

Richard and Smith

Richard has disappeared.
The barista doesn't know where he's gone.
Richard used to come in here and talk to Smith.
Smith was a friend who could turn nasty
and was always speaking into his earpiece.
Richard would answer back. Arguments
would break out across the café.
Richard once shouted out: 'Smith
you're a fucking racist'. I went over then,
pretending to understand, but all I could hear
was a river of sound, the music
behind all complaint, consonants,
the sweep of vowels and further back,
the cryptic source of worry, the damage
done where nobody can see it done
and troubles carried into the hills, albeit
in a minor key as if the softening
of pain was sufficient. His car
has gone from round the corner –
the car in which, according to the barista,
who won Barista of the Year Award, 2021,
he would sleep each night.

