**THE CUBICLE**

On the other side of the wall, crying -

or laughing hysterically?

A thin wall, just inches away,

a woman. Crying of course.

Laughter is shared, touched,

side splitting, uncontrollable, hollow,

hysterical or infectious. It arrives

in a burst, spurting, clear liquid,

a leaking pipe, whose sides

must be held together.

No, not laughing. Crying.

Inhaling jagged breath like a chainsaw, a rising assonance,

a piece of pain, thin oily water

dribbling across the road, joining with another

trickle, stream, rivulet and yet many

gathering in the gutters, rising across the pavement.

A torrent moving towards the wall.

There are boundaries, you know, barriers

that denote your zone, your sobs,

a cubicle to contain the rape and death threats.

A tiny space to compress the swellings from sting barbs

still throbbing in your flesh.

The yellow water under our feet

is the powder of crushed blossom. Not disgusting,

do not fear it, tread softly, barefoot

walking on dreams, liquid dust and stuff

melted into air, into thin air,

which cannot be breathed.

Which can only be sobbed

which is red white and blue

but mostly red.

Which we do not touch, because touch

is not allowed.

We lose touch. A tiny box of screens

and faces fills with the sound

of a woman crying, unseen,

in the next cubicle.