

# TO IMAGINE AN ALPHABET



*Sinéad Morrissey*

Too far back to imagine  
It was all dissolved  
Under soft black strokes  
Of a Chinese brush  
Diminishing the fatness  
Of original things

Animal legs and human legs were emptied of flesh and blood

Patterns from flattened  
Ants or a lake drained the facts  
That are trees in winter  
The spokes of the world went down  
In a language that  
Went everywhere, stayed put

Put out what you want a woman and man to be, the picture will hold  
that too

There are stories in skeletons  
And after the three fluid  
Lines that are Mountain, the four  
That are Fire, Ice as a stroke  
On the left side of Water—  
Problem is Tree in a Box

I hear moaning and see constriction in a picture the colour is cinnamon  
the taste is chalk

A mind is inside the lines  
All of it and sooner or later  
Sex is everywhere, money  
Rice-fields, wives are mostly  
Under the roof, to Like  
Is a woman with Child

I get lost in a landscape of noisy ideas that cross and flare in fireworks of strokes

Like a child who paints a smile  
Over signatures, makes Yin  
And Yang (two kissing fish)  
A rising sun in a field  
Of wheat, I draw windows leaking  
On the kanji for Rain

I make my moon round my forest has branches my people are walking  
with arms and a head

And then murder comes, a second  
Killing, so softly I'm deaf  
At the sound of entrance.  
My pictures defy the eyes.  
I see Lamentation as five falling stars,  
Grief abroad and walking,

And a terrible stag, flames shooting from his heart, as he prepares to  
walk and preach.