

The Quarries

The day we stoned dogs to their second burial
under the ægis of rock we did not know
that a mother ran through the fields
and screeched against her son's drowning.
While we stood in water with sticklebacks
she tore her clothes on barbed-wire fences.
Later we saw the shreds hang useless as speech.

That quarry still murmurs with the sound
of those who ran through the empty fields
and I know now what they could not bear to see—
a face floating under an amber nimbus
beyond the reach of all out-stretched hands—
in seepage water that lies dark and relentless
where nothing grows among granite chippings.

Though no-one asked how those tiny fish got there
we threw them back or left them in pots sunk
to surface level and they found their own way out.
Then we skimmed our stones into the middle.
Only now can words still the ripples.