

Ways of getting there

I was about to send you
my condolences, and I would've,
had the device between my hands not eaten it
and died.

I was stood at the corner,
diagonal from the stairwell, sullenly
watching sneakers dirtied with
places my soles hadn't cleaned, listening to the cracking
of strangers' loveless knees. I had never paid much mind
to the anatomy of a stairwell, figured
everything is more or less made the same,
rearranged.

Bored, without much way or will,
I walked to where the carpet lifted,
like the head of a nearly trodden-on snake. I pinched it
and pulled, playing the video in my head
I'd seen that morning, of a neurosurgeon,
lifting his patient's scalp
like a matted swimming cap.
I pulled to free it of its hard grey skin, was delighted
to see concrete shiver, naked to the breeze
smuggled in by the back-packs
and Mubi tote-bags. I found its metal spine, it
came loose in my hands, some kind of wire,
I pulled that too, nothing's too precious
to be back in the ground.

It all tumbled, like a child
flying no-hands over his bike, the sound
of an open jaw
crashing into the pavement, a familiar smile
spilt into large teeth,
stepping blocks around my feet.

The world is so easily flattened,
was what I would've said to you, had the screen
not gone black, that I know what it's like,
to have nowhere to go, no means of getting there.

To look up, and find only the sky,
looking, disinterestedly
back.