

## POETRY SELECTED BY MAGGIE SAWKINS

### Small Talk

We leave Euston in the rain, just  
another train journey and a long haul  
to Glasgow. The usual thing, I have  
a book to read while some stranger  
will insist on talking, though this one  
has a face of such pure and frosty skin  
under her bonfire of wild hair.

Wha's tha' ye're reading, Hen?  
I'm a great reader too,  
in between gigs an' that ...

After Crewe, other details slip in –  
how they found her mother's head  
and limbs scattered here and there  
among the snow drifts by a frozen burn  
somewhere near Dalwhinnie  
and how the weans still shout  
where's your Mam's legs noo, then?

and that her Da, saying nothing,  
but still angry as hot hell, is banged-up  
for ten years or more, back there  
in Barlinnie, in the old Bar-L.

**Angela Kirby**