

Sussex Poets Competition 2015: Highly Commended

Hot Cross Buns

by

Bryony Bishop, Brighton

Currants soaking in the melting triumph
of clarified butter;
red jam, swollen on the floral plate,
charred ridges, where the knife cut:
the rough-sawn edge of passion.
You brought it on a tray;
lay breakfast where our love had made
a mess of crumbled sheets,
still warm, the teapot is precarious on our knees.
Your lean, wired limbs relent, you spread
and curb the molten jam and tempt
my open mouth with strawberry kisses.
I lean back. Your split fingers
dawn on my impressionable skin, your nails
black from hammering resistant metal
into curving shapes, while I tease
words from other languages
into extended sentences
You give me precious metal
for this dictionary of tenderness,
raise my blushed firestain
to the surface.
No polishing with spinning petticoat
of layered cloths: a whirling dervish of frayed ends.
The iron grate, glossed brilliant red,
where you made a fire one afternoon
while I was shopping and at night
we couldn't sleep, is empty.
You burnt my tea towels, using them
to take your scorching silver from the oven.