

White Knuckle Clutching

We could smell him
from two seats behind
a stench of sweat and mould
that, if anything, worsened
throughout the journey

across from us was a lady
her blue-black hair in rollers
white knuckle clutching
a large handbag

a sound emanated
from a few seats back
half a hum, half a groan
a man, a woman
we remained unsure
as to turn to look
was to risk engagement

on the aisle floor was a liquid
rolling forwards and back
with the slowing and the quickening

the liquid split
into small tributaries, tendrils
a watery root system
never finding purchase
before merging back into itself
over and over

this was where I kept my focus
on the early bus
to Atlantic City