

Let Them Say

Hannah Lowe

*So let them say I'm mad / They don't know how it feels to be sad
I don't know who could be glad. / In a situation like this –
Bob Andy 'Let them Say'*

England had been shouting
in my face so long, I started shouting
back. But even my shouting

became a song. Mondays, I sang
Marley. All day Tuesday singing
Bitty McLean. Weekends were for songs

of glory. *Oh Lord, show me the way.
Give me hope in my heart, I pray.*
I liked my singing loud — all day,

all through the night. The neighbours banged
the floor. I locked my door and sang.
In Asda, I sang.

On a five-mile walk from Oxford Street
to Peckham, until I couldn't feel my feet,
I sang my songs in a chorus of sleet.

I wore my violet summer dress
and never gave the air a rest.
Even riding police cars back across

the river, I sang the sour officer
a line or two of Smiley Culture
or *Moonlight Lover* or *Freedom Fighter*.

On this cold white ward, I hold my pain
with *Singing in the Rain*,
I Don't Want to Wait in Vain.

Songs rise like smugglers from the telly
and cup my ears — *A Message to You, Rudy*
sails me home, our pink house by the sea,

my sister's hair-brush microphone.
Funny what comes around again.
In the doctor's cold white office, I stand to sing

a little Soul II Soul. *Back to life. Back to reality.*
When he tries to diagnose —
however do you want me, however do you need me
I turn away and harmonise.