

**Hibah SHABKHEZ**  
**Abundance of It**

Thorns stuck inside flesh, forcing it upright;  
Garlic stems pretending to be stout trees  
Fit to support the rest of a leopard;  
Perfumed hands slicing live fish into light  
Easily swallowed fingers; knocking knees  
Engrossed entirely in cold days peppered  
With pain; but - no trace of valour. The plain  
Truth glides away from the pen which trawls seas,  
And stories, which hunts for spines in vain: spurred  
By time, sorrow will suffice to explain  
Heroes.

## Wilderness House Literary Review 21/3

### Painters of The Abyss

Bought for the price of a mini-croissant,  
Savoured, perhaps, or snatched up heedlessly  
Like a riband to tie back sweat-soaked hair,  
Then exchanged for more; each book in the sea  
Of muddled letters feeds

Fingers tremulous with the need to plant  
A canvas against the brightening sky,  
Paint the abyss left by the flaming sun  
On the other side of the world, and cry  
For the drowned crescent.

**Red Velvet Box**

Inside, I know, rests a simple glass shield,  
Inscribed with some commonplace words of praise:  
Yet the box, red velvet trimmed with gold lace  
Holds a strange, seductive power. I yield,  
Let it set my heart on fire, athrum  
With long-forgotten day-dreams of glory.  
I call it Carlotta. On long sorry  
Days that sting when I seize them, I shall come  
Back.