

An O upside down looks like an O standing up -  
you watch as letters type themselves,  
the colour of dust  
collecting at page bottoms,  
forgetting footnotes.

A's bump into B's bump into  
the 1's and 1's that fall short of 2. One by one,  
stringing themselves into  
one another.  
Brave,  
like a blind army.

You never hear letters the right side up.  
So you wait for the days when you hear them  
fewer,  
further  
between -  
Only simple things. Never misspelled.  
Best Friend, Bookshop Auntie, Barber.  
Book. Blanket. Balcony.  
Bread.

## **My Mother's Religion**

My mother's religion  
lies in the undusted dust next to picture frames,  
flowers that un-arrange themselves,  
recovering in panadol tapwater.  
  
Her precarious faith ,  
placed  
in arms that reach above our heads  
into cupboards with teacups  
(the sound of prayer and paisley  
breaking into pieces on the floor)  
  
She tiptoes around teenage disasters,  
is careful when she whispers advice.  
(she loves you with two hugs in the morning)

She shows you,  
one hand in yours,  
how to find healing in between tea leaves,  
leave dust undusted, speak softly-  
How to seek god in secret places.

A mother's brown eyes passed on,  
golden flecks in the same places,  
like stretches of filtering codes. Everyday  
moles, birthmarks - lining  
continents across bodies,  
freckling a family like messy sunshade.

The staying still,  
within the same years.

Surnames, uneven smiles, eyebrows,  
all cursive;  
an inheritance like faith.

Grandparents age before births  
of children with the same noses.

Intimacy without meeting -  
like the fluttering of shadows, eyelashes on cheeks,  
accents and twin gestures  
rising and falling  
into loss, always acutely felt.

Missing base-pairings,  
the girls always go for the same boys,  
who become the same fathers, uncles.  
The same children.

A pattern of  
sweet-sour generations,  
mending to fit the new into pasts.  
Flushed, fair,  
people are born into everyone they know.

And there, it stands, alone but not lonely.

You don't know what to say so you sit still.

It asks you: Why did you leave your soul in a handkerchief?

It tugs at your sleeve, making sure you listen.

You have no answer.

You tell it: I still have my soul.

See, you say, See here and here and here (you point to the specks in your eyes, the laugh lines on the side of your mouth, your beauty mark).

It laughs. It laughs and laughs and you swallow it - one big gulp, you swallow it so it can no longer ask you difficult questions in dim light.

You swallow it and you sit still.

You feel it moving lower, until it finally rests on the top of a fountain sitting on your right lung.

It doesn't squirm anymore. You think maybe it has fallen asleep, slipping deeper into buttery muscle and candy floss tissue.

You think: We are geography and government, transportation and humidity; We are the light switches in public washrooms, we are the penal code, we are suburban districts. We are the grinding of teeth in mid- May nightmares

(Oh you know, you know, you know) that

We are one, and it will never leave.

Where is your heart?

**Re: New Ways to Be Lonely**

Email yourself  
from one account. Read and reply from another.  
There's always so much to say  
to someone like you.

Skype no one when no one's looking.  
Familiar faces near-midnight  
look the same.  
Talking to yourself,  
a different person everyday.

Pretend texting.  
Watch the little coloured speech bubbles  
bloom like a blanket of people,  
all 'how are you's' -  
You're always 'fine'.

The line always busy  
from calling yourself.  
Stay around the places that spend your everyday;  
Light, heat, people - all walking quickly,  
melting into the same conversations,  
where stories are more than made up.

You imagine imagining them,  
imagine  
knowing  
  
someone other than yourself.