

curved around rich garden beds, overflowing  
roses, lavender and pink astilbe;  
commoners, like briar rose and meadowsweet  
grew wild  
on the other side of the well-clipped hedge.  
A thin cool voice had observed that  
swallows glancing were a sign of rain.

Overhead  
black clouds — clouds like breaking waves  
pushed towards the sun.  
'It will probably come to nothing' we said;  
We felt threatened all the same.

## TESS WROE

### NELLIE

Facing seaward at the end of the wooden ramp  
Hair flicked backward by the wind  
She stood with all the knowledge of her full  
two years  
And took her time in coming to conclusions.  
Then turned and skipped back to me  
As I held my breath and waited  
Knowing if I reached for her  
I might just as well put side rails up  
And pretend to confine  
Her rollicking defiance  
Feel her fight my hold and fling  
Resentment at the slats  
Mutinous marionette  
Refusing to drown  
Without water.