**Mother Goddesses of Netherby** *by Susan Szekely*

*(Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle)*

One continuous stone hemline

and six sturdy feet; shawls draped

over shoulders. The middle one

holds a bowl filled with fat fruits.

The others steady brimming pitchers

against their hips. They could be waiting

for a bus to anywhere: Appleby market

(the heft of a pie, a truckle of cheese).

The school-run. Night out in Carlisle

(significant birthday). A hospital shift.

A visit to the food bank.

The stone glitters. Their heads

have been smashed off, so I must guess

at faces: frowns, crow’s feet, dimples,

smiles warm and wide as ovens. All lost.

Their splintered expressions buried

in an untilled field waiting for the plough.