

## BHAC 2019 Sussex Poetry Competition

### Runner up – Liz Eastwood

#### Two Years Later - Grenfell 2019

“Her heart must be ash where her body lies burned.” (Agha Shahid Ali)

when your heart burnt to ashes I was smooching on the floor  
of the Vegan Snack Shack at the back of a squat near Grenfell Park  
it's got happy carrots with green stalk hair on the back doors  
where pigs sheep and cows jump over the moon after dark  
she bought it herself had an interest free loan  
from her mum her dad a Cross Rail worker got her phone

she's younger not fat or white with a crappy phone  
not angry all the time or working lates on a factory floor  
she's black with the best Afro once I gave her a loan  
for her car repayment it felt bad so took my lad to our park  
got his happy meal you on late shift be back way after dark  
I let him on the PS in his room sent text *playing outdrs*

next day a concrete slab hits her dad his death opens doors  
to compensation her mum texts from her dad's iPhone  
no words of consolation *dead dad c u ltr* dark to dark  
to dark the lift carries her home to the twenty-fourth floor  
she can't stay put I'm late back from lad's night she's on bench in park  
next to our tower I can't wrench myself away leave her alone

I can't say she cried just sighed *my dad he's dead* stuck alone  
in the morgue until the law proves the cause and opens the doors  
so I breathe beer on her sweet face all night on our bench in the park  
send you a text *stuck at mosque ☺* next move give her my phone  
number I'm a bad man as the lift creeps to the twenty-fourth floor  
then for weeks I lie hide my Quran a disgrace keep you in the dark

When I was out on license you stuck by my side I recall dark  
not satanic verses *God loves Those ... who have not gone astray* I moaned  
in the grip of lust's fire fucked while you brushed boy flames to the floor  
and rushed for tap water two years of frozen fire by now fire doors?  
Arconic cladding? fridge? stay put? my son melted in hell if only I'd phoned  
but honest to tell no signal at illegal squat at back of our park

I bought the boy a Sloppy Joe from her van by the park  
*don't tell mum* snacks forbidden keep that bitch in the dark  
he took snap of van see? see her? I'd hidden his phone  
that fatal day he was naughty I should've took him away left you alone  
she fancied a posh hotel *just one night* to close doors  
on real life its ironic council's put us in this hotel on separate floors

but we don't phone don't meet in the squat near the park  
I don't take the lift to her floor or lick her feet in the dark  
each one is alone now survivors kicking at the council's doors  
*Two years after the fire fifteen households don't have permanent homes two are still in hotels*