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Poems

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Poems

Abstract

Testimony, Incident, Storm at Skaverup

Testimony

Everything's given in –
Decided to crackle into leaf,
Lay itself open –
Jackdaw nests away with their lookouts,

Twig shanties,
Make-do's for a season,
While their unspeakable brats
Prepare for flight.

Farmers' guns are busy –
Blue, keen, long snouts
Sniffing the woods for pigeons –
Barrelling up

For the sky-crazy rooks.
Habitat, not home,
Nothing means to stay,
But grow, increase,

Snatch what it can
From the earth. Now grass
Wearied of wearying of itself
Blasts green

From hill to hill,
Field to field. The sun sends
Trumpets and haloes
Through gaps in the cloud

That rolls bare-armed, practical,
In a grey shirt never
Wrung dry,
Though it trails all day in the wind.

Incident

To my left a dark hedge
And beneath it a stream,
An invisible rope of water
In this hour before dawn.

Across two fields
Light under a milkshed door,
The farmhouse standing empty,
Its windows looking out

With a stiff indifference.
Then at my feet
Earth tries its experiment,
A scrap of its jumps

Two feet in air,
Floats down – jumps again,
Light as a flake of soot
In a bonfire's updraught,

Quick as a blink
And it's gone. The path unfolds,
Clouds shut over my head
Like a sliding door.

Summer choked the stream
Up to its throat
In lady-smocks, buttercups,
Cut back in fall

For the cold twists of yarn
Of the winter's water.
I'd seen frogs then,
But this in December

Was a shadow
Leaping to find its form
Lost in the swathes
Of keeled-over grass.

Storm at Skaverup

A wild wind
Makes everything nervous,
Jostles trees
In rippling bursts

So branches strain
Under their own weight;
Anything rotten
Will crack like bone.

Deep in the city
This storm was a rumour,
But each skittering burst
Punishes the driver

Punching our bus
To the crown of the road.
I grasp the cold handle
Of the seat in front.

The wind dips –
Then off a fjord
Of liquid metal
About to be cast,

Finds us again –
Buffets us out
Toward oncoming cars
Whose drivers

Flash us their shock
As they rush
Into the past. Today
There are no birds

Chancing the storm.
Even gulls
Are planted on stones
On inlet shores

Staring blankly
As water is shattered,
Swept up,
Shattered again.