

## Hear her prayer – By Andrea Hosfeld

You get used to the Kitkat wrappers  
in the bushes beside the track,  
the white Tesco bags flapping in the pines  
like apocalyptic plastic ghosts.

You pat your pockets when you're anxious,  
make sure you have your keys,  
make sure you have your phone,  
catch a bit of sun on the left side of your face,  
and then squint up at the sky.  
Too vast and blue, most days.  
Overwhelming.

And you flick through the free papers on the train,  
coat yourself in celebrity gossip and guerrilla warfare  
while eating a bag of crisps.

Time dribbles,  
picks up speed,  
flickers,  
falters.

There's another spill on page 22,  
and a fracking rig being set up in some field up north,  
the slick, oily, wing of a nameless bird –

The hair of the woman sitting beside you  
is a silent swarm of bees.

And you dreamt last night  
that you were being born  
in a tree house.  
Your mother climbed the ladder  
heavily pregnant.  
Your father laid you down  
in a bed of coppery beech leaves  
gathered on the forest floor.

There are moments now  
when you catch yourself  
looking up into the treetops  
certain you've discovered  
a new species of green.  
You're constantly looking for home.

Lunar hours pass by,  
grey and cratered, dusty and bare.

Riding home on the train,  
the endless ads for vitamins,  
the holidays they tell you,  
you deserve,  
beaches that look surgically enhanced  
with plastic umbrellas and  
unnaturally white smiles.

And it isn't because you don't know how to love...  
You can appreciate the flesh of a silky pear.  
You can distinguish concrete from cliff side,  
the memory of icy lake water,  
your father's laugh,  
a heron taking off from a willow.  
These bones are not easily broken.

But it is the tiny transparent hairs  
on your fingers that tip you out of reverie,  
the way they begin to sing,  
the cry of your animal origins.  
And you hear the Earth's anguished prayer  
pooling in your heart,  
gathering like white blood cells  
at the severed tusks of elephants.

There is no distinguishing  
between sweetness and sorrow anymore.  
The sky you wake to  
with its epiphany of  
orange and soft yellow  
plays to a backdrop of gospel.  
And all that you love  
shines like starlight  
because it's coated in tears.