Notes about what I meant

What I meant to say about the light was that we loved it, then it changed. Taking the world with it.

Daylight unfurled and our seeing – anything – was adventure.

* We hunted light up and down the island. Sometimes, I thought we chased an idea of the softest clearest light – a spring you’d find, high in the hills, after days of walking. But, at precise times, depending on clouds, it draped itself across roofs and buildings like a golden cat – colours deep, ridges in silhouette – five minutes only, before we headed for a blinding, bleached midday. If we’d known the principles at work, we could’ve been butchers learning anatomy.

* The new optician had a different chart. The test was to read underlined phrases through lenses that changed like funfair mirrors. I was to say how hard/easy they were – except for one in tiny type that said how beautiful.

* Once, anxious about a sky with noisy pixels, I asked A. about the problem. He explained how a lens sees differently to our eyes. If I were a bird, or cat, how many colours would there be?

* We rose at six to catch the early early light, its cold wave splashing over the land, then staining
with the sun’s gold. The optician said the cells in our eyes are the ones we’re born with – the only ones that don’t renew. He placed a lens in front of my right eye/left eye. “How does that look? And that?”

*  
“Never get used to this”, begins a poem by Derek Walcott, referring to another subject entirely.

*  
We threw out maps of places we’d been and asked the sky whether this was the weather we’d heard of and where was the light?

*  
After my new prescription for sight, I wrote down the test –

the tall weeds

a landscape of snow

how melancholy.

Mary Macpherson