

DUSTY TROLLS

' Wherever he looks he sees strangers
full of ambition and a sense of right'
– Gilbert Sorrentino, 'They Die Over and Over. In the Movies'

Twelve years too long...' he says
but she corrects him: 'Fourteen!'
'No wonder I'm so bloody tired.'

Naomi's beautiful figure drawing
overlooks songs through a megaphone,
voices of angels and the oppressed.

Things we no longer put our faith in:
governments, parents, teachers, church,
things open to corruption and change.

How few lines are needed to evoke
the shape of the past, the forgotten
places of childhood, the view outside.

He manages to use 'sweet' in a poem
and get away with it; I try to downplay
my angels as impossible beings,

try not to be a lecturer, not to be
a dad, try not to be a husband,
have forgotten how to be myself.

I am too attached to my version of the past,
want to wipe it all away and forget,
erase, reconfigure and move on.

Clusters and sequences, arrangements,
networks and lists, all ways we can
organise a book of poems or prose.

More readers but nothing to put on a shelf
if you are addicted to pages and spines;
it is impossible to smell paper onscreen.

Dusty trolls from when you were a child,
gifted to me as you grew up, moved on.
Not who I expected in the audience

and someone arrived late with a phone
that rang out just as I was about to read.

I still collect rusty washers and metal shapes.

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