**Chatter and Requiem** *by Dena Fakhro*

Did I remember it right?

I never thought I'd see the Thames

recoil, nor mark the scar

We heard that, like the Ganges

it bore a man

not yet dead but knocked

live and kicking to his tomb

Light a candle

This market, like a busy smudge

Which lengthens the church shadow

Weekly, washing its feet

Of fish guts, offal, sheep's blood

And green leaves fallen from

The crowns of fruit and veg

Today it asks for silence

There is no nectar, no cheese

No sweetmeat offerings

For these are soiled goods

Stamped in fear

Yesterday's waste

London Bridge not falling down but crouching

Gone the gifts from other lands

Spent the purses, still opening

And baring their copper teeth

Yet hushed, silent

Hush, for a minute's silence

What space remains for communion?

When the crates under the arches

Are altar for human flesh and

Butchers' knives knead the hands

Of merchants for unholy war

Stopper the thought, hope it never returns

A night visit from new Rippers

Cracking the pavements

Straining the cobbles

Jumping streets

Like avenging ghouls

Sprung from the Clink

Or another dark history

Unleashed