

POETRY SELECTED BY SUSAN WICKS

That Day

The day you met me at the station
and drove us straight to the Martello Tower
– the day my SIM card erased every photo

I stole of you carrying our chip papers
out to the gulls on the shingle beach.

It was that day. You looked as you always have –
intrepid, ahead on the ladder, stalwart and unmoved.
We admired ancient Hoovers in the museum

that propelled you back to a dark
house that exists for me in photographs,

with all of you grey in the square, white
-edged frames, the birthday cake candle flames
as still and round as eggshells.

That day. You know. We overtook a cycling club
moving like a chain of lights
across the Downs, and by the Golden Galleon

you tried again to drum the landscape into me
until I could say where the oxbows lead – into the lull

of the Birling Gap, past the Seven Sisters
and out to sea. The very cliffs were a page

you might smooth against the grass for us
to read, my finger following yours; a true chronicle
of what and where. The story of your life rests

on the shoulder of Thirle Beacon; in the long
unspooling of Bury Road, that time your Dad

steered a rented car in reverse all along its decline.
In the root-by-root accretion of Pevensey Levels.

I have no photos now to prove it, or remind you.
but I assure you we did stand at the edge of the sea,
watching the waves come in, and recede.

Josie Turner