

Buried Treasure

Kristen Roberts

There is smoke still rising from the field beside her,
but the whispers of the untouched crops continue
as though the smouldering canes aren't victims at all.

She thinks of her father as she digs,
dark moons waxing beneath her fingernails
and the possibility of treasure inciting her muscles to burn.

He told her a story as a child, the tale of a city man
who bought a dying farm with his dreams,
who went mad after relentless years of drought

and buried all he held precious before leaping from a tree.
It was the same tree her tyre swing had hung from,
just beyond the house that had framed her youth.

It is hers now, that ruin of neglect
where the wind moans like an animal at the door and
mice gnaw footnotes in the skirting boards.

So she digs for gold, for tea sets
and brocade in the fields her family have never owned,
always in the unlit hours before her boys wake

and the canefarmer is unlikely to find her.
She digs for the imagined treasure that will save her,
but will soon find that she is digging for bones.