

L A V A N T E E

I have sat here
As if for all my life
And watched and seen.
Here in a midst,
And safely here
Walled in on the height,
Prowled on only by an occasional curious,
I sit, watch and see.
Knowing the authors, like weavers,
Knit coarse and thin straw,
Scribble their baffling tale
Of sex and prison and fete and gamble
And unemployment marches
Beneath this mammoth rustiness.
(Reminded of Jerusalem and India and Saigon
And I have not travelled there)
Yet there is here,
Alive as the middle crossings.
Now all ships drifted, lay stuck
To this earth-plot to breed an eye sore
Sloping down a curved bosom.

A shack, a hut, a shell!
Greyed black-brown weatherbeat,
Leaning stills, carved notches on the hill
Where paths redouble and knit this grant,

Weaving a spell of puppetry. Links,
Each a snake head pushing out,
Counting a tic-tac-toe rhythm
From the heat behind the square framed
Openings and rickety doors,
To steal a breath of fresh air
Riding the heavy stench, live as cesspits,
Muddy where the rivers are asleep
In the midday fire, their veins
Plagued dry to rust tins and old boots
Sink deep and silted.

Above, (reaching me)
The rumpled card gaming
Eye, hollowed dice raid,
Webbed tenor and snub six-set base pans
Tuned to rubber knotted stick-ends
And revolt,
The stiff collared sermons
For party votes and development,
While the green overalled skipping ceases
And 'force ripe' primary girls
Raise skirts in track schools
To a trampled, cuff and kick-slapped
'No-money-no-love' life; comes
By piercing screams another bastard
Into this whole huddled breath,
Spreading like spilled porridge
Worming redoubled patterns
Across the carcass of this rolled over bitch.