

P H I L I P L A R K I N

Two Poems

The following two poems occur in Philip Larkin's manuscript notebook no. 2, held in the Brynmor Jones Library at the University of Hull. Although containing revisions and corrections, both seem to have been brought to a finished state by Larkin, as reconstructed here. They are reproduced with the permission of the University and the Estate of Philip Larkin, to which grateful acknowledgement is made and with which all copyright remains.

Hotter, shorter days arrive, like happiness
Late in life: the sky still deeply blue,
Trees undiminished, municipal roses
Budding repeatedly though drenched with dew,
And the white cricketers at festivals
Casting long shadows, while waves tirelessly
Sunder themselves on disused littorals,
Just as if summer were still strong and early.

But to children sitting in fresh rows,
And the typist looking out across
Baking chimney pots the unhindered sun
Pouring through window glass deceives, because
No one can use it. So perhaps none
Enjoys old age, however fine its shows.

13.10.61

Clouds merge. The coast darkens.
Sunless barley stirs.
The sloping field alters
To weed-littered rock,
Waders and lichens.
The sea collapses, freshly.

Inland, a still park
Is thronged by wind.
Trees deafen the hideous chapel.
Storm spots quicken round
A railed tomb of sailors.
Nuts lie on the drives.

Embedded in the horizon
A tiny sunlit ship
Seems not to be moving.

O things going away!

21.9.62