

Missing

for Shahin Memishi

He is keeping alive
his language, its silky
consonants, its slippery vowels

and the hot colour
of his country's earth
its burned-off skies,

here where it is always
grey and green, grey and green,
the shock of bombs

smothered under neutrals
and people smile
not looking into eyes

for fear of catching fire.
He is afraid too,
but only of forgetting

to yearn. Sometimes
it is good to miss he says,
trying the hard sounds.

A. C. Clarke