

Inadvertent Consumption

Amy Crosby

Heaving on the flat white of the bathroom tiles
remnants and spittle of last night's meal.
What was it this time?
Rich man – Poor man – Beggar man
or someone who called me a thief?
I retch
and out comes a sandcastle,
aborted in its prime by waves of abrasive shingle,
and suddenly my vomit smells of
salt and intermittent sunshine,
a cold shower in public, European toilets
and the fat black spider that sat watching in the corner.
Memories I'll be picking from my teeth
for weeks.
The brittle plastic in the form of a bucket and spade
catches in my throat
and, as I choke them free,
out comes the dead seagull,
spread like a book.
It looks at me with eyes the colour of my bile,
glasses over
and shows me its feathers dipped in incomprehension.
I never like the taste of children.