

THE ONLOOKER

Nothing was unusual about backs turned
on state & church & synagogue
even four years before: trees
decked the wedding park in tiers
& fancy dress was no longer fancy.

Neat needleworked elves & sprites & spirits
as they were meant to, ran off
with wedding rings to take
away possession.

Human foible attired in love & lover
ran after goldengreen jealousy or
what was the point of a bondage
no man or woman should put asunder.

Not I who came after anything
was left to leave, I who
seem to keep coming back to
same tapestries, same black velvet
in different rooms with different lovers:
I, the visitor, almost How do you do?

Even when her latest leaves me alone
she wants to be with him, although
he likes me & I him. I find I'm
one of their privileged few he'd
share her with until their certainty
allows opening up & end to
privilege, both free to share
with whom they please.

My time is never my own:
although once would not be enough,
to have her again when he
takes her friend &
his & her other friend
makes her, not telegrams nor taxis,
not even jumbo jets could do it.

Two of us eat & drink & talk
& laugh without hysterics &
she & her lover are generous
to allow me, almost to encourage.

My success in my attempt
not to try to make her
is another way of trying.