

THE STABLES AT 'THE GLEN'
(to my rock biscuit uncle and Evening Peel)

along the stable gates of the new england
the timber was gnawed by champions
and threaded with black mane.
i remember as a small boy
my grandfather spraying them with the hose
after morning trackwork;
and the steaming rising from warm flanks
and the water running off like clear saddles
into the frost-coiled sawdust.
and the photos in the leather shed
greyed by the drifting feed dust
and the waving western plain waters,
that blew under the plum trees
and across the woodheap
like sharp-featured jockeys.

but the silks are still there
(funny how the moths have spared the silks)
they hang like tailored rainbows
in one of the big rooms
where the visitors stay.
and the visitors are always family.
for a time after you turn out the light
you aren't sure, if they are the mannequins
of a jockey, or a clown.
but as you try for sleep
hoofbeats seem to increase
on the warped verandah boards
like you are listening to the sea
in early november,
being churned by ready gallopers.