

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.