The Mill By The Beach

Summer leaks in slow waterfalls through the rafters to its rotten floor;
its floor is a carpet of shadows. Winds whistle through the black holes
of its various faces. The grasses have discovered it.

    On the beach between dunes and rollers a child is surprised
    to find a pebble, shining with colours and lures and "This is mine!"
    greed and delight in the pocket until tea-time
    before Mum and sandwiches.

    The pebble dries, turns to stone on the tea-cloth.

        Remember when we brought crabs in a bucket
        that were marvellous for a day, and then flushed down the toilet
        with sea-side summers and castles
        that could never withstand the tide. But who cared!
        with ice-creams and pennies
        for the arcade rollers. Sunday stormed in at the harbour,
        and we laughed to be soaked by waves
        big enough to crush us.

This place was the crush of grasses into bread; fed itself on the spoils
of the seasons washing passed its mossed stones where it paddled the flood,
making rainbows out of drops that were eager for the sea.

        Our dreams were rainbows of revolution and a new turn
        by the rush of the waves. Our songs
        were footprints at low tide. Try again!
        And we did, and kept turning
        until we tired of these tides and turned ourselves homewards.

            I have choked and spat out a thousand alarm clocks;
            ground my teeth on letter-boxes and milk bottles, broken,
            in a world of doorsteps and curtains
            swirling through dizzy mornings and homing nights.

Wood pigeons have made a home in the rafters,
their cooing is jewels in the black spaces

    and summer leaks in the slow waterfalls of a child's laugh
    and pebbles, with sand in your hair; the sniff of salt; seaweed,
    and Mum on the tea-cloth with stones and crabs for the toilet
    where waterfalls leak summer in the slow swirling streams
    of the mill. Its wheel that picked up the stream to the sky
    and spat it out has stopped doing that. And I
    have leaked my own eager drops
    through slow summers. Across the beach
    the sand creaked with my footprints.

Nothing creaks the old mill
except occasional winds from the sea
to the sign that reads:

        "DANGER - DO NOT ENTER"

Gareth Alun Roberts, 2010