

Removal

Landlords are shifting out old tenants.
It's the season of mattresses.
Checked, stained,
they are dumped in the road overnight.
Cramped in half,
their split seams erupt yellow foam
like crops of toadstools
under this grey wash
of a Middlesex autumn sky.

A piece of dark cloth is tacked to the window
of the maisonette my pregnant friend
is viewing to buy – her first home.
The tenant has been issued a Section 21
and won't answer the door,
so we can only get access
now the owner's swept in to open up.
The tenant follows us from room to room
leaning her cheek against the door frame,
watching. It's the same stare
I saw on my father's ivory face.

I was digging up plants from his garden,
he'd agreed I could,
after finally accepting
he had to move.
I thought he was asleep,
but he'd followed me out
shuffling slowly after me.
He stood balancing with his two sticks,
just watching at a distance
from the middle of the path.