

Voluntary Inundations

Martin Kovan

Volunteers inundate Syria, says the
newsfeed running along Indian-file,
soldierly and linear, an ant-exodus.
A monotheist telltale like history

writ by one-armed Cyclopean men,
gunsights aimed at the last townsfolk
running along Indian-file, etc., etc.
Or was that Gallipoli infiltrated with

loose volunteer bodyparts, the blood
goes back all the way, sons of
febrile empire, still there, the towlines
back and forth of which history? A

looping one strung with variations,
influxes and refluxes of intruders,
speculators and fellow-travellers hung
in the balance. But who, you say,

is inculcating whom and what kind
of voluntaries anyway? Oh the sacri-
ficial kind, who give a femur for a
fallow lamb, a fallacy, a sea of pale

paraded heads, the kind who offer
up a city to steal a century or two
away. Oh that kind you say, and
volunteer your face some other way.

Martin Kovan completed graduate studies in English at Sydney University and the University of California, Davis. His poetry, prose and nonfiction have been published in Australia in *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Overland*, *Antithesis*, *Tirra Lirra*, *Colloquy*, *Westerly*, *Peril*, *Group Magazine*, *Southerly*, *Mascara* and in a number of publications overseas.