

## beautiful, unfinished

M.T.C. CRONIN was born in Merriwa in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales, Australia. Her work has won and been shortlisted for many major literary awards including the *Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature*, the *CJ Dennis Prize for Poetry*, the *Jessie Litchfield Award for Literature*, the *Age Poetry Book of the Year*, the *Judith Wright Calanthe Prize for Poetry*, the *Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry*, the *Wesley Michel Wright Prize for Poetry*, the *James Joyce Foundation's Suspended Sentence Award*, the *Stand International Poetry Competition*, the *Josephine Ulrick Celebration of Poetry Prize*, the *Somerset National Poetry Prize*, the *Artsrush Poetry Prize*, and the *Gwen Harwood Memorial Poetry Prize*. *beautiful, unfinished* ~ *PARABLE/SONG/CANTO/POEM* is her ninth book of poetry.

By the same author

Poetry

*Zoetrope – we see us moving  
the world beyond the fig*

*Everything Holy*

*Mischief-Birds*

*Talking to Neruda's Questions*

*Bestseller*

*My Lover's Back ~ 79 Love Poems*

*The Confetti Stone and other poems*

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PARABLE/SONG/CANTO/POEM

M.T.C. CRONIN



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*For K.O'C., S.M., M.J., & M.A.T.*

*(readers)*



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Parable  
On the Erotic Struggle  
with True Muteness  
(How We Speak)



I

There is not one thing I will say  
outside of parable  
For in the mind is another mind  
one as far back  
as you have not yet reached  
It chuckles like the one who  
invented laughter

II

I have been laced  
as if with ambrosia  
with my fear  
It's in my eyes and the awareness  
of how they look out  
through blindness  
(Those annoying spots)

III

Is it true that all stories  
are written in halves  
The words spoken to me by an old man  
when I am a young woman  
As many lines again  
as I wrote when I was living  
Story of ends begun

IV

Reading deep in the mouth that speaks  
no words  
Poet-gamble  
with the grunt and moan  
'Who's that with a sun  
bearing from the throat a moon  
too and a vantage point?'

V

Sit awhile with time wasted  
There's solitude in every journey  
Picking up what might be  
and taking it to another place  
Fire suspended  
Knife attracting history  
to its sharp blade

VI

Needing sharpness  
Destiny hides its desire to hone  
and after the fact  
As if facts!  
As if facts weren't already razored  
with edges  
As if time gone softly

VII

Needing to be pulled back  
    into the boat  
Choking on salt  
Resuscitated  
Life stretches across all kinds of voids  
    without breaking  
    and even broken keeps up a soft whisper . . .

VIII

'Do it to me one more time'  
    though I wasn't going to refer  
Going with a packed bag  
    can be more or less trouble  
Going out there  
    you usually bring something back  
What of the possibility of it all being here

IX

The breath is like a little tug  
    at death  
    lying over there like litter  
    no-one wants to pick up  
It goes in and out  
    and without leaving us  
    is like a suffocating lover

X

Dragonfly again!  
Somehow I believe they have castles  
    invisible for their life  
    of a single day  
The palace of twenty-four hours  
Day and night  
    a feast day at both ends!

XI

Clouds are inauspicious  
Severe faces are inauspicious  
One seat only in the sun  
    is inauspicious  
And so, being forgotten  
    unappreciated  
    and paid attention to as if a dying King

XII

There are things which give me messages  
These are those leaking through  
    to other things  
Looks given which are not  
    dependant for their reception  
    on my mood  
My moods

XIII

Purely in the green of trees  
    their lushness, destitution  
See them speak differently among themselves  
    to how they address buildings  
    the child leaning to the trunk  
The child says  
    ‘What’s happened, Mama?’

XIV

Coming with the sun and the moon  
    the double –  
    day and night  
Two thin people outside the hotel  
They have chosen no food  
    no ambrosia  
Have relinquished fear

XV

Evening of the house  
Where is love?  
Giving in they have given up  
To this beautiful dangerous fate  
To love what will happen  
    as much as what is happening  
They die always

XVI

The train tosses me into  
the brick wall of humanity  
Filthy, fast, convenient  
It takes the sky with it  
as if the sky could see the reason  
for this journey  
*The sky has a very hard heart*

XVII

Lamplit sorrow agony of the empty street  
where a boy runs in shouts  
to his own broken body  
‘Talk to me! Talk to me!’  
Comminuted bones reduced to sand  
Broken eyelids, skin  
soiled in smell of jasmine

XVIII

Petals have fallen again  
It’s that time of year  
The kids bring small plastic buckets  
and jars to collect them  
They have flower-flesh beneath  
the nails of their fingers  
Our hands have another scent