

Taboo

Why should we be smiling?
After all, we are displaced
from our country, our lands,
our mothers and fathers,
our brothers and our sisters.

Why should we reveal to you,
through your staring, brass-rimmed lens,
what we think of your horses and carts,
those trinkets, the royal insignia
that adorn your epaulettes and coat-tails?

We know what will happen when you leave:
we cooperate under sufferance,
taking advantage of argentic shade,
the hills and riven valleys, subjugating
the light you require, so precisely aligned,

so perfectly diffused, to capture us,
to frame us, for a second or two,
to hang us, with your reflections,
congregated, along the walls of your museums,
your archives and acquisitive collections.

Why should we be smiling?
After all, we have been displaced.
We have been spirited away.
According to law, our eyes must close:
according to law, we may never look back.

Ian Gibbins