

Somewhere Far

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*I was yea high and muddy
Lookin' for what was lookin' for me
– Mac Miller*

Parks

For Caitlin

For the hour it takes to write this poem
I'll believe the pigeon in Brookes library
is my father's mind, back for a weekend,
delivered to my sister and me
in the shape of his face, his beanie hat,
the quick glint of his silver earring.

My father's mind hides in plain sight,
waving from a picnic bench in a busy park,
his perfectly timed smile a trick of skin –
another afternoon of swings and slides.
I believe the pigeon is my father's mind
because no one else has spotted it

perched up there on the light fitting, cooing.
If I have it right, if I know our father,
the pigeon will be gone by morning,
ushered out by some cleaner. And then
for the rest of the week the bird is nowhere
and everywhere we look.

Somewhere Far

Walking back from nursery
down Cornmarket to the shop on Ship Street,
You wait out here now and then a pen,
one of those little blue ones,
draw me something nice,
betting slips, twenty of them.

And when I'd finished the first batch
out you came with more,
Very nice and *I like that one,*
maybe a Refresher or two.
Men passing on the step
smiled or nodded or shuffled

but mostly they said nothing
because I was as much a part of that place
as any of the footballers on the walls,
or the fruit machines, or the
commentators, or the screens
where you would stand

when you thought I couldn't see,
Don't come in, you mustn't come in,
tapping your foot, hands in pockets,
face turned up at the horses
making their way from left to right
across the green light of somewhere

far from here.

In Amber

In my dream you are almost drunk,
struggling with the lock on the french doors
of my childhood, a lit cigarette
cupped in your palm.

Seconds before I wake, I realise
I've no idea which side you're on, which side
of those huge lime-scaled sheets of glass
you huddle to, hunched and cursing

the key which catches as you turn it. Sure,
the garden lurks behind, the gravel path,
but so does the television, the empty fish tank,
the cat's water bowl. So, which side are you on,

and where does that leave me?
Give me a clue – nod, blink, catch my eye,
crunch a snail shell, ash your cigarette,
flick the butt so I might hear it land.

If I could reach I'd pluck a silver hair from your arm,
just one, like a dream's very own pinch,
a dream we'll both wake from, at the same time,
on the sofa, some film playing ... *Did you feel it too?*