

Allotments

In the repose of suburbia's  
easy routines and small intrigues,  
he withholds from retrospect,  
the people, the party,  
his time of ecstasy and despair,  
hearing Marx mumbling from the grave  
of places at table for the poor.  
He rarely looks back,  
those passionate years being little more  
than an almost anonymous frown  
on memory's blurred face.  
Propping bean sticks, he looks out  
beyond the urban drift  
to woods, pastures,  
and mountains whose names are evoca-  
tions:  
March Hywel, Mynydd Drymau, Bryn  
Sidan.  
But he does not go there.  
A cultivated plot  
is his enclosed link with earth  
and her moods,  
he has coaxed abundance from the soil:  
tubers, brassicas, succulents, herbs,  
and red currants – scarlet tributes  
to his seasons' work.  
Crouching, he feeds a discarded meal  
to the embers of a fire:  
beef sizzles, bread blackens and curls  
like the pages of 'Das Kapital',  
burned years before.

Elsewhere, sophistry rules  
like a resurrected Czar,  
and of food, there is much displayed.

Fingers trace the fruit's texture,  
nostrils flare to the aroma of fresh meat.  
Many indulge this luxury  
then, buy their rouble's allotment  
of bread, some sausage, a few roots.  
Here and there,  
a defiant red star  
moves through the crowd.

On the plot, a hen thrush  
fusses amongst the currants,  
an airgun is aimed, it is old,  
the spring weak:  
but power being relative,  
snared by branches, beak agape,  
the dying thrush struggles.  
Blood drips on the leaves below  
exploding into small red stars.  
He watches, detached now.  
Each year there is surplus  
and of this, he will not gather  
give or sell.  
The currants will rot on the bush:  
he has watched them ripen,  
cupped their glow in his hand,  
he is fulfilled.

Far off, ponderous and confused,  
a tethered beast  
sways to the rhythm of a new tune.  
Millions are entranced by the sound  
that holds everything but its own history,  
others, bide with the clock's perversity,  
hoarding the remnants of a dream,  
awaiting the suggestion of a growl  
from the great bear's throat.