

John Pass / TWO POEMS

OVERSEAS

(for Dulce)

A short deception. For a month or two
we make distinctions; the design
of bus seats (here they are covered
like settees) the narrow roads
the many bakeries and butcher shops.

Fresh killed hares hung from iron
hooks above the street at first seem
ethnic colour. Their rigid mouths
bleeding into bags, white plastic

could have been a clue;
when the money's comprehended
it's the same place, nearly.

You dare it first.
I'm busy still with Cornish walls
called hedges, the thin slates leaned
precariously on edge in double rows
earth-filled between — a long stability
in this balancing construction.
Three hundred years they've stood
grown trees on them

but along the cliffs of Mevagissey
the wind rips bits of straw
from the worn hills across the curling water
as we watch a squall develop on the sea

you tell me it is not so safe
so small here
as we imagined

and the distance overseas
diminishes, makes room

THE VEIN

the hemlock, delicate
through window, underneath
the eaves I see

it is the contact
stills the world, arrival
in the widened eye
as we say the heart stops
in love or some excitement
and to hold the moment
locks the senses in

to image
or to flurry

we say it skips
a beat

as the spin continues
(a tinkle now, of wind)
who can doubt it stops
and it continues

that the rhythm moves
a counterpoint, against us
in discovery

this is the strain upon us
as we burrow in
throw up all manner
of defences

stubborn, even in that instance
to continuance

John Pass

and are conservative
of the event
so we are promised
with eventual destruction

the lines in skin
a wrinkled concentration

of the vein
the mineral experience
held fast, invaluable

or to bond and build
how can we get it out
non-violent

without the vision blasted
from the blood
the twisting of green wood
disfigurement
of new growth in the quest of it