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**THISTLECRACK**

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**JANE BURN**

Telephones are malevolent. Cradle-bones bidding  
until you have felt the evening's quietness spread  
above the room and you, uneasy, try to settle below it.

Then, it will rack the air with shrill – you leap  
from the chair, stub a toe in your hurry to answer. It slips,  
soapy from your hands. This is how the complexities

of twilight pass. Dusk is easy to close the curtains against –  
night comes like the healing of a wound. You close your door  
upon it, shove the key down the throat of the lock, spin it dead.

Dawns keep coming – it has been your habit to rise to them.  
Mornings you squat on the step, watching sun fledge  
through the wall's topping of broken glass, edges tinkered

with glim. You know how jagged this place is. How it makes you  
afraid. Policemen knock in a way peculiar to them –  
their knuckles on wood say *something's wrong* and your heart

is all clatterbash in your chest. Tonight, they are door-to-door  
after someone called about screams on nearby scrub. You say,  
*it's vixens make a noise like that* but even as they go, slicing

the wasteland with knives of light, coining a fox's eyes with beams,  
you lie in bed, headful of murder grasses and think how a pair  
of arms would be a comfort. You live where you can afford to live –

most days, you just get on with it and dream of fields. Exist in  
little things – see how fingers of spruce grasp invisible wind, how,  
in a thistlecrack, petals feather from spiny bulbs, turn to down.

Step to avoid torched bins. When you live somewhere rough,  
you can choose to hold sun in your eyes. Search out the trees.  
Discover the best and worst of places look beautiful under snow.