

**Belinda Cooke**

**Stem**

This cream tulip  
might taste of vanilla pod,  
its vertical petal just  
tipping the frame.

One stop more  
and the velvet olive stem  
would disappear,  
into that soft focus.

Remember, once you showed me  
how a wide aperture  
narrows the depth of field  
to free the white owl from its cage?

Without seeing the wounds  
how was I to believe those bars  
could disappear into the snowy white  
feathers flecked with brown?

Now come then, remove  
your tulip from the wall  
and give it to me:  
I'll put it to good use.



Photograph: Stephen Brindle

