

Alice Oswald
Two Moon Poems

1. In A Tidal Valley

flat stone sometimes lit sometimes not
one among many moodswung creatures
that have settled in this beautiful
Uncountry of an Estuary

swans pitching your wings
in the reedy layby of a vacancy
where the house of the sea
can be set up quickly and taken down in an hour

all you flooded and stranded weeds whose workplace
is both a barren mud-site and a speeded up garden
full of lake-offerings and slabs of light
which then unwill itself listen

all you crabs in the dark alleys of the wall
all you mudswarms ranging up and down
I notice you are very alert and worn out
skulking about and grabbing what you can

listen this is not the ordinary surface river
this is not river at all this is something
like a huge repeating mechanism
banging and banging the jetty

very hard to define, most close in kind
to the mighty angels of purgatory
who come solar-powered into darkness
using no other sails than their shining wings

yes this is the Moon this hurrying
muscular unsolid unstillness
this endless wavering in whose engine
I too am living