

The Quality of Light

Then there was light

cloud lay quietly over the town

a day old bruise messing with horizons
wet mist floated in like an unwanted relative

and sat about drinking coffee in the kitchen
before the distant drumming of wild beginnings

came in from the sea.

The day started with small ordinaries -
a flock of wet feathers

a dog surfing in on his first wave
a boy swimming with pleasure beside him

a rainy day starts like any other
sighs and cancellations

determined tourists flapping along
like ducks following food

and all the time gentle rain falling
over us like a curtain of unanswered light

silver gulls bearing their own wisdom
shot out of town

and flew incandescent into unknown clouds
as the valley stretched into darkness.

Then there was darkness

in the corner of an unforgiving sky

I watched the darkness flying
at my rain streaked windows

clouds deepened
stars shivered

the moon sliced itself in two
my heart jack knifed in my chest

the house shook and trembled

still the storm yelled like an enraged child
threatening to smash all the streets

all my life I've wondered
about the hallucinatory

state of angels flying in the dark
I whispered to them for protection

I whispered as the storm fled South
before it stomped itself to sleep

dragging its thick grey cawl
over our disbelieving eyes

I whispered to the angels
in the darkness

lightning forked the weeping sky.

Then there was light

the next day bursting

from the curve of the earth's horizon
light fell in great unpainted swathes

chunks of yellow and blue
from the washed out sky

fell into the harbour
sky seething with goodness

lay over the town
and fishermen fished for the light

small boats steamed round
the slow curve of disbelief

as the town rose uncurling
legs and arms and elbows

and trucks full of flashing lights
the mist slunk away

leaving plates in the sink
nobody cried to see it go

the whole town was singing
the hymn of survival

in broken streets men and women
and ladders and glass

pushed up into the awakening sky
into the blue unbroken.