

## Halloween

Plastic pumpkins are stacked up in Sainsbury's,  
family bags of Haribos are 2 for 1.  
I drive over to Mum's to see my stepfather  
newly discharged from ophthalmology.  
He's watching the snooker in his recliner  
footrest up. Onscreen a man in a suit leans in  
preparing to pocket the pink. A plastic shell,  
the size of a satsuma, is taped  
over my stepfather's eye. All the colours  
of hurt are under it. Violet and charcoal,  
mustard at its edges. The eye is puffy, shut.  
Dark stitches and dried blood map the contour  
of the socket. I say *that looks sore*  
and he lifts the remote to mute the volume.  
He studies me with his good blue eye  
and a small creature wakes after years of sleep  
and stretches out in me. I tell my stepfather  
we're going trick or treating, with him  
dressed up as a bluebottle. I say *all we need*  
*is a plastic shell for your good eye. I say let's pop you*  
*in a black bin bag and fashion you wings*  
*from cling film and wire coat hangers. I say*  
*I'll go and fetch your wheelchair.* Then he laughs  
and forgiveness is in the room, like the light  
from the last candle on a birthday cake  
you didn't have enough breath to blow out.