

Apricity

Rubus fruticosus Rosaceae

She blows blackberry kisses from her pushchair,
lips stained ruby red, hands peppered with thorns.
Summer sweetness in her heavy blood, tainted by
venous infusions of cisplatin and doxorubicin.
A bruised sky over the canal basin as we walk home.
Autumn slips into hope as she sleeps, dark eyelashed.
Perfect on the outside,
as the glaucous fruit of the glioma in her head, swells and ripens.

O Tannenbaum

Winter drags. Twelve weeks of bleeding and bruising and night sweats.
The long cold echo of clinical corridors.
Outside, white boned trees and silver frosts,
the ring road around Leicester fogged up with exhaust fumes.
The neurosurgeon says 50/50, and we try to remember how to pray,
The kneeling and the severed cold of holy water.
I want to believe.
At home, we argue about putting up a Christmas tree, but don't decorate it.

Vernal Galathus Nivalis

Pure white snowdrops push through unnoticed.
Spring is cascaded light. She slips into a coma,
the rise and fall of her small chest and not a flicker of recognition.
Her brain scar like a furrow, stapled and swollen.
We sleep intermittently, stare at the drowsy urban landscape,
look for life. In the community garden, a man is planting seedlings.
Small green shoots.
Rain falls, light and soft. We count the days to her 3rd birthday.

Olera aestiva

Summer cracks open, the temperature hopscotched to thirty degrees.

The ward humid and stale, takes on a blue sheen.

Weaned off the ventilator, she takes a first mouthful of food.

Words won't come. 'It's parietal aphasia,' the speech therapist says.

'The brain has a stop gap.' Outside, the community garden is bursting
with ruby red chard, firecracker chillies, the pop of cherry tomatoes.

The sun on our faces,

as the neurones and synapses push through.