

First Kiss

We hide in a bus shelter, hoping
not to be abducted.

A giant, alien searchlight

floating

across soaked tarmac.

Blinding, yellow, almost a face,
if you could stare directly at it.

It keeps shining, pulsing, through
the plastic partition, through
eyelids, through

the background noise, the hiss
of tyres on water, of late-night
bus braking, the urgent plea

of your whispered 'Be quiet!'
Friends have departed we are

abandoned

to this alien observer,
this beam that broadcasts
this private moment to everyone.

'We must not be abducted,' you say.
I say, 'I must abduct you,' and the kiss
is extraordinary: I am dying and

being born at the same time, and
the trees on the hills
are singing, and

the grass is reaching
for us through the soaked tarmac.
And I am everywhere at once.

Pete Strong