

*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.