

Inn-Between

Karen Kuehne Annesen

In the kitchen Dolce crisps chicken for twenty
in cast iron pans. My first taste of plantains
fried was here, it seems just nights ago,
and even now I can feel them hot
and soft at the back of my throat.
In the hallway Joanne beats back at shadows,
bleaches black and white tiles nearly grey.
Downstairs Gladys works hard at teaching young mothers
childcare while one then two of her children dies inside her.
I make the hostel a home painting walls cranberry and cornflower.
No amount of colour alters Jane's pale stare.
With high heeled shoes
he drove tiny holes in every inch
of her body until she leaked her way here.

Note

Karen Kuehne Annesen was born in America in 1964, but has lived, worked and studied in England and Wales for the past eight years. She works with homeless and disadvantaged women. Her poem, 'Inn-Between' was written while on a writing fellowship at Hawthornden Castle in 1997.