

Compass

poetry and prose 2:2



Sad Grace

When tree roots claw at my stomach
and rooftops and walls pitch in my mouth
and slate skies roll in my inner ear
and streets echo with terrible industry
I know
it's humanity on a Saturday
radio twanging
with dogs horses car washers and shoppers
bathed in salubrious fluorescence
consuming in twos
obeying holy weekend decrees —
Thou Shalt Not Smoke Chimneys Thou
Shalt Flutter, Clotheslines.
Couples! Thy squabbles be muffled.
Kitchens reduced to clattering
plants chattering to sparrows
on walls without windows
on which hoses are trained to hiss.

King of Beasts!
Room bound for five days
set free for two until coagulation occurs
somewhere between the end of the late movie
and 60 second commercial on Sunday,
the bottom of the ironing basket
unrevealed again, the cat
dozes on unfurled newspapers
synchronising worlds with tomorrows
death deducted pay slips ever deflating
life in whiter-than-white bones.

Blame them who dream and sail
towards moons and dole queues.
They have no Saturday!
Their week does not end.
They do not read the clauses of guilt
which sharpen the quick joy of
spending what is left.

Have my cheque Mate.
Hit my cheek Mate.
Fill my mouth Mate.
Somewhere to sleep?
Leaving the tumble driers, twin garages,
air conditioners to you
in the last glow
when equality is found
somewhere between the glamour
and gutter sniping
the other decree of daffodils
trumpeting loud horns,
violets mewing
the bruised sunset of smoking chimneys
when our dust
permanently presses
us back into the safe, quiet keeping
of fields.