



Being Here

They're as close as I come to church,
these fallow rooms of spider plants
and magazines, where the telephone shrills
for someone else, and the outside world
is a distant drone, and time itself is out on call.

I bow my head, and contemplate
the carpet-tiles, or choose a text
from age-old Readers Digest : Laughter,
the Best Medicine ; I am John's Spleen.

If I seem at ease, I'm a green
-room actor, secretly burdened with lines :
"sharp" "right here" "it's silly, but I just can't seem..."
But when the voice annunciates my name, I feel
...regret. I like this room, perhaps it heals.

Kathleen Jamie

This poem was commissioned by the poet David Hart on behalf of the Arts Council. It is part of a collection of fifty poems by different UK poets - each on the subject of waiting. The poems are for display in waiting rooms.