

## **Tenderness**

Its moments so rare I preserve them  
like delicate plums in a bowl

go back to them weekly, splitting them open,  
inspecting the core.

To name something is to give it a place.

It happened, said Eve in the garden,  
calling the dove a dove.

Now I pickle the fleeting for the winters ahead  
in which I touch nobody and nobody touches me.

\*

I fell asleep once on the night bus,

let my head rest on a stranger's shoulder.

Each time the bus shook, a hand on my temple  
held me in place.

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I know my parents don't care if I call,  
can't take walks through my dreams,

I know logic governs no ghost, I know the man  
who rung up the call centre in search of a cruise

was not dead. I know there is more than one person  
who shares the same name.