



Cliff

Cliff visits once a week
just for the Art Group.
He's touching base
between far-flung voyages
at a place of calm waters.

His eyes hold so much light
they frighten us - as if drops
of the Aegean have been translated there
lit by their own wild skies.

And his paintings hold a frightening power.
Some have been exhibited. His figures
are Saints calm-faced
their bodies knotted

like martyrs in agony,
their sexual convolutions
a nightmare of unfulfillment, a climactic
frenzy of the celibate crayon.

He is the despair of his poor mother.
Night after night she twists
between the sheets
at each new thought and turmoil of him.

Her love is nails.
He slouches into the Art Room
like a frightened bear
escaping into the hills.

Rogan Wolf

*The Art group took place in a community centre for people with long-term mental health problems.
Cliff is not the real name of the person described.*