

Four Closes

Uist Street, Govan

No flowers, just baldy grass and concrete midden,
sheets thwacking in the wind. And the old woman
who every day in scarf and checkered overall,
scrubbed the stairs, polished banisters and tiles,
with tissue till they winked. 'There wis a time lassies
widnae walk doon this street wae oot a hat,' she told me.
'Ye don't get closes like this any mair.' And she was right.
What became of her, and those old ladies of tenements,
keepers of our hearths, who planted roses in boxes,
kept our doorways scented with pine?
May the stench of streets never sully their hems.