

Martin Robertson

Nadia

Flute with no reed, violin
left unstringed.

Instrument evolved, built
with loving skill,
not, like this, to be silent.

She lives behind a wall of glass
which speech, touch do not pass.

But what she sees lives. A flat illustration
jumps off the page—
the rider reins his galloping horse towards here, blows
his trumpet over her head. The cock crows
triumphant in her face.

Not seeing only. Her untaught child-hand
impossibly catches the movements and their sound.

Faces express feelings, release words.
She looks away from them, down, towards
hands sometimes, more often lower
to legs, feet, which unaware
betray so much.

These too her pencil catches,
these and their inwardness.

But kind patience pushes, pulls her to people.
Caresses, words, make occasional contact.
And now the vision begins to mist. Hands seeking
other outlets
forget the pencil.

(And out of what depth, fingered on a steamed-up pane,
can that loud trumpeter charge again?)