

Alyson Hallett

My Uncle the Farmer

My uncle drinks tea from a saucer.
He pours it out of the cup, makes a shallow lake
then lifts it to his lips.

His voice is the shape of Somerset.
Gurt big, ow be on,
his tongue liltling like a Quantock hill.

He drives onto the moors at midnight,
drops dead-lines in the rhynes.
I learn that eels boiled in milk skin easily.

My uncle meets the day before the sun.
When fields are covered in mist
and cows look legless as they float around.

His eyes are full of weather.
He knows the sounds cows make
when their calves are taken away.

He's never had a day off
because cows need to be milked
twice a day every day.

My uncle's index finger is too big to fit in a tea cup's handle.
His hands are rough and broken.
Worst sound on earth, he says.