

### **Severe Weather Warning**

The walls are firm. The central heating hums,  
Cars wait; but I am a slave to weather.  
I sit in clouded light. The forecast comes.  
The horse is miles away, on the harsh hills.  
Storms will strike us; as the sodden leather  
Slips from my fingers, as the branch-fall kills

The young girl in her soft-topped car. At home  
My dearest projects wait for kinder air.  
New bulbs, adrift on Latin names like foam,  
Float in their box. They should be anchored in  
The tideless ground: dark arums, sleek as hair  
Under hoods. Earth lies too wet for trampling.

Others are free, detached. They watch their screens,  
They drive to drinks with friends. I watch the sky,  
Its maddening dazzle and its lemon streams  
Of sun through rain's dark tails. By the poor school  
Soaked starlings wheel from oaks. They scatter high.  
I live in the wind's thrust, by the sun's rule.

But why? I left the country. Join the town.  
The soil beneath the drive tugs at my heel.  
This is like trusting luck, whirled high, cast down.  
It is. But weather has a fierce ghost.  
Its wet black wing has touched my face. I feel  
It breathe, stretch, wake, before quick cars and toast.

From *Bricks and Ballads* (Carcenet, 2004) by Alison Brackenbury.