

TO THE MAN IN B23

In the summer I could hear
the husks in the highlands crush
beneath your boots, splitting
straight and dry.
We were stuck sauntering
between the fat days
and lukewarm winds of mid-July,
with the sheep caught
to the moss like clumps of cotton
and the reindeer that seemed to waltz
wearing nursing skin on their antlers
like wool mittens and nuzzled us
to shoo their swarms of feeding flies.

I passed your wynd twice
today in town, tassels tossing
side to side, trying to keep bare
hands worked deep
into wound up pockets.
A weeping willow
had its twigs hanging lazily,
buds round and upside down,
peering into window panes,
pattering wet into the ridge of trim,
and I, staunch
beneath its umbrella, staggered
with the ways of winter days.