

## Poems

*Matthew Griffiths  
Durham University*

### life-cycle

wind scoops two red leaves  
together its pulse twitches  
proud veins one lost heart

blue sunlight on snow  
remains for the longest heart  
beat the ice-plunged breath

i haven't the heart  
to breed lilacs wind is too  
quick to change its mind

pour me lemonade  
and drown the midday sun then  
my heart gets lighter

## Spells of Weather

1.

Look at us all –  
Little Odysseuses!  
Our fingers lashed to  
The masts of umbrellas  
That seethe down the street  
Like a river of canvas!

And all the while the  
Weather is singing, it  
Sings to us all with its  
Chilling temptations,  
Whispering that we  
Shall drown, drown.

2.

The aeroplanes left  
In the debt of night,  
Climbed from their beds  
As they jilted the weather  
To cruise with the cloud-crawling  
Moon on its river.

They scrawl their white lines  
On the sky.

Now the surface of morning  
Steams like a mirror,  
Hides the smudged  
Message they make.  
The bristling world  
Heaves on the dim light,

Squints at its bowled face  
And shaves.

## **The Bug Clock**

A soft metal shuffle, tinned  
at the back of the room  
was the alarm under sleep.  
I crept from the sofa,  
soles arcing like caterpillars  
on bristles of carpet, caught  
in its circuit of sound.

Inside the tin, the fat larva crawled against  
time like the back of a clock, hitching  
the skirts of its body into the curve.  
The thick, dry leaf it pushed  
fanned seconds forwards and, spent,  
they wheezed between its chewed gaps.  
It polished 360  
degrees of watched orbit, legs geared  
to their own reflection.

Sphinx or silkworm, I didn't know which,  
it kept on puzzling the tin's bulged  
edge, syncopation beyond the count of  
my fingers, playing the rim  
of a skinned drum letting time in.

## **I pine for airports**

We come terminally to corridors that smirk  
Fluorescence, supplemented by the sun,  
To seek concourses where panes slide to sigh  
Us together in stretched longing for the sky.

A canal of floor bears boots' boats from one  
Concession to the next, where noise contrives  
A peace – a tannoy that hums in fear  
At its above, the corrugated atmosphere.

The singular lingering of unseasoned pine  
Trails us as though undutifully slipped  
Into plangent pockets out of observation,  
Inchoate, fragrant with our destination.

Chairs stand like chopped plantation in the fall  
Between being and going, and, my back to theirs,  
I double up against my baggage, where the hint  
Of a needling aroma is again your scent.

These departing hubs, car parks and transit systems  
Are lost to cities' ids as downs, fells, marches, moorlands.  
So business and economy shuck off the ground,  
Air transfers plane weight from hand to hand.

## **Untide**

The sea's keen to see us, so keen it would gush  
All the way from the coast to be here.  
Slick gulls salt the air,  
Beaks bite marine guyropes, to haul glaucous canvas  
Against the horizon. But tangling the tags  
That ring the birds' air-thrashing legs,  
Lines stall them and they wheel, wailing.

What can the sea do? It becomes a huge puppy  
That can only champ at the sky it's so weighty,  
So wet to befriend us it's drooling  
Its way up the beach  
And it strains at the leash  
To worry the shingle, the cliff-edge, the grass.  
It will slather us all in its love as it grows.