

Cail Bruich

Heavy drapes shelter the entrance
we push through like petitioners
at a sheik's opulent tent seeking reprieve.

All week unreasonable winter growled,
a rabid dog we escape temporarily
by slogging out for our last night in Glasgow.

Cozy lights and the throaty Gaelic name beckon.
"To eat well," the ample hostess replies
as we surrender our sodden coats.

The wine, crafted by a Scottish vintner
self-exiled to Spain, glows lush ruby
tinged with a scorch of sun.

Somewhere between our shared starter—
seared "hand-dived" scallops snuggled up
to tiny black puddings capped with florets

of cauliflower lapped in cream—and the mains (you
venison, rare, and me hake in spicy sauce) we
fly apart like a rotten gate

in gale force winds. Looking back I cannot
say what happened—
one moment we were tipping morsels

into each others' mouths and the next cursing
piratically, hissing recriminations like bitten
snakes.

I felt gutted that night
trudging back in the sullen snow and sly ice
to a drafty room and cat-sprayed bed not even ours.

