Jayawardena, Kumari.

Davies, Miranda, ed.

Douthwaite, Richard.

Davies, Miranda, ed.


BERNADETTE RAFFOUL

Bread into Stone

If this cross is a bit in my teeth
then this chain is a beaded strap
I could split my flesh open with
if a turn failed around my neck

And if these hands keep folding under bankruptcy
of the body and not the spirit
then my prayers could be seen as curses against the man I invoked to redeem me
I cry to carry these blisters on my feet
then left lonely prints in middle eastern sand
I walked barefoot all the way to the pantomime
and at each station I screamed aloud as I thought of Veronica I wiped my brow as smooth as a cannon ball from my thighs as dark as the back of my mouth

Did I hallucinate that black birth
the apparition hung wet on a Phoenician bough?
I've forgotten my own baby
the dead limbs, the plucked petals
the vacancy pumped between her legs from which my eyes followed a pool of ruby to the ground where my memories are kept hard enough for a crown my baby escapes me in time
one karat for each hour of every day
that I sift like sand through my blank toes while I curse my pain and walk alone

Bernadette Raffoul recently completed an MA in English and Creative Writing, from the University of Windsor.