

FOR A GIRL PLAYING THE GUITAR

What is it that one is waiting for
between the songs? I ask you because
a sudden catch in the throat, the stricken,
almost, occasional dark note as a thumb

stumbles into the room of a deeper chord,
either lightens or clouds something, and you
seem almost not to be there, but somewhere
like an unlit corridor, trying the handles of doors

as though one might be your own. Inside,
if you opened one, I am almost certain
I would soon hear you crying or softly singing
perhaps both, with only yourself in mind

and I would not know what to do because
so often I have come to the same house, found
no door open, or, if one should give, I would
be there in darkness, talking myself towards

an Identikit picture of the real world, not one
step clearer to knowing who I am or where
I find the voice to ask the exact questions.
Always presuming there might be an answer.

LOUIS JOHNSON

WORKSHOP

liked to compare
the average poem
(his words)
to an uniced
chocolate cake

looked wholesome enough
even appetising
until it was knifed
(his words)
edge to centre
and back
for the first slice

what to do
with the crumbs
was the problem

the rest was fattening enough

said
the best poetry achieved
by the simplest possible means
the best possible effect

recommended patty pans
and a liberal sprinkling
of mixed, dried fruit
as a way of binding
less tasteful concoctions

about the rest
he was less prepared
to be sure

except to agree
the steady nibbling of the cake
inevitably precluded
its timely sharing

patient midwife to chaos
mercifully bruised
by the small order birth
unkindly marked a man for life
was probably what was meant
to be said

that's when it broke up
(not unexpectedly)

ROBERT C. BOYCE