**Waiting for Gold** *by Sheila Aldous*

From the red sky I saw goldsmiths

pouring twenty-four carats into the Teign.

The gold glinted on the heads of salmon

as they jumped in concentric circles.

Precious liquid melded together, made

a bracelet for the goddess of secret smiles.

The gold drew itself thin and wiry, a message

for a king from seven magpies

and the waters rolled with the honeyed tide

spreading out sheets for a mistress.

Closed lip of tors snatched the sun,

blinked the grey iron of a heron’s wing.

The river died, a silversmith’s eye

faced with the competition of aurelian fire,

as the gilded plate washed with darkness

was turned away in prayer.

I will keep watch, wait for the goldsmith

to return, to tell me the secret

never to be told, to lay out his sheets,

to cast me onto his bed of song,

and I will wait for the leaf of time,

the rounding, the gilding, the beaten path.