

## DES McLUCAS

### THE STORM BIRDS

For seven days, the busy nimbus breasted  
the range with hot gusts panting open-mouth  
over their shoulders. Some there were who detested  
the heat and, idle-rich, limousined south.

For seven days, clouds mushroomed up the sky,  
wilted and died – while we, embroiled in toil  
in this human, humid, hot-house jungle, si-  
lently swore, struggling to ease our collar's coil.

Hot springs of sweat twin-trickle down each side,  
but I feel no gush of health; the red-hot wire  
of glare pierces their eyes, and yet the dried-  
up screech of crickets becomes no sweeter choir;

nor does the mockery of the up-the-scale cries  
of the giant red-eyed storm birds' facile lies.

## GRAHAM ROWLANDS

### THE BLACKOUT

No.

It's nowhere near as  
simple as the anarchy or revenge  
virus swollen on itself and dying of it. So  
don't give orders to scrap the brand new skimmer jet  
to axe Special Project ZXV to untap the phone taps  
to pull back the laser beam research to low-beam  
to drop a Q bomb that won't need to be dropped.  
Conserve your destruction. Don't think you  
can put a whole nation to the torch of  
arson & looting & battery & shooting  
just by turning the lights off. .  
You'll blow the ghettos but  
enemies who are lovers  
in comfortable beds  
will make more  
soldiers.