

Guest Poet:

David Howard

**The Piano Holds Its Breath**

*(Granada, Nicaragua)*

Whenever a man comes between a bullet and a wall  
the piano wants to let go. Each key an attempt at the philosopher's stone,  
the piano was locked because God said nothing  
and that nothing condemns us to more than His silence;  
it is the model for every evasion  
between the parentheses of heaven and earth, the bedroom and the kitchen  
where I write this, after your before.

The piano has taken leave of my senses.  
One two three non-notes accompany the yet-to-be  
suicide: 'I will walk into the sea.'  
No wonder the piano is locked, no wonder now the piano is locked –  
it needs the rumour of bees,  
the air of empty dresses teasing the washing-line,  
the line that is a skipping-rope swollen with the rain of poetry.