

Between...

the grey-on-grey
sky (steam

breathed off the power station
into wisht November)

and the Pulverised-Fly-Ash slurry
settled to a wan grit,

layer me;

between the shuffle-and-thrill
of reed beds, party

children getting ready for
Surprise!

and the cool

rococo of the pylons,
the chitter of voltage

like grasshoppers never
where you bend to see,

inter-layer these two

worlds walking, look
and word and look and word and

silence, me and you;

between the many vague retractions
of the tide

(for now, for now) and small
stunned bird cries, tattered flightpaths,

archaeology

would lay one day
upon another (centuries-

old footprints
grubbed up by a spring surge,

gone) like leaves,

the wilderment of reed stalks, the chink
of coot purpose, and the aboriginal

and utter industry

of whatever rat or vole or other
kestrel-meat

has scabbled out a fan
of bright ash-slurry

(compensation

land, we call this) as close
as we'll get to a clean start,

from scratch, laid, layered
at our feet

impartially.

*from The Margin, in A Bright Acoustic (Bloodaxe, 2017)
after a walk at Newport Wetlands, with Valerie Coffin Price*

<http://groundworks.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Margin-extract-for-GroundWorks.pdf>