

JOHN BARTON
SQUADRON

Out of the cold through cracks
in the foundations of our rundown
Victorians, they slip in, flies banging

about the ceilings as kamikaze
as rock climbers careering
down rainy, cloud-lit faces of glass

steamed up when we peer through to
the narrows, the harbour's ebb
tide prying apart the headlands, ocean

bound icebergs and oil rigs buoyed above
torpedoed convoys, hapless
Titanics listing and rusting fathoms

deep, cobwebs snarling in our hair
wreaths of imagined
reproach we bat away, bluebottles

parkouring potlid to wineglass cross
wise from Niagaras drained into
cups of chamomile we forget to quaff

dishracks angled with plates
alit on, spoons, forks
thoughtlessly slid into mouths too

fast, broadcast biota spirited in
wingbeat by wingbeat
fibre-optic-thin legs in skittery

sidestep along serrated edges
of knives, fret glanced
onto tabletops before spam lets fly

helicopters on patrol above Beirut
and Paris, fighters scrambled across
the Caliphate, drones over Sana'a

phantom wiretaps catching whispers
CCTV not sharp enough to snag
threats agitated by garbage

spilling, satellite-dish-skewed lids
flipped off, tea leaves scattering
decoded by Leopard-tank-spotted

bugs, aimless miniaturized leviathans
hooking purchase upside down on
beige undersides of lowered

toilet seats, entrapped sleeper cells
unnamed bloggers exhort us to find
within, our rest restless, fears of gas

adrift in Syria as squadron after
squadron rapidly aligns with
blinking vanishing points in our eyes.