

The Articles

Saturday morning at the School of Music

Drifts of a language float across the floor,
the room re-vibrates to the drum of a drum-
induced hypnotic lassitude. My paper cup
stands unattended, drained of all
the remaining drops of unexampled coffee
thin and tart. The class of children
play at percussion, the parents gape in patterns
along the wall, observing a mystery play.
The blackboard draws a blank attentiveness,
the lino bristles with dust, the windows
readmit an effigy of day (the sun struggles)
and the full-length ballet looking-glass
bounces back the morning's quietude
despite the jiggling presence of the children
in semi-certain disarray.

This building is not visible
from across the way, obscured by foliage,
architecture, and the strands of space. Time
is irrelevant – a century back a paddock
was here, or a cluster of stones
bundled together to accommodate life.
A thousand voices would have passed these lawns
week after week, thousands of incarnations
of traffic, colour, weather – children, women, men,
machines and beasts, while insects bored their dim
complexities into their own element
of eternity and death. The clouds deliberated
a thousand times a month, the sky darkened
on and off like a switch. The globe spun,
and nothing registered.

These lines are a talisman
against what they record, and all
that they omit: the iridescence
of a leaf, the brute necessity of surfaces,
the minute-hand, the night, the
definite and indefinite articles
of time and accident and the emptying breeze.