

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.