

Short Walks Are Permitted

You must have seen me stand, week in
 week out, and wait where no bus-stop is,
 while you breeze past clocking up
 the days. Or draw in to the kerb, lost:
 "Can you tell me the way to the docks,
 the station, the stadium?" Sorry,
 I don't know from here, and the girl
 throbbing in the rusty Mini wails
 "I'm going to miss my connection,"
 trailing a lifetime of missed connections.
 One for me to take home, here, behind
 the ivied wall the trees reach over
 to smother the streetlights in neon green,
 for go; home to my carousel
 of coloured pills, dotes and antidotes,
 food for the small bloody tomatoes
 that grow in every bloody artery.

Home has all we need for a happy life:
 physio, chiropody, mad parlour games
 and evening classes in death
 (sponsored jointly by Suicide Weekly
 and Valhalla Life) leading to the last
 certificate you will ever need.
 Plus a free video of your funeral.
 The leaves churn and swamp the light,
 each leaf with its own predicament,
 each one dancing to a different wind
 and taking its chances. A red-faced
 heavyweight bristles from an overladen
 red pick-up, "So you're lost too, mate."
 No, not lost; not going anywhere,

mate, but home; home and bed before
the fleets of black-windowed vans
begin cruising the night, pulling up
where no bus-stop is, where shadows wait.