

Sussex Poets Competition 2015: Commended

Bill's

by

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I was in Bill's, having a late lunch,
they sat opposite, just by the door,
I could barely hear myself think
in the noise and the rush. I watched her
lean across the table, watched her
smile at him, offering up her face
like a bloom to the sunlight, offering
the whole of herself, all
the best of herself, radiant
in the noise and the din, her unwavering eyes
fixed on him. He tucked into his salad plate,
grateful, I'm sure, but he didn't see what I saw.
I wanted to shout across the tables: *Look!*
Look at what she's giving! Look at her face! Lift
your head from your meal, don't
hurt her, don't hurt her, don't -
it takes years and years to heal.
I wanted to warn: *Take care. Don't offer it all,*
too soon, keep something back – just
in case. Or maybe, what I wanted most, was to find
in me what she gave, so thoughtlessly,
as if it was entirely commonplace
to surrender to love, radiant
in the rush and the din – or the courage
to offer it, all over again.