

She drifts in the slipstream
of the slim margin.

Sometimes she worries that she is not worried.
She is very calm. Like the white page before she begins writing
or the water in the cat's bowl.
She wonders if she should yell at passing cars.
Or get wild and pull out all the weeds along the grass verge.
She just wants to get on with things.

On the first day (a lifetime ago) a diagram
is sketched to show where she is and she hears
good news (she will be cut to be cured)
although she is suspicious of the fat gape
between medical jargon and English verbs.

How to drive out into the world?
In the organic shop she thinks she is hallucinating,
the organic produce produces streams of organic colour
that match the organic voice from behind the inorganic counter.
Nothing feels solid enough to walk upon,
but she takes her apples and pears to the inorganic car
trying not to fall through organic space
or slip through to another universe.

They fly to Queenstown but she has to bear
the weight of a phone call mid-air
(‘ninety-five per cent of women
in your shoes have nothing
to worry about’). Privately,
she laughs at her small collection of footwear,
mostly Chucks, and the way numbers seem to fall
like shooting stars and picture books
on the bright side,
according to the oncologist.
She is used to off-road driving and the weakness
of chance. They drive for hours through pillars of rocks
the burnt horizon a sleepy distraction.

It’s not a deep-seated worry,
just a flutter of the imagination.

She meets a woman who has had the same operation and
the woman says she never likes the way people
say I know you’ll be fine when
the future is unpredictable, as random as love

or the way birds shit on her car roof.
The woman says she is *very sure* she will be
all right nevertheless, and to do something special each day
like walk
on grass with bare feet or drink fresh guava juice
or write a poem about split seconds
if that was what took her fancy.