

JOYCE COLE

NEIGHBOURLINESS

I saw her often, peering
slat-shadowed by the palings,
wrinkled with discontents,
grudging my presence
and blooms which flourished
where I walked.

A small pale plant
with moonface flower
curled a tendril
through her fence
and tentatively stretched
toward her as she watched.

She wrenched it out
and glared, malevolent.

And then one day
she was not there.

The small pale plant
twined confidently
round her fence-posts
as I smoothed away the pain-scars
of her gimlet eyes
and laid a sunflower on her grave.