

## Chris McCabe

### Lungworm

*The word has gone viral*

William Burroughs

Lesions licked from silvered slug trails  
the stipplestick of death  
you drink the host from a viral chalice  
in whispers softer than sparrows' air tracts.

Words burrow through earthsoil,  
pass the long wait of bitterwort & the white  
palette of expectation : your face.

All the worms, each double-ended word,  
the poison from the skin before the de-crowning leveller bit in.  
You were our King's taster. When you died you grew  
from the other end & the sparrow ate your head.

Silence came too late.

This virus is in us.