Pride and Prejudice

We took our best dresses,

the summer we went to the seaside,

by bus with everyone,

staying in a boarding house,

me still at bucket and spade stage,

her forced by frugality to share,

one room, one bed with me,

the bathroom with strangers

and breakfast with everyone

the packed lunch an extra cost ,

but worth it for convenience she said

and everyone agreed.

And we all booked the evening meal,

to sit in circular conviviality,

nice comments made about my dress,

the favourite black and red needle-cord

which he’d later have me photographed in,

and hers all orange and brown swirls,

handmade and much admired for that,

but her uneasy about all this praise,

feeling she’d discerned another opinion

and a curiosity about us- mum or granny:

her so pale, me so dark.

But I had my bucket and spade,

bought paper flags from the beach café

to stick into sandy battlements

and a strawberry mivi to lick,

hers a mint choc ice,

and then at some point it must have rained

and we ventured into a bookshop,

a place I was used to given his habits

and the book bought to please someone,

Pride and Prejudice, small and musty

red cloth covers, black gothic print

which I did try to read. Did try to enjoy.