

## how their nets are entangled

Rennie Parker

on the tidal drift in smalltown occupations  
why their staff keep leaving and coming back again  
reluctant old retainers who are never quite gone:

you would think they had been in these places forever  
the only ties they have known, too tight  
to let go of, even though they are sinking, sinking

like one of those houses in a remote field  
the tenant farmers having absented themselves  
long ivy pulling at the crusted stone,

still nameless when their desks are cleared.  
And you think the horizon must be bouncing them back  
ensuring whoever is born here can't escape

because there is nowhere else but here  
the pull of this room, these chairs  
the cardigans hanging carelessly across them

whether it is five minutes or ten years.