

# Two Poems



*By Alice Oswald*  
*(for Sophia Nugent-Siegal)*

## *Cyanometer: (an instrument for measuring Blueness)*

In the lengthy proceedings of light against dark,  
those who spoke for the light  
brought forth a Bluebell:  
    under-lit and seemingly  
    swimming through far-down shades, like an angel-of-the-sea.

With speechless speech, this witness  
twisted back and showed itself  
all ears and volumes, throats and wrists  
of a colour cut from pure eye-tissue.

‘Truly’ someone said, ‘ what a dawn! what a dusk!  
what a sudden sky-wave!’

    And then shivered, because  
the blue of it was older, almost  
a numbness - so that we who stood there had the impression  
of looking down and down into death’s depths.

Then came the dark-pleaders, breathless -  
they had been walking they said  
outside the city along the immortal still-moving motorway  
into that thicket, which looks so weak by day.

But ‘oh’ they said, ‘by night it is twice as thicket!  
yes, yes, by darkness, it is twice as flower-lit!’  
and to prove it, produced the same witness:  
now even azurer,

like a diver, caught in the shock of not-looking,  
coming up through violet waters, weeping

blue  
ink

Which we passed between us  
moving from one likeness to the other,  
asking please please for a little longer  
since we too were surfacing at high speed  
through the same inexhaustible colour, in the same

stupor

## *Hymn for Winged Instruments*

A soft knock on the window and in flies  
nothing to say

    simply befalls itself  
and out again into the blazing gulf

A soft knock on the window - and in flies  
wave of the hands  
    flash of the skirts

    Yet another and another  
tap-taps on the black glass  
some with thrummings  
others with whirring tremblings

What is quieter than a  
quicker than

What is deeper-into-the-dense of things  
than a moth’s message?

Not much, maybe the heart-fly  
drumming at the window in the chest  
and  
    stopping

*by Alice Oswald ©2022*

