

*Coast to Coast*

Was *Dr Finlay's Casebook*  
on the radio or TV?—

though it definitely was  
a Sunday night,

the yard had the look  
of patent leather

and whoever strayed out  
in the pitiless wind

needed their heads examined,  
so that sweet Highland voice

reached as far  
as could be expected

into our den of silence,  
the scrunch of the coal-shed,

spluttering drains; gun-  
metal beer-kegs on

the moon-white shore.

# *Half a Century*

*after Eugenio Montale*

The learned foreigner tells me  
he wants to congratulate me  
on *Cuttlefish Bones*.  
But it came out  
half a century ago.  
Let him go to hell.  
I don't want to be yesterday's man,  
frozen in time for four verses.  
In fact, I don't like  
who I am or what I see.  
The whole thing's a mistake.  
And now who can get out of it?