

BRENDA SAUNDERS

Bennelong

Dressed in his British best, he sees the power
of a ruffled shirt, a regimental hat
Fine manners bring status as a go-between

Lost in two cultures he's accepted by none

Only his name survives, claims the headland
for the Gadigal clan, brings authenticity
to this sacred place, famous for celebration

Dancers chanting on Corroboree ground

Now his place bears a canopy, white as ships
floating in like birds through the heads
styled from native *gadjan*, clams bleached

buried in shell middens around the bay

Shaped by wind in full sail, this icon reshapes
his rocky headland. Old and new spirits sing
ring a harbour speckled with light

Mask the pull of stars hidden under blackness

Gadigal: Sydney clan

bora: circle cleared for celebration

Brenda Saunders is a Sydney writer of Wiradjuri and British descent. She has written three collections of poetry and her work has appeared in major anthologies and journals including *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Quadrant*, *Overland*, *Southerly*, and *Best Australian Poems 2013 & 2015* (black inc.). Brenda reviews for *Verity La*, *Mascara* and *Plumwood Mountain*.