Road To Murdering Beach - Majella Cullinane

I'll let you in on something –

I've never dreamt of being a bird,

see only the shape of myself plunging through water,

a fish flecking its tail, fins stroking waves

in the charcoal sky of dusk beneath the sea.

Nights I have dreamt this, and come up to breathe

in a room curtained in darkness. By a window

I have watched headlights stream down the road,

sunlight hide behind the old villa next to us,

heard the pledge of autumn in the sigh of another leaf

the wind sashay the green orange pines on the hill,

and in the skitter of grey-pink clouds polishing waves

I remember what you said to me once –

there are few who can feel the shadow

of the murdered behind them at twilight,

can hear the swing of hatchets, the thrust of spears

the last murmurs of the dead. There are others

who listen hard, like a child holding a conch shell

to their ear, but hear only the tide's exhalation,

the plaintive kāhu, the flap glide flap of wings.

Finding Billy Collins in the fiction shelves - Ruth Arnison

He was leaning

against Jackie Collins with

Tamara Cohen peeping over his shoulder.

I whipped him

off the shelf hissing,

you've taken Aimless Love too far.

There's no point

in going ballistic, said the assistant,

we've always had trouble with poetry.

Billy, I said,

shelving him next to Emily, *you've got to*

stop this sailing alone around the room.

I think he got my message.

Next week he was still there,

Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes.

Bridge - Carolyn McCurdie

I search down an alley for 10 Riversdale Lane,

the Glasgow address I'd sent my letters to as a child.

'Dear Auntie May and Granddad, thank you for the presents.

I'm sorry this letter is so late.'

So late. My first return in sixty-four years.

I was here, aged two, weeks before emigration

and never saw them again.

Now no one of family is here. They died years ago.

All I have is a memory, remnant, perhaps not

a memory at all. Being lifted to a window

to watch a train go by. In this, no noise or shape of train,

a vague sense of window, but significant that I was held up

by a person who was Granddad. No face, no voice, just arms.

I never trusted it as true. Memory so misunderstands

itself, claims fact when each re-visiting adds, subtracts,

borrows, gains layers, becomes story, becomes myth.

And I was two.

The lane is quiet, empty. I take a photo

of the door marked '10'. Some pegs on a clothes line.

Then I return to the street, walk round the corner to look

at the front of the building on the main road.

Above the traffic, is a railway bridge,

iron-clad, outside the windows.

Lumb Bank - Sarah Grout

All day, I have been forced to wrack

through words recalling

the death of my father.

At Lumb Bank,

we cauterized Sharon Olds and her race –

a race I have run too fast, too slow –

I sat and squirmed,

looked out the window,

as the long poem was read twice;

discussed other's pain, other's trauma

while mine, a wound that will not heal,

drained me of impression.

Later, the walk to Heptonstall

I stood and watched the red tulips

wave to no-one above Sylvia Plath's grave.

And felt the sun in the tin-white sky

a ball of burning kelvinite ice

too bright, too bright;

and thought there is breath

and another

"Notes from a refugee" - Ruth Hanover

Look at me...

Am I not black enough

in pain enough

in loss enough

of brother, country

am I not poor enough

un-housed enough

for you —

to *look* at me?

Cambodia (a deconstructed country) - Susan Howard

This path I cannot walk again.

Beneath my feet their bones

would slice my soul.

Here this tree weeps the blood of

children snatched and smashed.

Monuments are not enough.

Stillness settles in the valley

among the watchful trees.

This schoolyard hides the

unacknowledged screams of innocence.

Barbed wire kept them in.

Here this children's swing

presents a paradox for brave visitors.

Photos are not enough.

These gardens cannot contain

their loss, our tears.

This now un-layered country

houses the enemy still,

and waits for the justice

of forgiveness