

The wedding harvest

The canals that ring Novara here are frozen
and last year's rice stalks tightly clenched in ice.
By high-rise flats half-built a flyover
veils the stiffened refuse of the nights.

The fields, the wedding harvest over,
are littered now with slivered glass –
broken mirrors shattered on earth's back,
chalices hurled from leaden clouds.

No bell sounds out a summons, castle
doors are blind and bolted, land locked against
a threatening sky. Over withered stubble crows call,
no choices but to mate, to fight, or die.

The hunter, lord and master of a waste land,
cracks those who think to flee, to fly – or merely try.
In her cold eyes he sees himself diminished, over
dark fields tramples snow into the earth – like rice.

Gabriel Griffin