

Something to Show for It

The best time to take a shower with the lights off is forever.
Especially in the very early morning, before the stars
have gone in, with the snow on the mountain
faintly visible in the darkness through the crack in the window
where the steam piles out. You don't have to leave the house
to see the world. Once my mum went into her bedroom
and took her own life. You never know what a person is going
to do next. It's enough that you have the light from
the extractor hood to wash up in, and the space between the sofa
and the coffee table, where your knees go. Even the sound
of your downstairs neighbour singing in the afternoon
can be enough. It rises through the floorboards in the bedroom
and pulls you from the edge of sleep, returns you to your marriage,
to the heat trapped under the duvet. The body is, strictly speaking,
the only thing we can experience. It's why I say *snow* to refer to
what is snowing in me. There is no mountain other than the one
that has been going on inside you the whole time.
It's enough that you are allowed to lie naked next to her
on the bed, in as much darkness as the room can hold,
listening to the sound singing makes when it's over.

Uniform Echo

Sometimes when a child cries in the street it is yours.
Sometimes the greenness of a tree goes well with it.

Now and then it is raining on the mountains and then it stops,
and what's left but a hole where liking it was?

Think how far this wind has come to mean nothing to us.
Some days I wake up and I can't find my son's body.

There are cardboard boxes I have never opened
that belong to your brother, a man who used to live with us,
but mainly there aren't. Mainly a box is just a hole with a lid
and all I can feel is your heartbeat through the sofa.

First Winter in Iceland

Some mornings we're woken by the sound
of our neighbour sneezing. I raise the blinds
and drink the night-dulled water. Half a pizza
is sleeping in an open box in the carpark,
topped with shimmering slices of rain.

The name sprayed on the wall of the bakery
is my stepdad's, but it seems so unlike him
to assemble his ashes back into a body
and be ready to start over. A map in the window
explains they are moving to a red circle
containing a bakery from the future.

The rim of this glass tastes of both our mouths.
In the shower I sing guitar solos, and sometimes
you come in to brush your teeth, and I feel
love. A woman is brushing her teeth and
is my wife, I think. Because sometimes it is hard
to say out loud the thing you absolutely feel.
Then two ambulances pass each other
heading opposite ways, and the morning is lost.

Under Cover of Light

Forever is not a word I would use to describe
the colour of saucepans hanging from picture hooks
in the kitchen. You are phoning America on the patio
and Momo is asleep in the shadow it makes.
Every time you stand to lift your chair back into the sun
she wakes and lifts her morning back into your shadow.
Nothing stays what it is for very long. Time passes
inside the cat as in everything else. When you run your hand
along her spine, lots of tiny cat hairs float free
and sparkle in the light. Soon we will no longer
be a part of this. The summer will come to an end
because it's all a summer can do. We've tried to give birth
to the parents in us, but it's hard. We keep on being
left over. In love, without a doubt, but in so much else
besides. We hurt in places no one can reach us,
under ceiling lights that make the daytime feel darker.
Year after year, searching for somewhere our poorness
hurts less. Just hoping those old dustpans,
our hearts, are as big as we claimed.