## **Dolores**

Waiting – bar drifting at midnight First time Lewis calls me 'friend' Sticky tables and tequila salt (House? Sharp; warm; cheap) Tipsy seat – damp coaster wedge and news on the TV.

Sounds of my childhood fade in a London hotel room.

#### **On His Shoulder**

I breathe, cradled in his tendon-stretch between head and neck (distantly dreaming of lying upright against clangs of lockers; the 10:52am emptiness of school corridors), drifting in that hiccup of drum-skin flesh where tension rests with softness.

#### **Nursery**

Honeyed sobs, saliva pops, deep dream snuffling

as he sleeps, snuggled to a pink, wet thumb.

High-rises dazzling, like static television

through windows, over skin (meek as milk, bright as bone).

Held, cradled, lifted by song, but when he's loved, he cries.

He cries.

### wedding

i am a daffodil: bright and yellow for photographs but at the stigma – where my petals kiss – i whisper with black beetles.

so i pull my clothes to shapelessness, let them hang: my dress fluted like a tulip and my shoulder skin muffled under a hand-me-down brown cardigan. so i catch my shirazed breath on my teeth; a film of wine and why and who am i -

so i diffuse my musings in the bride's perfume, try to focus on the sweetness of her first dance. the groom treasures the grooves of her naked spine the dips and undulations of time, spies in her eyes the endless seas of their lives.

so i stifle this pain, this shame, on their day remembering last night when i was martyred: the Best Man's cigarette lips licked, groped away my stars and made music feel like bee stings when he fucked me in a scream.

# **Mother**

Bone-glass, whiskyed fingertips treasure the mauve of your lips, and rouge lies on your lifted face (as though you have breath, blood, and organs to match the organ that howls – once for carols, and now undone into hymns and staggered words – each verse a curse on our houses).

You'd kneel beside me when dreams tip-toed into my mind, hand-holding, lamplight glowing through curtains in your amber eyes, until I slept. And now as you rest I kneel, begging for another lifetime – an eternity for you.