



TRACEY SHARES THIS POEM WITH US...

The Facilitator

I spent a winter with them,
watching how they talked,
the way the director would turn
when asked a question;
the subtle order of tea and coffee.
They asked: 'When will we start changing?'
They said: 'Nice work if you can get it.
What is it you actually do?'

I smiled and shared their jokes;
I asked them what they thought they were,
animal, plant, mineral, machine.
At first they were hesitant and recited
the company line and spoke eloquently
of vision, mission, goals. No heart.
But one day over lunch a quiet secretary
whispered that they were an orchestra
only some of the instruments had been neglected
and most were out of tune.

I went along to a rehearsal and sure enough
there were
broken strings, a battered flute,
a drum whose skin was torn.
And still I listened.

A board member waylaid me in the stalls.
'We are a ship,' he said, 'more or less sound,
but battered by the storm.'
I looked out of the window and truly the horizon
was askew.

The woman who headed HR reminded me of the
calibre of the crew
But the woman who made the tea said 'No-one
speaks to me.'

I was the loom on which they wove the cloth
of their past, their present and at last their future.
I was the canvas on which they drew the cartoon
strip of their progress.

I'd brought a bag of tools but, to be frank
I never opened it. They had their own,
unusual, but well-adapted
for use by musicians on a stormy sea.
While they patched holes and mended strings,
I was their temporary harbour.

For a while I was popular and enjoyed
a certain notoriety but slowly
they became absorbed in their own music,
plotted their own course. They were
so busy listening to each other,
they forgot me. I left them
sailing up the Amazon
playing a Strauss waltz
conducted by
the woman who made the tea.

