

## Poem

**Jo McFarlane**

### Empire

The DSM\* is getting bigger,  
more audacious  
in its claims  
Colonising difference  
in its patriarchal sweep

Every human trait a species  
of disorder to be subjugated  
to the will of doctors  
Nothing that we say or do  
is normal anymore

In whose interests are the  
territories of the mind enslaved?  
Why give up our protest and dissent –  
the lush green spaces we inhabit  
they call madness?

A foreign power  
alien and threatening encroaches  
every corner of the globe  
Sanitising us  
with blandness and complicity

That we too may be its agents  
as we silently retreat  
into the diagnostic ghettos  
where the natives are allowed  
to freely roam

\*Diagnostic & Statistical Manual  
(of psychiatric disorders)