



A Portfolio of Modern Poetry

Esme Partridge

Pink

I want to stain myself with pomegranate
seeds or beetroot shavings, to remember
this as if from above: the trees pressing down
on her hatchback, driving in convoy to that
ribbon of blue tied to the bottom of the clouds.
They sit in front of me picking the music,
like my parents in the way they love me,
as family, as royalty, as inheritance.
Then I lie down flat on the back seats
and all I can think is to press hard
into the underside of my forearm
'remember this, remember this'.

Two Portraits

i.

My father after fishing trips:
holding things over the sink gagging
he would tip and rinse, all this black
water is actually oil at the base.

Can he divulge which treasured possession
over the years, students have sobbed into?
I'm thinking of thanking books,
which are liberally scrawled on,

and playing bluegrass music, but
I'm afraid it's hopeless.
It all thickens by the day with
Dialectics of Liberation.

'And our government has been quite generous'
(profoundly corrosive of human)
I believe that's my father's spirit:
wake me up instead of my wife.

ii.

Ever see her
kitchen, looking more herself than I will,
flower blooms, in her pyjamas, her mother silent,
shy eyes shining, pinning her hair behind pixie ears.

My mum before she is: layered dusting of inner
bunny fuzz on cheeks, surrounded by bridesmaids

toasting her changed state and changed name
imagining the reception in five hours' time

her twenty-third birthday, she looked out at the square race house
the morning she got married, the morning of her.