more kids to make friends with they're all really cool!"

Without fuss or bother, they went off on their own,
kept in touch with each-other with their smart iPhones;
then met back at the school, their planned destination;
and later they'd share their new found information!

Aunty Brenda and Rhonda welcomed them, with open arms,
introduced them to the kids, with that quirky Ridge charm;
there is no doubt at all, they were greatly impressed,
having never before seen a school Language Nest!

More singing more scootin', more playing with friends,
and goodbye, with a promise, to catch up again;
then Dhinawan Dan, from the corner of his eye,
saw on a pink daisy a stunning butterfly!

He smiled at her kindly; he could tell she was coy,
but because Dan was caring, she felt instant joy;
"Please tell me your name?" "I'm Pallah Pallah Paula"
"Then hop on my back, we are off to Goodooga!"

Our birds flew in unison, in our brilliant blue sky,
they waved at an eagle, Maliyan flying high;
Dan and Paula, on the ground, had a fantastic view,
of wild flowers and tall grasses, all sparkling with dew!

Kass and Billie then spotted a huge COLA and pool,
excited to learn that these were at the local school;
Billie said "We MUST stop here, without hesitation,
we MUST go to school here to get a good education!"

A campfire burned later, with red hot gidgee coals,
Kass and Billie both working, to keep out the cold;
a strong breeze blasted through, like a high powered fan,
thank goodness, the arrival of Paula and Dan!

They sang *You, me, and the wide open sky* and they chirped to the beat,
Paula made her wings dance, Dan tapped his big feet;
Billie then sang Goodooga Goodooga Goodoo...
Kass thinking he sounded like a didgeridoo!

Settling in for the night, with another day done,
they'd welcome next morning with that early rising sun;
this part of their adventure had been busy indeed,
and their fun would continue, they truly believed!

Cathie Colless