

PETER E. LUGG

CONTINENTAL SHIFT

On the mouths of others
I look for lips like yours.
And before sleep invades fantasy,
I hold memory of you
shamelessly to my pillow.
Recollection is a bitter companion.
We trade letters back and forth:
from your rhetoric of travel
my mind conjures taste,
presence, ardour.
Separation leaches desire,
but not the caring.

LINES FROM THE FRENCH

Stupor is the drug of this dominion.
Ambition wilts on trees in drear lay-bys,
dries on stone walls that stumble to the sea.
Employment is some folly from another's dream:
prosperity is nudged to the next small town.
Fishing boats bob and ponder on a sluggish tide:
seabirds fish for trash that's rarely there.
Empty bars claim half the town.
In one John Wayne, with French subtitles,
acts at a room of empty chairs.
Cowboy gunfire clatters on cobbled streets.
Walled in by wintry sun, Basque hills,
the town's a prop from the age of poetry
when poems sailed into harbour,
stanzas taut in the midday breeze.