

MARGARET GALBREATH

NIGHT TRAINS

The sound of a train in the night
dumps me into childhood,
shifting dunes of flock mattress
under the sloped ceiling of granny's
back room like the inside of a hill.
Night has snuffed grandad's red lamps
of apple and gooseberry, white
Star of Bethlehem, his chickens
feather-bedded dream of worms.
Even the stink of Steadman's pig
slumps on its own side of the wall.
The world's a black page for fear to write on.
Ghosts in the curtained alcove
stir between elderly coats, alive perhaps.
Something pecks at the window.
And a train like friendly cavalry
blows its far horn, gallops iron-footed
along its bank, hurls volleys of light.
Ghosts shrivel. The plum tree's
pecking fingers shine with leaves.

DALE HARCOMBE

ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

Each day the canary drowns the room
with his whistling
an original composition
not Grieg but a haunting tune
an apricot euphony flowing out
in waves from the bamboo slatted cage.
The apricot canary has already learnt
the secret which he passes on to others
a shame our ears are jaded
from hearing without listening
In the night when all is still
we long for his song.