

## LISTEN

**Colour *n.* ...any of the constituents into which light can be separated as in a spectrum or rainbow, and which are referred to by names such as *blue, red, yellow...***

'Can't you hear anything?'

You peer into the picture as though by sheer effort of will you could produce an image out of thin air, something that you haven't seen before, something that wasn't there.

'No,' you stand back.

'It's Spain,' she points to the trees, the sound of them like rainclouds in a red day.....

...and you wonder how you can explain the space of a colour and the way it sits in your heart and becomes something else. As you look, you feel yourself pulled into the paintings, walking along the roads and swimming in the rivers, creating a story from the structure of images and colours unfixed in space or time as you float in the canvas, fleet of foot and waiting for something, anything, to happen.

You are a traveller trusting the hand that drew this map: black lines draped purposefully over the shoulders of hills and mountains and across the boundaries of a landscape, half remembered half hidden. The line is where the colour starts, in startling contrasts of cerulean blue and vermilion - now orange now red, cadmium and turquoise, filling seas and grasping air, sticking to gateposts and hedges then rivulet-running down pathways that lead to...where? They are leading somewhere, that's the point, and this is only the start of your journey - one thing becomes another in a strange alchemy and something begins to shift.

You move on, finger-following the lines to France, Brittany and its wild mad wind and rain-textured, kinetic otherness, the vast expanses of the sea, and on to the beaches of Lindisfarne with their tides of sand and memory washing the present clean, leading you between marker posts reflecting the very stars in the hemisphere, white against black and yellow, colours you haven't even reached but will come to in time. Only then do you stop.

'Yes,' you close your eyes. 'I can hear it now.'

Dr Joanne Lloyd, January 2014

*Joanne Reardon Lloyd lives and works as a writer in the North West of England. She has a PhD in Creative Writing from Lancaster University as well as being a graduate of the UEA Creative Writing MA. She worked for many years in theatre and as a Producer for BBC Radio before becoming an Associate Lecturer with the Open University where she is also an honorary Research Affiliate in the Department of English. She is widely published and writes drama, fiction and poetry.*