

Home Office

I am given the advice but no definition, on entering the country, to have my position "regularised", which feels like being a member of a shadow cabinet shadowing his counterpart in the real government. The real government acts with power—the counterpart who devotes his time to power & not to shadowing. I am a shadow of the person I would be if I were in the home office & am full of dark resentments, being out of power, out of favour, outside the home office & still in it: I am a shadow citizen needing some kind designation, but they say:
who are you?—
who has loved,
a shadow making love
to a shadow, each with a power-

ful imagination of how powerful these shadows might be, given definition: what acts might we not perform!—as our counterparts in the flesh which is given definition by the bone—they tell me I might enter & I am given leave, but my position is not regularised, if I enter I may not stay under present regulations, my imagination is irregular, my position is not defined but in my imagination I am constantly entering in many irregular positions; we are shadows governed by a home office which is regular & interested in power; when one is out of power, one is neither regular nor interesting, one is a shadow of a home office, full of dark resentments.

Robert Vas Dias

The Hyperboreans

Those city states staked out
On flat, thousand-acre sites
Of damp moorland
Are the theoretical locations
Most of us inhabit.

The iron-bound, leather volumes
Of political philosophies
Silting the dust
In brown country-house libraries
Are fulfilled here .

(Just turning a tap on proves it).
Rough, pictish hordes scrabbling
Like bodied clouds
Drain away into our sealed ducts
From bare hills.

Though proofed against most of their
Uncivil, natural subversions,
We, too, invent,
Within bedded walls, our own
Distanced locations,

The unmapped settlements only we
Can find a way to, where a train
Stops by a sign

At the rail-head, near the new
Workers' co-op.

Helewyn the letters say. Cerilic
Or Gaelic? The paint glistens.
Stacked with soft peat,
A line of yellow trucks shunts out
To the power station;

While, on afforested slopes,
Chain-saws bite into spruce and fir.
The pine huts
Everyone lives in fresh keenly
Of green juniper;

Their strenuous inhabitants smile
In a chill light, then go on working.
They know all the
Objections to this bracken frontier,
Lawless, chastening;

And if their loves are seldom easy
Their only authorities are those
Black, cairnless summits,
And these their energetic combines
Are subduing.

Tom Paulin

Transubstantiation

I can do without bread
I am overweight in any case
and loathe the way it nails me
to this place without even
a memory of growing corn

that bloody birth symbol—
this is my body! I'm on the same
scrubbed table waiting for the thing
which will eat me!

what a meal to worship—
eaten and eaten and then eaten
and eaten again, like a live nest
of carved loaves chewing
their way back to the centre.

★

The baker's in Dulwich
where we sat on the warm paving stones
and ate bread pudding.

and the other one
where the girl stood on her hands
and showed waving legs

we were older then

long before the days
of Wheaten and Granary
Slimcea and Sandwich Cut

bread was just bread
and you spread it and ate it
things will never be that small again.

★

This is our Give-us-this-day bread
which we eat from each other
doubting that there is enough
for everyone and hoping that
eating may maintain love

my daughter and I have chosen
a fast stream where the fish
are hidden and the birds bombard
their fry with empty bellies.

"There is no bread but bread" I tell her
"and hunger is its prophet."

★

In heaven, eating bread will bring us
closer—how could it be otherwise?

In heaven, we will take root eating bread
and grow together for the duration of the meal.

I hope I will eat bread with my daughter
in heaven, for this is what eating bread is about.

It will make up for the bread I have eaten here
which is piled loaf upon loaf around me.

like a wall which will feed no one
not even two little fishes.

Edwin Brock

Dream

I dreamt I walked the streets of your home town.
I knew it though the map I carried shook,
And all the jumbled houses had the look
Of faces but not one of them your own.
The crazy grid of blocks went up and down,
And when I showed a passing cop my book
I seemed to feel the pleasure that he took
Scrawling across the page, "address unknown."

So in despair I tried the city hall
With its bronze eagle sneering as I went in.
Yet there I was expected. They knew all,
Far more than I did. "Yes, we have her here
Waiting identification. This way, sir.
We understand she named you next-of-kin."

Robert Gittings