

lost

, thick mist

we have been walking miles

surrounded by peat hags  
surrounded by acid-whitened stones

you unearth your compass  
still puffing

I hold a corner of the map  
if you dropped dead, I wouldn't have a clue

a hawk flies past  
it took him a few breaths from the bottom

we go off in another direction  
to meet black peat circles surrounded by white

the mist finally lifts

the age-long ridge falls beneath us  
gathered  
into folds of silk

*-wards*

The snow falls thickly,  
a strong wind moves  
the white-fronted geese flying south,  
grey wings out of cold,  
calling in half song,  
half bark.

An early moon, knife-edged,  
shining indiscriminately,  
cuts light on anyone.

The train takes me north,  
scooping into the cold  
air, sharp and clear,  
where there is no sound,  
not one –  
the fields unravelling,  
the trees running backwards  
in my wake,  
behind.

# Spring Hijack

Mid-March.

On one of those grey February-ish mornings with the lamps still on  
I drive out of town in search of green.

Even here the land is road-riddled.

Snow, disguised as cloud, hangs above the AA-recommended inn,  
brooding over the roundabouts and the petrol pumps,

traffic on my trail.

Some time soon the air will fill up with white,  
and all the grave country roads will turn to car-park.

## On a Walk

The lower gate is open, leaning on a stone  
far from its post,  
the water trough unfilled,  
there is no horse.

Down in the valley at intervals the crows give out a softened caw,  
over the rise the rally scramblers hum and roar,  
a tiny plane whines through the sky  
and, rushing along the backbone of the hill,  
the occasional in and out of waves of car –  
measured against the liquid clatter of a single horse's hooves.

Which ones reflect my song?

My tread sets off a pheasant, startling the quiet air and me:  
its indignant rattling flight, its body like a bottle –  
its rapid whirring wings a fly's,  
while the skylark's continual commentary  
breathes in song and  
breathes it out.

The horse hooves are slowing, cease,  
the rally race announcer trails away  
behind the sound of baaing sheep,  
the upper gate clangs shut.