

### **3. Bullocky**

[Judith Wright, from *The Moving Image*, 1946)

Beside his heavy-shouldered team  
thirsty with drought and chilled with rain,  
he weathered all the striding years  
till they ran widdershins in his brain:

Till the long solitary tracks  
etched deeper with each lurching load  
were populous before his eyes,  
and fiends and angels used his road.

All the long straining journey grew  
a mad apocalyptic dream,  
and he old Moses, and the slaves  
his suffering and stubborn team.

Then in his evening camp beneath  
the half-light pillars of the trees  
he filled the steepled cone of night  
with shouted prayers and prophecies.

While past the campfire's crimson ring  
the star struck darkness cupped him round.  
and centuries of cattle-bells  
rang with their sweet uneasy sound.

Grass is across the wagon-tracks,  
and plough strikes bone beneath the grass,  
and vineyards cover all the slopes  
where the dead teams were used to pass.

O vine, grow close upon that bone  
and hold it with your rooted hand.  
The prophet Moses feeds the grape,  
and fruitful is the Promised Land.