

## **Cut from water**

I hold this back from you  
And speak instead in images  
Of images  
A fantasy carved with fading marks  
On shifting grounds  
A picture in your mind  
Maybe a woman  
Maybe a man  
Face obscured, forever changing  
Forever steeped in shadow  
Blurred form  
One step beyond you  
One step  
Within the firmament  
A word spoken and –  
Waters cleaved from waters  
And made truth,  
Truth, not the stuff of things  
The rough edges of stone  
Or flesh slipped into night  
But raiment cut to cover you  
From their wake  
The slipstream hush of fantasy  
Castles built in sand  
And yet when, finally

You meet yourself  
Ghost, unreal thing of stories  
A twoness held apart by glass  
It will not be there  
Not even a shadow stained upon your skin  
But you will anyway feel it  
And unreal, anyway,  
It will still be there.

All the things I cannot,  
Will not tell  
The despair  
That slowly turns to love  
A process killing me  
Cell by dead cell  
Sleepless night by sleepless night  
A death held off  
The woman knelt  
Forehead pressed against clenched fists  
Resisting the urge to push  
Responsibility met  
In the outstretched hands between God and Adam  
A love in knowledge  
Of corruption  
And so he grows  
Into this  
A thin line

Stretched between a mute show of kicks  
And the rust of language  
The ruin of promises  
Every sound left my mouth  
Blown like cherry blossoms  
Like hard, clear glass  
That subtly distorts  
That holds back the flood  
Of the real

All those things I wouldn't say  
All that melts from air  
Into solid form  
The djinni I follow  
From desert sands to blind underground tunnels  
The laughter that denies  
A reality of dreams  
Gone bad  
Structured investment vehicles  
Numbers ordered into columns  
Columns ordered into workers  
And consumers  
The hypodermic Orient Pearl  
Piercing the sky with drugged,  
Reified love, a better future  
Clients lured by champagne  
To the fatted calf of Monaco

Red symbols spread across the screen  
Call us down  
As the words of a girl  
Plastered twenty stories high  
Over a Shanghai block  
Whisper out in waves  
Letters left her lips and form  
Desire  
Hips thrown back  
Surrendering rivers to mudded slake  
Farmland to dustbowls of Gobi sand  
Gateway to Siamese worlds  
Caught within each other  
The dream sucking life from the skin of the earth  
In order to spread wings, left  
Just beyond reaching

Any spell cast  
Is a djinni's spell  
And uncovers  
Only the djinni  
And then all the things  
I will say  
Are only the djinni's things  
And yet  
The immaterial bleeding into photographs  
Is not only evil

Memories

The words of a woman

Perched by a crumbling shore

The black tides of the Jamuna braid

Swallowing islands

Only to vomit back land

In some new shape

The right for the dispossessed to squat

Until dispossessed again

A tin sheet, a suitcase, jewellery not yet pawned

For food

Hope held close

The solitary candle

By which she brushes her hair

And makes her evening prayer

Every day the death of her husband

Pushes her closer to starvation

And still something escapes this cage

The constellations choking the earth

The filth of their birth-mist

Their hands forbidding every little joy

Unless it is their own

Are constellations nonetheless

The reek of traffic

On Whitehorse Road

Has a beauty and tragedy

The data packets of conversations

The lights in empty offices  
Tired eyes and bad diets  
Jealousy and longing, the dirty vegetables  
Mouldering, set back in rows  
The hurt eyes and bedraggled beards  
All the people who will never love you  
The footsteps across a city pavement  
A dark flag of hair  
Impossibly corporeal  
Stray eyelashes, cracks in lips  
Flawed fingernails,  
Stumble against the curb  
I could reach out and touch  
Almost physical, almost there  
The grip of the unreal  
On the real breaks down  
And lets the image through, again  
The constellations only streetlights  
In Thornton Heath, are stars  
And burn inside me  
What I have said is unsaid  
I hold this back from you  
I hold this back

Jethro Perkins  
South Norwood  
16/09/08