

## Clare Rainsford

### Martha

Dirty saucers. Damp teatowels.  
The steady drip-drip-drip of drying plates on the draining board  
as you pray for strength, head in hands,  
in a kitchen that isn't yours.

Kat couldn't do Tuesdays, so you covered instead—  
put out the biscuits, the chairs, the cat,  
drew up rotas, tidied up upstairs,  
let the flower-arrangers in when they came at one,  
locked up behind us when we left  
and then went home to get the dinner on.

Tomorrow—the same.  
find a bunch of flowers for a suffering friend  
—cancer, poor dear, we'll keep her in our prayers—  
sweep the kitchen floor and the leaves off the drive,  
do the Sainsburys' run, give Mum a call,  
and look up flight-times for your daughter's plane.

Your life defined by the whistle of the kettle;  
Rythmed by the clink-clink-clink of teaspoons against the side of mugs.  
And though our unkind inactions told you otherwise, you kept your faith  
that all of life still boils down to love.