

Graeme Hetherington

BOBOLI GARDENS, PITTI PALACE, FLORENCE

Our dangerous dislike of crowds
Reined tightly in, we gave up on
Attempts to stroll around the walls
As king and queen for scrambling for

Lawn chairs. Enthroned, we bolted, poured
The boiling lead of scorn and made
Joke fodder of the hordes, with 'Up
You' signs explained away to those

Provoked enough to ask, as tea
For two or double gin requests
To waiters on the run. Sides split,
Eyes filled with tears, collapsing at

A finger raised to test if our
Hysteria had passed, we then,
For physical and mental ease,
Scraped back, dug grass up with hind legs,

Till court dwarves in the livery of
The Borgia or Medici swarmed,
Frogmarched us out, shocked sober, freed
From fantasy's iron cage of hate.

