Just the ticket

It's not like waiting for the bus or the train :
Glasgow to Edinburgh, Dundee or Aberdeen.

Peoples' names called out by the woman at her work
like the names of places, stations : Mrs Kirk, Falkirk.

Lily Gow. Linlithgow. I sit here going nowhere.
I sigh in and out with my newspaper. A man there -

out of it with his chug, chug of a cough.
He has the look of someone needing a week off.

A doctor's line is a ticket to take it easy.
The woman before me is called, rises, queasy,

somebody now—Mrs Carr. Awkward carriage, vexed.
A knowing door closes like a secret. I'm next.

My turn to pass through that door,
to tell what hurts, where, to whisper, implore.

My turn to imagine I'm elsewhere,
to joke to the young, dishy Doctor :

if only we'd met under better circumstances.
He could have said, "Can I have the last dance ?"

I could have said, "Listen to my heart sing.
Listen to my heart beat its wings."

Jackie Kay

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