

Kyiv, spring 1986

There was sand. Concrete with a grassy verge.
Dusty willows with their tiny coupled bugs,
A deep iridescent blue, which we used to search
For in foliage and name Kuzya; parasite trails dug
Into the leaves crumpled like stomachs. A fat coin unlocks
Sugary fizz from the vending machine. A fine light rain
Waters lilacs and dandelions alike, soaks
Into filigree sandals, mists over picnic remains.

Not very far away
By the measures of sieverts and half-lives
(I imagine) there are still burning fires,
A mad chittering of Geiger counters. Lies
Already being shaped. Elsewhere, instruments spike,
Isotope curves staggering higher.
Here, at least for a few more days,
There's just late spring, and silence, like
Nothing has changed, and as-yet-untainted May.