

*Carolyn Jess-Cooke*

**Boom!**

There was this baby who thought she was a hand grenade.  
She appeared one day in the centre of our marriage  
– or at least in the spot where all the elements of our union  
    appeared to orbit  
and kept threatening to explode, emitting endless alarm-sounds  
    that were difficult to decode.  
On the ridge of threat, we had two options.  
One was attempt to make it to the bottom  
of the crevasse slowly, purposively, holding hands. The other  
    was see how long we could stand there philosophising  
    that when she finally went off we'd be able to take it.  
But then the baby who believed she was a hand grenade  
    was joined in number: several more such devices entered our lives.  
We held on, expecting each day to be our last. We did not let go.  
As you might expect, she blew us to smithereens.  
We survived, but in a different state than before: you became  
    organised, I discovered patience, shrapnel soldered the parts of us  
    that hadn't quite fit together before. Sometimes when I speak  
it's your words that come out of my mouth.