

Hide and Seek

Kyle wasn't like the other kids.
He'd say, *Give me 30 seconds
and you'll never find me.*
We could have, if we'd tried.

He'd search for dead things
on the railway tracks
and put them in his pocket.
That's how it started.
Later he was fined for
doing something to a cat.
Experts intervened.

Most kids didn't like him.
He'd tell us heaven was invented, and love.
Somehow we knew he knew.
I can see him now. Hiding.

Catch a Falling Tortoise

Few things are more sickening
than the crack or clack that
shell would make on impact with
the concrete. Treading on a
cockroach doesn't match it.
Grotesque in flight, a tortoise falls
to earth like a frozen turkey might

or a terracotta pot with contents
so unspeakable no one wants to see.
Everyone is somewhere
and I was there: right place and time
to save the weary dignity of something
seldom looked at (unless it's
polished-up to back a hairbrush).

With such presence and such
languid eyes who could let a tortoise
hit the unforgiving ground?
Heavy as a house-brick it
completed my cupped palms like
something built to need me.
It slapped into my grasp with a

slick and easy *thwick*, delicious
in its substance like a well-struck
cricket ball pouched beside
the boundary rope. There's nothing
much to match it in the satisfaction stakes.
I recommend you catch one
next time you see one falling from the sky.

In Tiananmen Square

A million souls can stand here while Moa
shines out across it like the moon
and comrades stare with tourists
at the man who challenged art, and grass.
There are children flying kites today,
pulling hard against the sky.
A yellow wind blows in from the Gobi
to chase the birds away and make the
old folks hide their heads in bags.
We photograph Qianmen Gate
and men who scream through
narrow eyes. We watch the bikes
float by; we listen to the traffic
growl and thunder. I think of tanks,
faded grins, and imagine
waking-up to find the circle squared.
The people have no English,
we have no Mandarin, so all we do is
wander to each compass point.
All they do is stare and sometimes fail to smile.