

Quiet Sisters

Today, I closed my eyes against this night –
the stars, a distant universe away.

Where are my sisters? Are they calling me?

Unmissed, unnoticed, deserted, buried –
their bones are bitten, burned, and none can speak
(except with their wounds). My ghostal sisters,
asleep beneath the rivers, yards and fields.

The fish, among our seaweed hair, devour
us, water-bloated, violence-silenced. See
our broken nails, bedraggled hands and arms
still wearing nightclub sleeves. Who loves us now?

Who mourns us now? Remember. Listen. Hear
the crowds of us, all mouthing silent pleas.
Us, cotton-dumb, our mouths are blocked with soil.

Helen Steadman