

Stations

Suddenly flat,
Strangely placed in solitude,
The telephone commends itself
Distracted by its stale smoke breath, no reply
Ringing and ringing in a distant house, empty.

A drunk with an
Upholstered kind of face mutters
Indignation, and why not? Sometimes he sings, and thenaring
It's incredible how invisible he can become.

We are aliens to each other, wary,
Suspicious, if you fell
No-one would bother; you'd like there, until perhaps
A station fork-lift truck would scoop you up
And shoulder you away.

On the platform, a pier into the night
Desultory,
Passengers without a train pretending they wait
Like this all the time – they do;
And every time, the same pretence.

Diesel fumes and the night, hollow, still,
Distant announcements scarcely punctuating
The bag of privacy
The reflection of death.

Lovers leaving, left
Forced apart by cold steel
The head of a family checking the time
On the station clock, one sleeping child

The buffets are closed, litter haunts the floor
Like used confetti and the chocolate machines are frozen.
Mute, staring at each other and the floor
The minutes clap by but still they wait
Though there is no hope.