

TWO POEMS



Peter Robinson

CLEARING THE WOOD

*Ma fui certo che il bosco
non è senza via d'uscita*

—MARIO LUZI

Replenishing a bonfire wants fronds from the copse,
Or stripping ivy out of strangled boughs
She cuts through twigs; replenishing allows
Embers glowing red hot to collapse.

Making the distance with coffee cups, I traipse
After hiss of sap and smoke that goes
Rising above her spinny now breeze blows:
Yesterdays marred by quarrellings or rapes.

Let me slip away without a sound
And live the rest: seed packets, coins, pub lunches,
Xmas decorations, overcast skies.

Tomorrow, white foxgloves will prick cleared ground
Or dappled shade, estate and grange surprise—
Never again these intertwining branches.

NOSTALGIA FOR THE PRESENT

In a cliff-face lake front frame,
pink and ochre with grey pilasters
and oval-topped windows,
a dainty hydro-electric plant
built in the early century seems
such a thing as appears in dreams
of deserted piazzas with distant trains.

A statue in white wind-ruffled stone
with an abstract name like Melancholy
is forgotten by locals, ignored by those
emerging from the porticoes
at sunset: somebody, let's say,
whose elongated shadow ends
where a rock wall meets a lawn,
one of a child's imaginary friends
invented, cherished to fend off
the empty hours or lack of love;
he suspects we might be more
accepting of the architecture.

You see a lido's moulded concrete
landing-stage canopy, curved sheet glass,
and parked at angles on display
two number-plate-less cars;
this restaurant terrace is curious
with eyes that glance at them and us,
you and I trying to recuperate
from a premature nostalgia
at the merely being here.

Young divers splash among the stakes
of a rickety pleasure boat pier.
Behind us, under cloudless blue,
there'd been undeniable urges.
We're staring in the dusk to see
if from moorings, beach names,
the roadsigns and waving grass verges,
would emerge a continuity.

So nothing more alarming than a topless torso,
the wild goose chase of whitening waves
across a lake as smoke wisps slide
from explosions of each firework
allows the moon, a whole orange now,
to move above black cypresses
by a swollen stone-pillared balustrade
and lovers' bronzed or brazen faces
swim this avenue.