

## PREDESTINATION

A whiff of tannins  
as the leaves come down,  
mulch underfoot  
on her way to the site.

In the hut, windows trickle  
breaths condensed  
and the topped-up urn begins  
to gurgle and sing.  
Mugs milked and sugared,  
tea spooned in the pot.

Early birds drop in  
for crusts and crumbs of gossip,  
stamp feet, blow on hands  
and make plans  
for the day's work  
ahead of them.

Elbow-tested,  
a tin bath of water  
awaits the dragon's immersion.  
Bathing, baptising,  
motherly and serious  
she attends,

washing it clean  
of grit, silt and mud.  
Reverse-hibernation breaks spells  
of countless long winters  
and its long, deep and  
silent sleep.

She wonders again  
as she always does,  
delight undimmed by routine,  
at how every potsherd, bone and coin,  
and now this dragon-glass,  
carries its seed of mystery,

a history there for the taking  
if you know how to ask  
the right questions.  
How did it happen  
such fragile grace  
fetch up here near-perfect?

For a moment she thinks  
of home, dug far down  
where night is falling  
and spring is lengthening days.  
How did it happen,  
her own adventure,

from earliest times this notion  
of work digging up old things  
before she knew the word  
archaeology?