

## Mother Daughter

We face each other - drawing back,  
needing to separate. Does it matter  
which one goes first?

The house breathes.  
Your bed's unmade and your toothbrush gone,  
you have left books, hairbands, blu-tac spots,  
graffitti on the door: the panel felt-marked  
with a love-ladder of friends.

Your list of resolutions: *I promise to read,*  
*not bite my nails, help wash up, be nice to mum.*  
*I promise to eat sensibly and not tell lies.*  
Your 'dream board' of plans, unsolved  
equations, scribblings on the wall.

You have left behind what you no longer want.  
Your green eyes scan for approval.  
*I've done alright haven't I?*

In intensive care a woman breathes  
into her life. And an incubate newborn  
also breathes – fingers curled around  
his mother's sheathed and restless thumb.

Does it matter how imperfect the beginning?  
how flawed the end? we improvise,  
sing to songs we've never heard.

What I know is the still point in moving water.  
and that you and I my daughter  
can still dance  
in a room full of strangers.