

The Storming

There are differences, one assumes,
between us and the people we know who storm out of rooms,

sometimes crying, but not every time;
sometimes muttering, sometimes an angry marching mime

is their exit mode. Where do they go,
all those people who storm out of rooms? Will we ever know?

Are there sandwiches there, and a flask
of hot tea? We won't find out if we never ask.

Once they've fled the provoking scene,
do they all get together somewhere? Do they reconvene

in a basement, an attic, a flat?
Do they also reserve the right to storm out of that,

and if so, do they take turns to storm
or link arms and desert en masse in a furious swarm,

leaving nobody in their wake?
Would there be any point in the storming, for nobody's sake?

There are differences, one fears,
between us and the people who storm out of rooms in tears,

as if, having ruined it all,
in the snug, they imagine they'll be better off in the hall,

and that anyone left in a chair
automatically gets to be wrong and to blame and unfair,

unaware of how bad stormers feel,
and quite lacking in feelings themselves. That is part of the deal.

Notice how I don't leap to my feet,
how I nestle in cushions and curl myself into my seat.

Leave at once for the moral high ground.
I'll stay here by the fire, mocking storms and just lounging around.

Let's

Let's steal a clapped-out camper van
And push it to the edge
Of occupied Afghanistan.
Let's perch it on a ledge
Of sinking sand, and test how fast
Its punctured wheels will spin.
Whoever's lung collapses last
Must lift the van to win.

Let's roast the carcass of a beast
In sweat and single malt,
Subject whoever eats the least
To a prolonged assault,
Blindfolded, beer cans in the face;
Let's scale the sharpest rock
Straight from a polar ice floe race,
In hypothermic shock.

Is it high-risk and ill-thought-out?
Will victory equal pain?
Will all involved be plagued by doubt
Unless they are insane,
And will this be dismissed as grounds
To stop and think again?
I only ask because it sounds
Like a plan made by men.