

MY BROTHER VISITS ●

DS Maolalai

he looks around
at what the new place
looks like,
sees the pictures,
the bookshelves
and the guitar
in the corner
and asks politely
if I still play anymore.
I tell him
I don't - it's pretty much
just all
decoration.

we sit down
on the easy
chairs;
two quiet men
uncomfortable
in a familiar silence,
making occasional stabs
at conversation
like someone with a broom,
nervous to kill
a mouse.
I offer him a bottle,
but that doesn't work. my parents
are having dinner nearby. that's
why he's hanging out here. just killing time
until it's time
to drive them home.

we try a movie then;
talk a little

about Fargo
and lapse in silence - more comfortable now
with someone talking
on tv. we've almost gotten to the spot
where the dad gets shot
in the carpark
when the doorbell
finally rings. I pause the movie,
feeling glad for a release.

our dad
comes in. another
not a talker. relief shot again
like a guy
in a carpark.
he casts around the room
for conversation,
sees the guitar
and asks me
do I play. I tell him
not really
anymore.