



## Home

These days when I'm away too long,  
anything I happen to clap eyes on,  
that red phone box, somehow makes me  
miss here like nothing I can name.

My heart performs its jazz drum solo  
when the bared crow's feet on the 747  
scrape down at Heathrow. H. M. Customs . . .  
I'm resigned to the usual inquisition,

telling me with Surrey loam caked  
on the tongue, home is always elsewhere.  
I take it like an English middleweight  
with a questionable chin, knowing

my passport photo's too open-faced,  
haircut wrong (an afro) for the decade;  
the stamp, British Citizen not bold enough  
for my liking and too much for theirs.

The cockney cab driver begins chirpily  
but can't or won't steer clear of race,  
so rounds on Asians. I lock eyes with him  
in the rearview when I say I'm one.

He settles to his task, grudgingly,  
in a huffed silence. Cha! Drive man!  
I have legal tender burning in my pocket  
to move on, like a cross in Transylvania.

At my front door, why doesn't the lock  
recognize me and budge? As I fight it,  
I think intruder then see with the clarity  
of a torture victim the exact detail:

in my case that extra twist necessary,  
falling forward over the threshold  
then mail or junk felicitations,  
into a cool reception in the hall.

Grey light and close skies I love you.  
Choky streets, roundabouts and streetlamps  
with tires round them, I love you.  
Police Officer, your boots need re-heeling.

Robin Redbreast; special request: burst  
with calypso, bring the Michelin-rung worm  
winding, carnival-style to the surface.  
We must all sing for our suppers or else.

FRED D'AGUIAR