

## Coda

peering down from their perches,  
the gods proposed a new rule:  
each song on earth would now have a limit  
of one hundred listens per person

beyond that, songs would drift into the sky like clouds  
held safe and cold and hard as precious stones in celestial palms and free  
at last  
from gluttonous ears

at first there was outrage, but the people soon adjusted or  
forgot  
settling into their new rules  
like dust on windowsills

but no one could quite decide what to do with the songs

some kept them tucked under beds  
brought them out only on special occasions for listening parties adorned with golden balloons  
and glistening  
lights  
bottles of wine saved just for these nights when they would sit in careful circles  
full of friends  
pop open the lids of melodies and let them ooze  
into silence  
like moonlight into midnight

the song trade became notorious  
dealers stood tucked in alleyways with stock pushed discreetly into pockets  
wary of letting any notes escape into the night as they waited for notes  
of a different kind

but the final sort of person  
the rarest of them all  
were those who would take their chances  
those who would unwrap a song each night and let it wash over them undisturbed  
one hundred times  
close their eyes as it floated away  
and trust their mind to keep their favourites playing  
as many times as they chose