

**by Sarah Rice**

**Last week**

a grab-bag, lucky dip of trinkets

*Monday*

an almost date  
not quite there yet  
hair short and key chain  
a sensibility with no suitable

with an almost boy  
still high voiced  
dangling  
pronoun

*Tuesday*

an altercation  
with me the ham  
in the measured distance  
they wear between them  
It would be easier with string  
where they could circle each other

between my neighbours  
a matter of 2.5 metres lost  
the courts have deemed  
a portable no-man's land  
or a bull-ring  
keeping one hand on the rail

And *Wednesday* the marking  
administering *adalimumab*  
the contrast suddenly horrific  
The long lance of light  
alcohol swab cotton buds  
out of air from the steeple  
like ink awaiting writing  
fillet of gut squeezed by my left hand

of my little act of bravery  
by self-injection  
of shiny steel and stomach  
paraphernalia on the table  
the plunger and the pressing  
Each tiny drop gathering at the nib  
on my cold fat fish trembling  
into a ready fold –

*Ready*

and in that blank line waiting  
To push that thing in there

a whole world of doubt and reticence  
Not sure I could go through with it

And then there's the rest – *Thursday*  
now he's not in pale pink baby yellow

my father's begonias still blooming  
and sunset

*Friday* the planting out of bulbs  
but won't know for weeks to come  
I water the bare dirt and hope

*Sparaxis* I think  
have forgotten even where they are  
What have they begun to do down there?

*Saturday* – the empty paddock between

two picket posts

And *Sunday* learning the Requiem  
which really is too high for me  
from our choir master  
who tells us off in no uncertain terms  
has almost all but kicked the joy  
hobbled the piece at the knees  
to the night before now  
about two knees

Brahms  
and elicits harsh critique  
cum school mistress  
and calls us strangled cats  
out from under our feet  
which brings me back – forward  
to that feeling of a poem coming  
laughing at each other.

**Sarah Rice**

Sarah Rice is an art-theory lecturer, visual artist, and writer. Sarah's works have previously been recognised by co-winning the 2011 Gwen Harwood Poetry Prize, and by commendations in the 2012 CJ Dennis Literary Awards and the Michael Thwaites Poetry Award. Her limited-edition, art-book of poetry *Those Who Travel* (prints by Patsy Payne, Ampersand Duck 2010), is held in the NGA, and other publications include the *Global Poetry Anthology* 2013, *Award Winning Australian Writing* and *Best Australian Poetry* 2012, *Long Glances: A Snapshot of new Australian Poetry* 2013, *Island, Southerly*, and *Australian Poetry Journal*.