

137Y

More than crumbs

I'm not religious, but there's something in that story,
the one where five well-risen loaves could fill
five thousand stomachs
and two fishes in their basket could swell into several shoals.
The contented crowd chattered, resting cracked soles,
hands ceaselessly conveying bread to mouths

and after the banquet, with more than crumbs left over,
they hauled twelve basketfuls of broken pieces back
so none would go to waste.
And some say it was a miracle of another sort, man-made,
the people breaking into their provisions to share them, split them
with strangers who had nothing, so everyone had enough.

And there's something in this, when the charity lady
bangs flat-palmed on the locked doors of the local Metro at 10.30pm
to wake the workers and several hi-vis Lowry figures
wheel out crates of baguettes, potatoes, carrots,
and she piles them high into the van,
slams the doors, flicks on the headlights,

gently toasting the road with a golden glow.
And when the fancy chefs drop in
to turn some ragged chicken into a five-star, slow-cooked sensation
served with capers and smashed roots –
and the soup kitchens, small start-ups, heat vat after vat
of bubbling brews

and folk mark the frosty pavements with their feet,
pounding the back-alleys to give out parcels.
And in my dreams I have a place –
a room, a table ready-laid, a warmed oven, an open door.
Come in, drink, eat, pull up a seat.
Of course there is room for one more.