

Hod Hill



Carol Watts

What turns under the feet, hurls summer to bold
witness of endings, a brooding heat not yet given over.

Nothing sharp to glean in thick late season hazing.
It sweats wetly on skin, binding in to tufts and mounds.

All the nameless flowers, bells but not bells,
white puffs like small strangers to this eye, pushing

up now on Hod Hill, lit to fluttering dependencies.
A rim where neolithic dead were posted in a crust

of settlement, as if from a crater lifting above
combed corn, spilling out in human spores

to wider circles, cut through in later military
takeover, Roman lines hating the curve.

There is news of cruelty in the scented summer air.
A pushing back of boats proposing fascistic love

for impregnable borders. On a clear day, from
this place, you would see across channels to an island.

Here settlement is ancient, it rises as smoke might,
a draught of endless movement inhaling deep

unexcavated time. Lifts up staggered, ramparts
holding on, tipping a wildness of greeting to the edge,

down to the stalwart river, once inhabited by water tribes,
now a coughing swan, eels hidden in the stream.

Stourpaine, September 2021