

Memories in Ash

Claire Rosslyn Wilson

They arrived on boats, as people always had.
Boredom, sickness and expectations clung to walls
stowaways that hid in suitcases for months

while mouths lingered with stories to last a winter.
At the other end on beaches, they burnt memories
photos had no chance to fade, incensed faces were too far

committed to turn back now. Smoke ghosts
filled the first days as passengers disembarked
to a sequence of precautions and processes.

And so they waited, faces floated in water
reflecting a repetition of emotions sometimes there,
sometimes not, screens held up to the outside world

soon engulfed in a sun that flattened their sights
and gave them headaches. They had time to collect
conversations while they waited for attention.

In drying winds their hopes ran in circles,
clothes beaten clean grew thinner each time
and the silk faded when held too long to the light.