

Only the telephone

i.

Do not split yourself
into so many pieces –
there is no part of you
in plastic, paper,
china, nylon, steel.

You cannot carry wires
and sparkplugs into heaven.
Dead, you can manage
only the photo album
of your memory.

ii.

In the double-glazed dark,
the washing-machine
sings the baby to sleep;
only the telephone is there
to listen to our troubles.
These days, we bless ourselves
with glass beads, golf clubs,
Golf GTIs. We believe
the cosmetics ads: our lipstick
will start a revolution.

iii.

If you have eyes and ears,
if you hold the red secret
of a heart in your ribcage,
if you have a tongue
that remembers
word, song, kiss,
you know

life is not in computer chips,
or games consoles –
not stitched into clothing labels,
or the creases of upholstery.
Do not look for it in supermarket freezers,
or under the hissing lights of retail stores.
Life does not fit inside carrier bags, shoeboxes –
a motherboard has no children.

iv.

It is better to patch your skirts,
wear necklaces made from bottle-caps.
Better to drink from cracked cups
and empty jam-jars – better
to let the world consume *you*.

Claire Askew