NOAH'S ARC: THE BUSHFIRE RENOVATION

Our place is south of Kinglake – well – south of where it used to be,
we've made a tranquil bushland from a farm of rabbit and blackberry.
The machinery shed's on the hilltop, it's roof gives a ripper view,
but on black Saturday we learned it can give you a bad one, too.
The smoke rose straight a thousand feet, like some grey-white mountainside,
the southerly change blew to eerie red, that glowed down the great divide.
My wife cooked dinner for fire-crews, glad we were all set to flee,
our fire plan was like a popgun, against the firestorm's artillery.

The phone rang hot all next day long from Strathewen to Arthurs Creek,
they'd fought and lived and cared for mates – could some stay here next week ?
At dusk we both looked around our place; two minds with one thought shared,
if we're staying on and sheltering friends, we'll need to be better prepared.
Now we love our greenie council that sends inspectors round,
we catch our strays before they do and send them to the pound.
But they're deadly keen to get you cutting trees in fire breaks,
they check the arial photos a lot more than the rates.

You have to get an arborist in before you touch a tree,
it takes six months to get them round – tied up with council, you see.
Then you apply back to the council, and they are busy too,
so the trees keep growing closer, and there's nothing you can do!
My brother in law arrived with the dawn, a chainsaw on his hip,
I showed him the trees, he grinned ear to ear, said "Beauty, let it rip!"
I said, "It's green wedge conservation zone with special overlay,"
when I turned around, he's chain sawed our shade, yelling "Can't hear what you say!"

"Ah stuff it" I said, "North wind's due in four days, it'll burn down every tree."
And he sang "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen eighty three".
Well the front garden went leaving just one rose looking sad, bereft and forlorn,
when I got back from clearing the firebreak he'd concreted over our lawn.
"I crushed all the trees down the driveway to get in the dozer and bin,
it meant I could bulldoze the garden beds and fill the wetlands in."
"It's a shame about the veggie patch, the orchard's no loss, it looked dead,
and I've blue-boarded all of the windows, it looks more like a fort than a shed!"

I listened to chainsaws on the breeze and breathed that sweet welding smell,
with the bushfire still burning just over the hill, the place was looking like hell.
There's corrugated iron across the front and wherever he could wire it,
I won't surprised if the Hells Angels rang and ask if they can hire it.
What was once our peaceful bush retreat, a haven of green and still,
looks like a government detention centre, on bald, bare hill.
But when the kids let our animals two by two into it's cavernous dark,
we had to smile, 'cos they'd realised, we've rebuilt Noah's Arc.