

## **Long for This World**

I settle for less than snow,  
try to go gracefully, as seasons go

which will regain their ground –  
ditch, hill and field – when a new year comes round.

Now I know everything:  
how winter leaves without resenting spring,

lives in a safe time frame,  
gives up so much but knows he can reclaim

all titles that are his,  
fall out for months and still be what he is.

I settle for less than snow:  
high only once, then no way up from low,

then to be swept from drives.  
Ten words I throw into your changing lives

fly like ten snowballs hurled:  
I hope to be, and will, long for this world.

## The Cancellation

On the day of the cancellation  
The librarian phoned at two.  
My reading at Swillingcote Youth Club  
Had regrettably fallen through.

The members of Swillingcote Youth Club  
Had just done their GCSEs  
And demanded a rave, not poems,  
Before they began their degrees.

Since this happened at such short notice  
They would still have to pay my fee.  
I parked in the nearest lay-by  
And let out a loud yippee.

The librarian put the phone down  
And muttered, 'Oh, thank the Lord!'  
She was fed up of chaperoning  
While the touring poet toured.

The girl from the local bookshop  
Who'd been told to provide a stall  
But who knew that the youth club members  
Would buy no books at all

Expressed with a wild gyration  
Her joy at a late reprieve,  
And Andy, the youth club leader,  
And the youth arts worker, Steve,

Both cheered as one does when granted  
The gift of eternal life.  
Each felt like God's chosen person  
As he skipped back home to his wife.

It occurred to me some time later  
That such bliss, such immense content  
Needn't always be left to fortune,  
Could in fact be a planned event.

What ballet or play or reading,  
What movie creates a buzz  
Or boosts the morale of the nation  
As a cancellation does?

No play, is the simple answer.  
No film that was ever shown.  
I submit that the cancellation  
Is an art form all of its own.

To give back to a frantic public  
Some hours they were sure they'd lose  
Might well be my new vocation.  
I anticipate great reviews.

From now on, with verve and gusto,  
I'll agree to a month-long tour.  
Call now if you'd like to book me  
For three hundred pounds or more.