

ADRIAN CAESAR

Summertime Blues

The first hot night of summer
we open windows to disturb the air
which lies like us inert and stifling
too close for comfort

we watch TV listening
to other channels in the street mingle
with electric sociability
there is no breeze

before human voices
knife through night's blanket
discovering a raw domestic argument
with thrust and parry

between the film's romantic close
and the start of late-night comedy
such usual tears are startled
by our neighbours, sobbing now.

We exchange glances relieved
that violence has passed
but still aware that we have heard
all our marriages dissected

in that troubled heat
we hardly sleep and wonder
if they have buried their difference
in passion or estrangement

and recall
our last glass-smashing battle
thinking what an audience
might make of our untidy drama.

The following day we see them
working in the garden
they do not look up as passing in the car
we scrutinise the aftermath

feeling we know them better
than we ought, their bitter grief
at the erosion of romance
the way love stories are balanced

with careful amnesia, willing laughter,
our resolution is
to buy an air-conditioner
and keep our windows closed.