

Another summer of brine flowers

Lighthouses stopped and snapped like cigarettes,
knocking crooked veins through the ice below,
for a frost had eaten England. Everything in England too.
Earth stayed unaware, the sun's glow kissing the features
of its good side, tilting with the stars in the tar of space.
But people, became the apex of boring, like dusty furniture
on landscaped land – hollow and flat and plain.
A dusting of carbuncled faces, veiled with silent
utterances. Random expressions. Subtitles pending.

Bodies of water illuminated us. A lost duck from last year's
race, lay stupidly yellow next to a supermarket receipt,
in a village, in a trolley, in a beck. The receipt was pulp,
the duck drowned, dead. Yet there's something artistic about that,
isn't there? Like an exhibition you don't really understand.
Just like the washing lines of wooden bras, too cold to think
about putting on. Or dead mole bunting, each one a bruise
with human hands held in prayer.

In the epidemic of chill, children went past redeemable
red-cheek-cold and straight to pale bleakness. One examined
a tadpole, stuck between speck and frog. Another tried
their luck as a supine starfish, waiting for their mother
to excavate them from a plastic paddling pool.
But their mother preserved the smile of a static crackle.
And under the faces, the stationary birds, the boring
white sky, their hearts bled in panic.
Nobody was ready for the outside to come in.