

Marie Naughton

When Elvis Died

A hiker brought word from the valley.
I was on the mountain—the upper village
where grass was sweetest—driving the herd
to sheds near stone-built cheese huts.
Blood from the little cow's infected udder
mixed with milk as it rattled into the metal pail.
The farmer slopped it in a trough for the orphan heifer.
Of course I turned down his proposal! I was eighteen,
for God's sake, my life belonged elsewhere.
Weeks after, mum forwarded the postcard
to my student halls. I recognised the childlike hand
from shopping lists of tractor parts.