Woodsman

When failing to find fucks
at parties I never asked about,
the unhappy Conservative,
whose pussy seeped spices
and eyes smoked Easterly,
would message me drunk
wanting the hurt inside
broken out.

As a child I hit dead sticks on trees
just to watch them break, to feel
vibrations ache my bones,
see one half snap off,
twirl in the air and careen
into dirt. The other half
left gripped in my fist
ready to be swung again.

The Pact

Your visits are a shared ache
surfacing from beneath
this pier. I don't know how

to sit before our faces
turn to rot
in this House of Horrors

where you hold my arm, scream
a pure sound and drop
enough pennies to win me

a meerkat. That fist
would squeeze an arc of sick
from anybody with five credits.

My phone says the lump on that horizon
is called Flat Holm Island –
among smuggled brandy

and hidden cannons, Marconi
sent seaward the unreplied:
Are you ready?

Being sideways stalked
for our salted batter where seagulls
won't leave us alone,

we decide not to tell
the other two
who love us when we're home.

So lying together
as the married dead
do I wait to dream

and listen to you teeth grind
hope to the partner
on your mobile screen.

Alfresco in Waves

Feeling the brunt of wild expectation,
we double back and park
at the garden centre.

We traipse and get lost beyond electric
trap fences, over stinger surrounded
styes. Outstare a horse.

You go first and take the bag, these yellow-
rimmed and grass-bleached
ditches are too prickly.

Where is my phone? Climb and be crowned
King of the Pylons on a rackety,
rust-moulded throne.

Wait here. Just an old woman talking
to her walking stick.
This way; let's strip.

Every angle, each pore pink flicked
against shadow from the wind-
played leaves. Your back

sweat pools in flat garments creasing
from our weight, our movement
free roaming into the present.

Floating above, among bird calls
and cell towers, the thought:
will this, now, be enough?

We're Terrific, We're Just Sensational

I'm a John Cassavetes type.
I wear black and talk a lot.
I start an improv acting workshop for the over-60s.
We heat our black clothes in the microwave
so the cold never takes us out of the moment.

It's all a scam; I'm winging it.

I'm hustling the elderly
with my wild eyes and roll necks,
making everything up on the spot.

I have no idea what I'm doing.
I'm learning how to improvise
                        through improvising how to teach
                                an improvisation class.

My one rule is that we wear black.
We shout at each other in a hut while prowling in circles.