

*After Franz Kafka*

I didn't know I was in love  
until yesterday. She sat  
beside me at the board meeting  
her hairspray mingled with mine  
hem of skirt slid up her thigh  
I wanted to touch her nude tights.

Today, I lie shackled in my husband's arms  
his ramrod digs the small of my back  
after-sex sweat blocks my pores  
the memory of her kiss  
imprinted in my mind.

My back stiffens,  
skin darkens, belly domes,  
splits into constipated-brown sections.  
I have to manoeuvre myself out of bed  
crawl towards the bathroom  
scurry into the shower.

I didn't know being in love  
would morph my body  
into Kafka's *Ungeheures Ungeziefer*.

I let boiling water lash my vermin  
armour. Cry cockroach tears  
brown wings dissolve  
antennae swirl down the drain.  
Six spindly legs become two again.

I lie beside him, can't be with her,  
if I'm to survive in this corporation  
of pest controllers.