

Purveyors Of High Class History

The past
 is a comfortable city
 with typical seasons:
 long hot summers
 Botticelli springs
 Dickensian winters
 autumns of nostalgic leaves.

We are rich
 yet do not have to work
 our ships
 continually encounter
 Indies.

And we are gentlemen
 our women, ladies —
 except those midinettes
 our mistresses
 to whom we ride
 in curtained coaches.

There are no poor
 only red-faced commoners
 with comic phrases
 who know their place
 and proper distance.

How times have changed . . .

. . . our electricity
 constantly imperilled
 by distant generators;
 one day
 a switch will be thrown
 and the iron lung
 which breathes for us
 will cease to breathe.

Anthony Edkins