

# S A M G A R D I N E R

## *Days*

(A Coronet)

1

Days are too short to measure the time  
survivors survive, wishing they  
had saved the plank to cling to  
during more private storms.

2

Storms the Tax Office, takes a red  
delicatessen ticket, sits and rehearses  
his case, trying not to stare at  
the desk fan shaking its head.

3

Overhead the parent squalls in circles  
as a juvenile unspangled starling  
crosses the road in a cat's  
mouth, one wing flapping.

4

Flapping halyards on the flagless pole  
emphasising the Magistrates' Court fire  
warning shots above  
the heads of passers-by.

5

By passing eastwards in endless  
procession across the fens, the grey  
flat-bottomed clouds add a sense  
of direction to the days.

# *Brought up*

(A Coronet)

1

Brought up on underage drink drunk  
from dented cans, we relished each dent,  
till keepers reported the crack  
of ring-pulls in the covert.

2

Covert yokels maybe, but never known  
to mount a horse, filly or colt, or  
any animal with more than  
two legs, we had standards.

3

The standard evasion of the gooseberry  
bush was accepted without question,  
following the discovery  
that most mothers have one.

4

Mothered (and besotted) by an angel (sots  
that we were) whose kisses made us men,  
in a beauty spot with burst matt-  
resses and ruined playpens.

5

Pen plays over paper, can be overheard  
harking back to haps and mishaps  
which, brought up better, I would  
never have brought up.

E A M O N G R E N N A N

# Orison

A morning washed to gleamy skin and bone, to the vapoury  
radiance left by  
Rain, to such absolutes as my own shadow burnt on treebark  
and hedgeleaf and  
Living its other life there while I walk this present, provisional  
body towards  
The vanishing point, peering backwards to see a small fleet of  
ducks muckraking  
On the grass verge—for earthworms, I guess, whose thirst has  
brought them out

To savour the aftermath of last night's downpour, blind blood-  
coloured bodies  
Sliding through raptures of damp, through such palpable slow  
ecstasies of drip  
And slobber, the smells of freshened earth their paradise as the  
ducks peck and  
Swallow the morning's manna—a gift they give thanks for in an  
anthem of quacks  
As they waddle a swamp of sunlight, totally for the moment and  
at home in it.