

**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.