

## Late Last Year

My brother brings a Sheikh to the house,  
we sit knee to knee.  
I hear the echo of my mother scrubbing a pot,  
I imagine her body crossed, wishing.

They hold me down,  
I wake with a needle in my arm dripping  
ZamZam water from the curtain rail. My brother sits  
comfortably as Sheikh touches my arm.  
I know then that he will be my first.

Now I lie alone in dark rooms,  
a stomach cut open in my hands.  
Sweat and unci burns my skin through my clothes.

I cough three times.  
I heard if you phone the police but cannot speak,  
three coughs will alert them.

When my brother gives me away, he flings  
my body down the aisle.  
Mother still rings me every morning,  
I end the call with my phone in my tea.

The man who fucked love into me  
stands over my body.  
A present from his travels hangs above my head,  
I crane my neck,  
memorise the lines on the aged male  
folded in a corner, let the colours  
leap out and sew my irises shut.

There are no women in this painting,  
just a scarf draped over a chair.  
I cannot escape.

My love for women is my fear of men.  
Heaven is under my mother's feet,  
but when she is stepping on my chest,  
she is actually trying to push me into Hell.