



# How Emily Mercer (96) grew Young

She stood in her nightgown staring out at the night. The moon dissolved like a sleeping pill on the tongue. The sky grew light.

She walked again in the garden. Dead blooms straightened their stems and flowered. A broken web re-strung itself like a necklace

to hang at the throat of a tree. *This is all for me*, thought Emily. She left her sticks at the gate and ran for Wish-you-well Bridge.

The river talked with its mouth full, gleaming with bright ideas. *Goodbye my dears !* cried Emily. In she dived, her skin smooth

as a pearl, her white hair turning to red as she swam. She forgot her grandchildren's names, her children, the tall dark handsome man with the ring. Emily Mercer was always a girl who could swim. *Hi diddle dee diddle dee*. Aeroplanes in the buttery air turned to balloons in the sky.

A poacher up to his tricks on the bank noticed her splashing away. Afterwards, when they asked, *She was young*, was all he could say.

Carol Ann Duffy

*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.*