

## BEHEADED

I hear perfectly: the thud  
onto linen, the strange gasp  
like the cry of a premature baby,  
just once and then silence.

And I see perfectly:  
how my lashes scratch the light,  
a hair glittering in shadow,  
the winded hollow

where my lips rest.  
I still have all my words.  
I move my mouth,  
like someone begging for water.

Fingers grab my hair  
and I soar high above my sad  
old body, slumped and tiny.  
Tears of pity for it fill my eyes.

They are tending it,  
the blank women in blue.  
They are washing it,  
as if they loved it.

Look the people are cheering me,  
look, they are glad to see me,  
now that I've been removed  
without a single word of protest.

By Polly Clark  
From *Farewell My Lovely*  
Bloodaxe, 2009