

The menstrual elf

by Kathryn Anne Hart

there are the basics of it
(blood)
trickle/puddle/dot
in cup/tampon/sanitary cloth;
three, four, five days on,
regular cycles
(or not).

it is labour, pre-labour,
and never of love;
a means to an end
whether wanted, or not.
this
is our deal.

softened somewhat
by pills (contraceptive,
morning-after, ibuprofen,
...the lot)
even still, as deals go
(we might grumble)
pretty raw:

no recourse
from those ovaries
crusading the cause
til mission accomplished,
or (misnomered)
menopause.

Kathryn Anne Hart is a gender equality and women's rights consultant specialising in Europe and West Africa. British by nationality, Kate lives and works in France. She is passionate about equality in all forms, but especially women's equal rights, and particularly women's sexual health and reproductive rights, which are so often challenged, ignored, or repressed. Kate has two young children, and when not working she writes novels and poetry, and runs a small charity offering training on gender stereotypes in schools.