

David Winwood

PINK

Man and wife.
Homing in after their holidays
they're in for a surprise at the estate:
all doors have been painted pink.

He swears an oath the queen
would never have accepted.

-But I like pink, his wife says
-It's no colour for a door.
-But I like pink.
-The whole goddamn apartment block
(He dislikes the term estate)
-But I like pink.
-Everybody'll think the place is full of faggots.
-Pink is the colour for girls.
-It makes me go blue in the face.
-Blue is the colour for boys.
-But you prefer boys.
-So do you.
-Oh, go ahead, rub it in.
-I like pink.
-After all these years.
-But I like pink.
-You're always coming back to that.
-Perhaps they could've used a more mauvish shade ...
Or old rose ...

He dragoons towards the communal entrance,
key in hand, arm outstretched. Disgusted, but
in a hurry to reach the concrete solidity
of his own cubicle. She holds him back.
Keeps staring upward.



"Rolly Polly woman barbeques her husbands parrot for making fat jokes"

What if you opened the pink door and there was only
this pink mist behind it, she thinks.
Pink flowers all over the floor. Pink bulbs on tall
glasses, their white roots hoping to draw
just a little blood. Pink grass. With pink grain beyond
bending the rules of morality, the sound
of seductive laughter rising from the ears. Look, pink
grapes
and a quick hand picking one. Even the sink
and bathroom taps pink. And an enormous dish of pink
oysters,
some shells so fragile they remind her
of her first kiss. And, of course, of the Beatles. That
film, she wish she could remember its title,
where they life in a street of terraced houses, where each
of the four enters his own front door,
And behind it all barriers have been broken through.
But pinker.
And warmer. And people, all barriers broken, tenderly wild
in each others arms, woman and man, man and
man, woman and woman, spilling pink spittle, weeping pink
tears of pleasure. So pink without clothes,
though she recognises some of her black neighbours,
which gives the picture a nice perspective.

-Come on, he says, pulling her.
-What's holding you up? I hope to God
you aren't seeing pink elephants again?

So she sees the wild myths her mother used to read to her
after her father had upped it.
They're in the Asgard, the garden of the Gods.
Everybody is there. Everybody she's ever met, or heard
about, or seen on the box.
The Queen mother, wearing a hat pinker even than
on her birthdays is helping laying the tables.
Karl Marx, exactly like on the photograph her dad
had left behind, is sitting next to Odin
preaching equality. Or is he telling jokes?
He must be.

Cause Odin laughs and jots down the punchlines
on Lenin's bald head (the revolutionary
helpfully squatting next to him). While Trotsky
plays hopscotch with all the American presidents.
The once and future ones (and quite a few women
amongst those); Washington's wig keeps falling off,
pink lice cling to the exposed skin.
Now her friend Myrtle passes by, riding that pig
of a surveyor who refused to do
anything about her leaking roof. Does he look better
pink, with a pink tail.
They deliver him at the butchers and walk
to a corner of the endless garden (never wondering
how there can be corners in endlessness).
There the poets are gathered.
Milton is there. And Lao Tse (whoever thought of him
as a philosopher?). Homer is there, drunk again
with Anne Sexton; William S.; Aphra Behn; Jane Austen
in bikini, applying a sun tan lotion she has never
been able to afford. They fall silent when
the greatest poet that ever lived starts reading.
A woman from somewhere in Africa who invented
separate lullabies for all the children in her village.

They enter the building. Again the council has delivered
those black bags that won't fit the rubbish shoots.
It stinks in the corridors.
-They shouldn't have chosen pink, her husband persists.

Still in the garden Myrtle runs after her. -Guess
what? That poet we just heard,
they all say that Sappho is her lover.
-Is she? What a shame ..., she mutters. "I'd hoped ..."
and shrugs.

-Good, you're coming round to my way of seeing things,
her husband says.
-It won't do. you know, you harping on things past.
I conquered my impulses. And a good thing too, with
this disease doing the rounds. You should count yourself
lucky you have me.