

the map breathers

Kevin Gillam

at dawn, sea is breathing, the pylons like staves unplayed,
feeling the easterlies, loose in their tethers while around the perimeter

bruising cloud, on the rocks one gull, cries scraping and insistent,
holding this tarpaulin, this vast lung of tepid thinks and

humidity, this salt and flung fish inhalation, but no need
to ponder – let the Sound lick, let history and now be

judged by the swelling in your scabbed shins, the same lengths
bitten and held by memory, one each of pith and kindling,

aches long slipped into incandescence while here, beneath
soles, the neaping, the fret, the conch and its unfurling,

architecture at its most naïve, here the tossed in calcified light,
dunes and scree and scuff into aquamarine, granite

tackling the tide, bookending glitter, the creped and silvered
before Michaelmas and Breaksea, but this proximate thumb

nail, don't see it as Mistaken, no, one digit's armour,
angles of import, no, see it as sanctuary and the way a land

might kerchief its weepings, like hope might candle wax for more,
be forever drip, the channel 'tween the known and whimper of

prayer running neck deep against the schemers, the land borne,
the map breathers, those that front bar and banter and plot,

the shufflers, moving their plunder, all navigation and
nulling of surf and boulder, blind to scrub and pike fish,

lost as story, as bottle dropped, as gulled, as dawn