

*White Lines*

Take, if you like, that green woodpecker  
at work on bark of a poplar tree:  
its stubborn, red-crested action brings  
far echoes with each tell-tale knock  
tap-tapping through thick traffic back to us  
in a breakfast table air..

Take tendrils drawn from an ivy wall,  
or that heron at the torrent's brink  
keeping its feet wet as we bike by  
in a day of forms and hurried talk,  
faxes, photocopies, sad or sorry queues...  
Yet somehow still I hear myself think  
despite the brief cicadas' racket,  
the Vespas, programmes, ephemeral news...

Like cumulo-nimbus in a sunset,  
late on some horizon, doubts arise  
with, capping it all, the summer lightning,  
its remote, mute detonations  
flashed across cloud-cupolas and domes;  
only you don't hear a thing.

The arrowed forks and flare-flames  
strike like so many unsourced quotations  
escaped from the lost dead's unthumbed tomes;  
but because they can't remember us,  
resentful, we've forgotten them—  
and an obscure grief or shameful  
forms from dark by the road's white lines,  
among allusive adverts and clear signs.