

Something Broken

American flags and mulberry trees
sway to a dull breeze and
a broken radio hums softly about
afternoons in Mississippi.

Laughter flies from Pawpaw's mouth;
Moll Flanders has been misheard
and racist slurs have been inferred.

Mawmaw looks quickly at Jordan
and I realise the severity of race.

How strange that I am a foreigner in
a foreign land with foreign people
but I am welcomed because of my skin.

Fear holds me back from commenting
when I could and *know* I should.

But what does it matter?

I'll forget it in an hour.

Outside the crickets are clicking
and birdsong fills a clear sky,
and the broken radio hums about
afternoons in Mississippi.

Catherine Darwen