

Weather Fronts

Inspired by the letter from Ludwig Van Beethoven to George Thomson

Weather moves across the world
there is no such thing as the Scottish rain
no really, at least that's what I mind
learning in my Scottish classroom, which I imagine
was as dull with the weather as so many other
classrooms in so many other places–

Do the birds no stop wi ye afore heading here?

This letter incomplete in translation
looks like my view - it is I think in my East
Coast home partly made of harr and smir
drawing you insular -

Is this no when the music comes?

These songs arriving like cloud
cover. So resonant but so strange
like a scrawl that for a moment
feels like your own–

‘Can you tell me where they end?’

The song of a Selkie (*do you have those?*)
who will soon need to return
to the sea *taking your weather*
emerging a new mist to old rememberings
lighter of her silver, *paid to the boatman*, they say
but we know, that so much is lost
when see wi tired eyes. The truth I think lies

in the way a storm downgrades
itself to a fresh wind. One, we open
our windows tae, on days when we feel
so stifled by our own noise. When we need a shift
in the weather, to remind us of what it is to sing

tae a dynamic sky.

Hannah Lavery

This work was commissioned by the National Library of Scotland as part of Neu! Treasures!