

Handover

There is a profound change taking place.
The sun, pink from the exercise of the day
is waning, exhausted, ready to dip into the horizon.
Just me and thirty-odd sea birds perched
on matchlegs stare out at the bleeding sky.
Behind us the moon, a perfect tissue circle
is beginning to rise. It is the handover
between separated parents. The child –
hula-hooping – doesn't notice her pink suitcase
moved between cars, or the quiet words
as they watch her hips rhythmically beating,
keeping the spin in balance.
They exchange practicalities, simple messages.
The base of the sun fizzes orange into the sea.
Birds stand till the final moment
in this tiniest of ceremonies.
And the handover is complete, the grass
will lose its redness, the sea will start to shuffle
as the moon, whitening in the purple sky
climbs up through the gears.

Emily Hinshelwood

Leaving Los Angeles

Maybe it was the red sky like a dragon's spine
that dawn when the earthquake rushed us out
to stand naked in a circle of neighbours
as all at once the street lights popped.

Maybe it was that other hush
a quill of smoke across our horizon
a woman walking like a broken alarm
warning me to go back inside to the television.

Maybe it was the way I hid
like an empty basket on Fuji's car floor
as she drove us west through the riots
away from where our sweet shop burned.

Maybe I had already decided
on that lover's vacation, hiking your country
its settled history, seeing only the charm
in hedges and the Brecon Beacons.

Certainly it was not knowing
how one winter the BBC would report
as from a great distance, my highways falling
between news and parliamentary questions.

Although I said I left for love,
it was because I did not understand disaster.

Catherine Temma Davidson