Parallel Universe

Leighton, 1989

I remember the corridors’ countless tiles –
ceiling, walls, floors, stretching
blandly to an end
somewhere; an inevitable
Conclusion.
And gardens scattered occasionally:
small affairs – concrete, naturally –
breaking up the grey with
green-grey.

I remember staring at the rain scarring windowpanes,
at the paralysed trees
and the starlings;
starlings, launching themselves from diseased branches
in hysterical scrambles,
blindly hitting unseen windows.
I remember their dull eyes fixed; stony.
Dead.

And how silly it all seemed, aged eight.
“But Mummy, people come to hospital to get better!”

Katharine Wiseman