**Widow**

Nothing has prepared her for this,

the capsizing house, the relentless days,

the television moaning in the background.

The hours panic, each one battering

its stall, worse than the last,

the armchair, the unpaid bills,

the exhausted sofa all closing in.

Even the garden’s gone guerrilla:

roses he pruned hard every winter

plague the glass with their thorns;

ivy fingers the back-bedroom window

while inside her son’s childhood

clings on in *The Illustrated Iliad,*

*The Muppet Show*, the dented Matchbox

cars lining the dusty shelves.

In the double bedroom, the mattress sags,

still remembering his weight,

the familiar tideline of sweat,

the sprawl of his long limbs.

Every night she tries to fill it,

sleeplessness gnawing her to the bone.

Hugh Dunkerley