
MAN IN A GARDEN

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Creation's monster, metaphysical man
Across the garden moves his doomed machine,
Propelled by timeless fuel, caught in time,
Changing, unchanging, mobile, half at home. . .
His legs in Croydon, head for Eden bound,
Between two stars he tills the promised land.

A budding snowdrop beckons to his eyes:
'As flower in soil, so mind in body grows,
Wept by the primal dark' . . . He tastes the weather,
Sweet on the tongue, loosening his lips to gather
Breezes like manna; but his lungs expel
Polluted vapour, warm and personal.
He listens: blackbirds fluting. . . pigeons talking—
But in his entrails hears a time-bomb ticking,
Planted at birth, set for the mocking hour. . .
Screaming, a sea-mew hurtles through the air:
'Birdsong is praise because a bird can die;
We do not leave but take the world away;
Almost we dare not look or love our fill,
Almost we dare not live our lives at all'.

And still he digs, digs in his grievance there,
Long after dusk; digs till his mind is bare
Yet in its bareness holds one metaphor:
'"Stars in the dark and out of soil a flower'.