

The Brae Tops

Up the stairs by the Kirk,
Past the vault that used to house the Big Wheel
That powered the Mill.
Painted profanities on the sandstone,
Half covered by weeds.
Reaching the brae tops,
The cold making our eyes water,
Our words thick.
Past the summer seat that looks over the Square,
The tall trees that once stood in front of the Old Mill.
On past the War Monument,
Ground littered with empty bottles and cans,
Lost sons.
Along the woods above the Holm,
The steep gardens reaching right to the top.
Leaves crunch,
Our feet touching roots.

The water in the voes lie stagnant,
No longer turning the big wheel.
Across the valley, the trees are etched black,
As black as the crows which circle overhead.

Sound travels fast across the frosty evening,
The bark of a dog,
The chime of the ever present ice-cream van.
Voices drift up from the road,
Men in camouflage head for the frothing copper river,
Where not long since,

Salmon had leapt with gymnastic grace,
A soar of silver reflecting the Autumn sun,
The lucky ones escaping the cold metal of the gaff.

Below us the coal fires burn in the grates of the mill houses,
The flames dancing behind the paned windows.
Plumes of smoke curl upwards,
Streaking the pink sky grey,
Filling the air with the smell of home.