

Playing with dice in North Uist

It was there –along the sweeping,
unspoiled beach, no footprints from birds, sea
unruffled by wind, white sand
as if freshly bleached, sun shining
with much enthusiasm though not warm– that you said

this will not be forever,
and I flatly refused to believe you.
How can this seascape
not last, its colours
the very definition of infinity, its scent

reminding us that there are things
which should never end. And as I spoke,
you focussed on something in the distance, the sea
or the sun, or maybe you were looking for more convincing
reasons, even if untrue.

Was it the view and the thoughts
it provoked, or was it
the feelings themselves, ourselves
in one word? We were the more fleeting of the two,
the losers in short. Yes, you meant us,

two creatures thrown into this scene
as dice, pinning our hopes
merely on chance. All over with one roll,
a sentence passed
by no one in particular.

The score, the odds, the probability.
We tried hard to leave our mark, or at least
make an impression. Yet it was clear, from the direction
of the wind, that we would never be part of the picture: the whitest beach
the quiet sea, the coolest sun.
