



## **At this latitude**

Polar day is such a magical time - people walk  
by the lake together until late, enjoying the warmth

and the golden light. Sometimes it's hard to sleep,  
even in imperfect surrender, but people

are happy and the light is so golden together out late  
by the lake. Polar night creeps in slowly like a discreet

arresting officer, till one morning round coffee time  
you understand there will be no more light

until next year, like climbing alone into an MRI scanner,  
the cold slicing through you like meat at the deli counter

the fear that the sun will never return. Time passes  
into a blender. People grow feral. It's hard

not to let the bitter winds take you. Is it wrong to resist,  
to desire to live elsewhere than this?

## Marathon

Across this field the farmer's left a track  
for you to race down sky wheat sky  
far hedges banks of remedies  
a corridor you run each visiting night  
to see her nil by mouth no flowers

Around you in the tumbling air  
the plants secure their future lives  
as down the hollow-way its leafy tracts  
and ducts you run through double doors  
to raise funds catch a person leaving

You'd run for years if need be  
x-ray penicillin x-ray this sea of corn  
you'd swim it like Leander there and back  
each evening guided by the light beam  
at her window laser chemo laser

outpaced at last by racing winds  
the lamp extinguished questions still  
to ask why all the dust the flies  
what are your reasons for running

## **The Gloves**

*Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the gloves herself*  
'Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street' - V Woolf, 1923

Some days were long, and up to the elbow,  
a mix of polyester silk and cloud cover -

sunless gloves, but still offering something,  
protection for the delicate wrist-parts of the mind

so that as we walked the city, masonry  
falling around us, tears rising to our eyes,

sap rose also to our fingertips, and though  
no bees or butterflies settled on our palms

leaf buds burst through the stitching,  
papery new skins of delphiniums,

sweet peas, irises blossoming, saving us  
from arriving at evening empty-handed again.