



Arrival 1946

The boat docked at Liverpool.
From the train Tariq stared
at an unbroken line of washing
from the North West to Euston.

These are strange people, he thought -
an Empire, and all this washing,
the underwear, the Englishman's garden.
It was Monday, and very sharp.

Moniza Alvi (b. 1954)

from "Carrying my Wife", published in 2000 by Bloodaxe and reprinted here by kind permission.