JACK BEDSON

COMMISSION FOR A PICTURE

Escher etch me a litho
to screw into my study wall
above the working thoughts and desk
in four or five dimensions
that impacts slow, and small.

Not Venice in its vap’rous haze or
British hounds fresh from the chase but
something
  uninviting to the foreign eye
with an
  entrance like a mirror
with
    Jenny in a chair
contemplating breakfast
a tail in her hair
her back to me like
the passenger in front.

And
  if you take the commission
(patronage is art) make the other
(my) chair turned out from table
just enough to signify that I’ll be back:
I’ve gone to get the milk maybe
or maybe I am you the artist, and
she is lacquered in a pose
just skew of shadow-normal.
you’re good at those.
The line of light does not relax her neck.
The view wonders
    is she hiding something
or buttering her toast? does she resent?
is there a veil cannot be rent?
what most concerns her:
    another day at work?
    being left alone at table?

Perhaps she bears a child?
Provide
    a panelled window. Its
regimen of light says: this way east.
outside the wall I'd have a currawong
whose call is inconceivable.
perhaps this is a soundless world
where space is
    the single possibility,
but a world all the same:
    its own gravity
    social reasons
    style of silly cap;
but space has many mansions
add
    dimensions of your own
I do not prescribe. Except

The table must suggest a vanishing point
for this table, desk, these thoughts
of being abandoned, of loneliness, marriage
must irrevocably creep back
to my uncertain lap.
teach me Escher to rhyme in line and shade,
To suggest a hit obliquely
   by a miss
sans punctuation.
    Where she sits
will face a door ajar. this exit
and the salt and pepper shakers,
cream jug, shape of floor, etchings
on another wall, all
suggest a strange zone: friendships strange.
one of many incarnations.

If what you do is this
   I will pay the piper
and I'll hum the tune.
Failing you, I will not have a glass.

HELEN ALLAN

POSTHUMOUS SUITE

1. CAUSE OF DEATH

A mosquito killed me — wiped me out completely
Justice, I don’t deny
for I’ve killed many mosquitoes.

Only
a sharp sting on the ankle, less
than the needle makes at the dentist’s
impaling pain.
Quite to be expected under mango trees
at home, at dusk
but on a motorway