

Farah Reza

Ghost Trail

I

Springtime, sun on rain,
London shines like metal in a fire.
From the top deck of the number four
a row of shops glow acid green;
sun burns the back of my eyes,
I stare into the palms of my hands
and long for an occurrence
that would make their flesh melt
into lightness.

II

He is cycling ahead of me
on the Viking coast trail – I keep calling it
the 'Viking ghost trail'. We stop at the edge of a cliff,
dangle our feet, bikes sleeping in the long grass.
We are drunk on ozone; it fills our heads
with talk, then silence, then talk again.
He points to dots on the beach:
oystercatchers and sandpipers
making tracks too small for us to see.

III

I tell myself I am in my comfort zone
waiting for a bus on Blackstock Road.
The pavement is narrow, men lean
on café windows, flick cigarette ash,
speak Arabic in a low murmuring tone.
The smell of coffee wafts out of a door.
I check my watch, count the days to half-term,
when I can lay my head on sand,
let it fill with gravity and sink.

IV

Staccato rhythm of a dripping tap,
the clock ticks.
Birds sing in a tree outside
as I survey the damage: home just four days
and the kitchen table is mottled with the outlines
of new countries formed from our tea stains.
I run soap across the surface, sponge it clean,
then flick on the television. It shudders
into life from standby.