

C A T H A L M C C A B E

A Postcard from London

to Kamil in Warsaw

I took your mother's hand and the PLANE,
a toy in your hand, took off, an improbable flying TAXI.
Imagine a weekend without the CAR!
Oxford Street is *choc-a-bloc* with double-decker BUSES
(though not, you'll be dismayed to hear, a single LORRY
in sight). In the centre the TRAINS

go to ground. The speed with which those underground TRAINS
shoot into every station—nearly, I'd say, as fast as the PLANE!
(Though not as much fun, I know, as a LORRY.)
The incredibly roundabout route of that TAXI!
The crash, then, that Mummy witnessed out shopping, a BUS
going into the back of a CAR!

"Crash!" you cry, for the thousandth time, not (thank God) in that CAR.
"Crash!" you cry, as a TRAIN
is derailed (you the derailer) stopping a BUS
in its tracks, while inches above our heads a PLANE
begins its descent to Warsaw, to a hungry gaggle of TAXIS
—though there's always somebody needs *a LORRY*,

what with their trolley stacked high with TVs (all off the back of a
LORRY).

Still it's you that I miss, not Warsaw, or the CAR
or, needless to say, those TAXIS.
My heart sank, son, when I saw (with your eyes) the TRAINS
tonight in Hamleys. If only you'd taken the PLANE
with us! But then I know nothing, not even a double-decker BUS,

could have got you out of that store. I could see myself ready to take
a gun—a blunderBUSS—

to Hamleys, reckless now as the driver stuck in a queue behind a LORRY
as they call out his name, *last call for this PLANE*.

Cut to my father and I in the CAR

(in the seventies, this, no north-south TRAIN)

then, passport forgotten, my father and I in a TAXI

stuck in the traffic in Dublin (I'd never seen Daddy hail a TAXI!).

Time was short and in any case we'd no idea about routes or BUSES...

Double-deckers. Ulsterbuses. The dark to come of the Carlisle TRAIN.

All your words have been my life. I remember the trips, the mineral

LORRY,

how suddenly, when your Granny died, there wasn't much fun in the CAR.

Your Granddad drove home beneath the clouds, and I was terribly sick
on the PLANE.

My heart sinks now when I think of the time

when neither CAR nor PLANE, BUS nor LORRY, TAXI, TRAIN,

will take me to his side on time—nor you one day to mine.