

Black to White
(London/Turkey 1964)

– then, quiet in the wall
moved along by paraffin lamps
you left for a keyhole of glass;
your ribs and breasts, quite clear
beneath its constellations,
slid behind two strangers' hands.

Knit from cicada chains
to where the earth's rim
stitched the sea to white heat,
we knew it already from flickering leaves...
your hairs' final arousal
blackened the Turkish sand.

We Tread Forwards

In a clutch of yellow and blue spheres
(buttocks, bags, turbans, moons)
a piece of diamante, touched, looms red-hot
on the conscience – green bananas, lychees
blur under the railway arch,
where insolent skies gleam eyeball-white,
we tread forwards through bright puddles,
trail behind us almost three hours
(noted, as only the new notice a stiff mouth's
capacity to still utter words,
their reverberations,
or bats remember their own loud weight).

Years later, whistling while you run the bath
again, carelessly, one loyal foot obeys
without dragging, the stark nature of it
reminds you of last words –
life is indeed 'rich', it is 'miraculous'.

Saints on a Rood Screen Dado

You lie in an East wind
spinning off empty barley fields
in new pink saxifrage collar.

They can't provoke some absences,
and where a master-stroke began
ends in precarious lines

(four are almost entire
some half there
some in a kind of limbo) –

I guess, through criss-crossed light
your bones are just that,
a life's long pentimento

before your mouth enunciates
adjusting to casual quiet,
my near-future's insidious whisper.

It's like devotions real purpose
makes me a listening absentee,
there's nothing but desirous colour

saying 'Ambrose', 'Augustine'
'Gregory', 'Jerome',
or not 'there', but 'everywhere'.

If We Sell the House

Seen through an open sash,
what remains (of me, dust),
the lime against cloud cliffs
this quiet August harvest
in a heat-wave's 3 a.m,
is a mere splash of leaves,
the blue cows' breaths and
waking eyes blank drift
slow separating
all enmeshed, silvered
by a bright moon.

Christmas Ghost

Earthed here, rougher, much more
than delicate remembered bones
or even her face's desire
to boulder such impossible loves,
Cassandra, still vanishing
under the weight of natural laws
unable to force things back into place
and all of those eyes still fairground glass,
she disadvantaged, so obviously
that taxi-drivers noticed it
refused her even a no-man's land...

not here by the estuary
nor where a bird hovers
occludes a birthplace of crippled pines
for clouds stiffened like nacre
suggesting all kinds of mortal dangers
or supernatural relief

but under the tree with smashed glasses
embers of chestnut smoking on
boxing hours still held in abeyance.