AFTER THE FUNERAL

for a neighbour who died giving birth

the day is tight
as the inside of an eggshell

he's wearing shades shut fast
as a mussel on a pier
mourners eddy round

her girlfriend walks up the drive
in the seemly black
of an evening shift
the boyfriend gives a reassuring
slap to her hip
she sways into the hard
comfort of his thigh

on the lawn a magpie
stabs at a ghoulish grub
turning it into
a bar of the blues

... come evening and quiet
voices wreath
in a slow double helix
over the terrace
as though murmuring responses
at the homely litany
of a barbecue

stars swarm
slow and clear
as the seeping of a windowpane