

S A R A H      W A R D L E

*Upper Palæolithic*

It might be thirty thousand years ago,  
with horses and bison running the plains,  
and you in skins with a bow and arrow,  
holding me close against the cold night wind,

above us a sky, pitch black as a cave,  
stars at intervals like blazing torches,  
and our modern selves, descendants we made,  
like two rivers, traced back to their sources,

instead of the twenty-first century  
with late-night traffic and the cafés closed,  
shop lights masking the stars, as you kiss me  
on buried earth in Tottenham Court Road.

## *Cross-Country*

Waiting for you under the clock at Euston,  
a bag's leather straps in my hands have become  
a horse's reins. I canter back to childhood.  
The crowd of commuters are trees in a wood.  
I'm jumping logs, ducking overhead branches,  
as a voice on the loudspeaker announces,  
"The 18.58 train to Manchester  
is now at Platform 5", and the concourse clears  
to an open cornfield, where I kick you on,  
lean in, sense your keenness, feel my thighs tighten  
round you in the saddle, and inhale your sweat,  
as you say my name, touch the back of my neck,  
then pull me away, till I can't tell for certain  
which one is the rider and which the ridden.