

Poem for a Painting

The cold morning light on the flat, lifeless sea and distant cliffs
Seeps through to highlight all that remains of him.
Washed onto the dark volcanic shingle,
Beached and dead.

Is this all I can remember of a body
I once knew so well?
The way of all flesh.
The way love ends.
Improbable girlish lashes
A Napoleonic nose and a harsh mouth.

Time hangs heavily draped on driftwood
Stripped of its bark, of its leaves, of the textures of the living.
Do the clock hands point to moments of significance?
Or are they as random as our dreams?
How soon, that which once seemed as timeless as my grandfather's watch
Is consumed, like a rotten carcass.
Swarmed over, colonised, devoured.

For now, I will let it all lie, let it melt.
Soon I will find a way to open that box
And everything
The love, the sex, the hopes, the regrets and the snatches of memory
Will be packed away, forever

