

Bush summer

'Ah, c'mon Bobby, it'll be awesome!' Tommy looked up and smiled broadly at his older brother, revealing squishy pink gum where his two front teeth were missing. 'I'll get you an ice cream at Pat's after?' he almost sang in his effort to sound beguiling.

Bobby shook his head and his fringe flopped in to his eyes. He blew at it impatiently.

'Nah, I'm in a really good part of my book. Go ask Amy,' he suggested as he turned the page, leaning in against the smooth eucalyptus tree, bare of bark.

'Oh yeah, right!' Tommy blustered, his face reddening. 'All she cares about is her hair 'n stuff. She don't wanna go down the river now, neither. It's not fair!' Tommy swatted a fly away from his upper lip as he curled up on the long grass, leaning his head against Bobby's skinny leg. He was silent as he peered up at the clouds stretched thinly across the sky. 'Look up Bobby, they're feathers on gigantic angel's wings,' he murmured.

Nearby a dragonfly's wings rustled like old paper. Cicadas blared their electric song in the trees that clung to the river's edge, their old branches bent and draped in the water. The heat of the afternoon settled upon the boys heavily and after a while Tommy closed his eyes. 'Ah, maybe you're right,' he yawned, 'I don't feel like it now, neither.'

Bobby glanced down at his little brother. He removed his hat and gently covered the side of Tommy's face that was exposed to the sun. Later they would swing out on the old roped tyre attached to the largest gum. Tommy would shriek with joy as they leaped into the water, washing the heat off their bodies for another day. Meanwhile, the summer lay ahead like an endless country road, the faded bitumen shimmering hazily before disappearing on the horizon.

Bobby found his place on the page and bunkered down to read. His chest felt warm, and soon he too, succumbed to sleep.