CLIFTONVILLE LIDO

These are the old flight paths

unused by the US dollar. Bits of day,

or what passes for it here, scatter

across the car park like the spume

across the sward of the seawater

plunge bath. The big mosaic

— lido sands — is out to sea, the sea

it claims to own though really

it’s only taken in, and not tenderly,

as just another offering.

Behind, the thousand coursing winds

against the thousand windows of the town.

A town is where people come in, and people

go out, and here is not that. Here stands

like the remnants of a long-departed hermit,

but monumentally, persevering, just as the town itself

has never been able to give the place up.

At a body’s worn peripheries are sometimes its deepest pains,

like how a toothache throbs

at the heart, or as we feel the close loss

of a faraway lover — and these losses

have been a playground for hating,

and yes, the revenant Nazis of the Kentish coast.

These are the flight paths, cut off

from the capital, closed as the smugglers

tunnels, these are the currents

the huge seagulls float on. Hades,

the Cliff Bar — it already wasn’t ideal

here, ­but the ’78 winter storm

wreaked havoc, reconstruction work

was never considered, and even today

the Lido faces almost certain demolition.