



The Weighing of the Heart

What does the heart weigh ?
More than the pull of your small
hand on mine ? More than your head's
light heaviness on my shoulder ?

Under the tender pressure of sleep
my old wool jacket becomes
your memory of consolation, comfort,
that ancient sweetness of love and tweed.
Remembering this, watching you,
I lose my place entirely, not knowing
whose the head, whose the sleeve,
whose the big hand and whose the small.

At the gates of an unknown underworld
the Ancients measured a good heart
against the slightest puff of down,
in the gleam and glitter of delicate scales.
Like Thoth, we watch and wait.

What does the heart weigh ?
Less than your head's tiny burden,
for lighter than a feather is love
and this the Egyptians knew.

Maura Dooley

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