

Tsvetanka Elenkova

Pain

When you hold a bottle and hear the wind
through the open throat
when you put a conch to your ear
the echo pain from the emptied body
and when a single slight hiss
as of a punctured bicycle tyre
finally fills the empty space
like a newborn's wail
Take it carefully in your arms
and give it or don't to its mother
but take it carefully
it's so fragile all cartilage
Give it water or leave it on the shelf
by your head

Translated by Jonathan Dunne