

NOREEN LARCOMBE

THERE IS A BIRD IN DISTRESS

I keep hearing it
Inside the storm is contained
by a jupiter thread.
How can it hold such fury?
It beats with forked hands
on the brass door.
Through the stained glass
the pitch tautens.

Someone opens the window
I can see the palpable stones
in the grass.

JEAN THORNTON

PARENTS' NIGHT

She long since ceased to be surprised
that dramas of Aeschylean proportion
are staged in solid-brick suburbia
along the golden miles of marriage:
the fifteen-year-olds in her class
report in matter of fact tones
their escapes to the pub
where Harvey Wall Bangers insulate
against domestic passion
and a house about to be fired

On Parents' Night, if one or other
of the protagonists fronts up
to 'meet the teacher' presenting
a portrait of perfection
a la Dorian Gray, she resists
the desire to strip the canvas
and expose pitiful truth;
other parents are waiting
their allotted five minutes
and ordinary problems cannot
be ousted by the horrific.