

LISE DOWNE / from **This Way**

Choice

Enter poverty.
Enter beds of soil and something unusual
living in the neighbour's tree.
Enter a notion of present and future
the way it continues
to turn one's head
and scatter this waking of birds.

Now enter the guests
sometimes feathered, always restless
thirty feet or more above the ground with nametags

that suggest some correspondence with the space
around the tree.

Include the island, isolated peninsulas.
Cliffs and swallows.

Enter the few noteworthy exceptions
such as luck and youth and a pastel-coloured carriage
yawning in the pensive street.

Enter the stranger and something strange
like an ideal morning.

Or a doppelganger.

Or two.

Enter erudite
and leave hopelessly lost.
Enter the willing, the ever-enlarging circle
and the book with the chapter on growth that rings.
Enter inter alia.
Never the
nevertheless the very notion
among them.

Enter unannounced
welcome and long overdue.
Enter loud.
And persistent.
Dragging a wing.

And hum.

Telltale Signs

Church bells in the middle of the night, superimposed
and attending the wee hours of morning.
One red and one green.
Long descriptions accompanied by longer silences.
If, or when, from whom, or from what they are retreating.

When things in simulacrum are equal and scary.

When almost every other faith lasts longer
than the knotting hidden in us.
When a detour is the longest point between two distances

and everything else is peripheral.
If it happens suddenly.
When it is uncannily accurate and then you inherit it.

If it glows.

Because it has a memory and seems to enjoy talking.
When it isn't a depiction, but an embodiment, and
strikes a low chord – twice.
When it strikes.

When there is only one risk at a time
it inevitably blocks the view.
One wonders if
you had to be there, straddling the river
while everything on the opposite bank hangs upside down.

If, when looking back, one is turned to stone.
If, in other words, you pick it up.
If it looks harmless but leaves you
ready to hate what is to come.

When the patterns reveal something
moments before entering the sanctuary.
When it is inexorable *and* inedible.
If it becomes enshrined.

If, above all, it isn't waiting
here at the furthest reaches.

The End

We don't always stay where we belong.
Sometimes we wander, engrossed
by slippers and tiny irises, shuffling sleepily
alongside the baby-blue vinyl siding of an un-
familiar garage.

Well, someone is backing out of the driveway.

This puts me in mind of monks
and I spend a long time watching everything
the table of contents suggested
including
even
this dilapidated pocket comb
stunningly intertwined with the leafy suburb.

What apparently runs wild in these here parts
surprises everyone.
Look at me, unkempt in the surprising foliage.
Did I hear "no"?

Parting shots can easily make one feel
slightly crazed.
Up to a point, this could be a selling feature.
There is always the night
and its *insight*, which isn't always understood

but somehow fits
into the room, maybe.

Anyway, it is an option we might consider
during this curious lull.

The kettle is simmering; the paint is peeled.
Flags are faded, and there are countless signs
of impending doom.

Was that seers or seersuckers?
What of the barely perceptible slowness
easily missed by all the targets?
They are completely flattened long before the boat
drifts into the frame.

As if floating from sea to shining.
We can thank our lucky.
Its contents scale down
the unguarded wall and make a dash for
the odd play
of
a sunny day
or equivalent
last sentence.

The hours are complicated with honey there.