

Letter for a Postbox Filled With Rain

By Isla Anderson

February rained on us all. Splintered the sky.
In every driveway, trees collapsed, and knelt
as if to pray. They were crippled too.

Three feet of water in a stranger's living room.
Sandbags in the road. Red-cross men

with blankets, children, metal mugs of soup,
and fathers, clutching photo-books
as if to stop the rot:

the smudging of the polaroids;
the mildew at their nails –

didn't manage, quite.
They scratched their bodies raw.

Winter was a plague inside my mouth.
Sorry leak. Clothes wound.
I couldn't dry the damp

although I tried –
I churned in the sky like a bellyache;
writhed; I held myself together,

or didn't manage,
February rained on us all.
It washed my clean away.

Outside, I miss you

Like the coat I do not wear:

Fold my arms around myself;

pretend that they are yours.

To the Poems Written in the Dead of Night

By Helen Ridout

To the poems written in the dead of night.
Underneath the blanket and underneath the stars,
These poems never truly make sense, and they
Twist and turn with a strange certainty of a
Tired mind and they burrow through the mattress
And under the bed and lives there, words that form
Half-heartedly on the edge of a consciousness,
These poems are special, these verses spelled in
To the quiet humming of the night and they make
You believe that some things are never quite as they
Seem, and other things are all to like real life.

These poems that are written into the illicit
Darkness of a bedroom, a pen in hand scratching
Quietly on a paper, any paper with glancing over
Shoulder like someone is going to burst in, often
Tell something of that person, often again, what they
Don't quite want the reader to see, but who's to know?
The writer could be anyone, darkness covers all,
But the words leap like beams of light illuminating
And brightening the blackness of a sleepy bedroom.

These poems which are often written under the cover
Of the waxing moon and dancing stars never end,
And the mind sings the body to sleep with the
Magical words, that are created on the borders of
Consciousness, and the stories that we are told
When we are too young to properly understand them,
But we fall asleep with a smile and think we,
Truly, understand these poems that are written
In the dead on night.

Tube

By Katharina Dixon-Ward

Edgware at Rush Hour-
We gather, limbs lardened
In heaves of morning breath.
Ladies and Gentlemen
planned engineering words are taking
place on the following lines today...

Outside the sky splits –
roily as surf and coiling
in vast ill-omened skeins.
We see nothing of this.
...on the District Line no service
Between East Ham and ...
Rain slicks underfoot.
Puddles gum and merge.
Fag-ends disintegrate.
...Upminster, on the Victoria Line
between Walthamstow Central ...

This is where they meet:
The heat of urban
deadlines; full day shifts
and payments; fines
and protestations; tunnel walls
and Stockwell; pension
schemes and pickets;
metal slash on sliders;
guillotine and elbows;
stubble, sweat and unrest;
practicalities.
A wasp in a suction pipe

I hear it buzzing.

Then – out of the greyscale
two pale unblinking orbs
that widen, whiten
as if to clear a way