

# Bill Cotter

## PIPER PIPING

Cloned and grim,  
The morning shoppers come,  
Cruising landscapes sterile, white,  
Trailing blue grey scraps of dreaming,  
Sex or talk, tumbling thought in pasty breath.  
Releasing boxes, trollies, fruit,  
The turnstile bars glide smoothly,  
Dark as polished eels.  
Ambition, thoughts contract,  
While furred in frost the turkeys totter  
Row on row. Gloved hands stalk bottles,  
Packets, cans. Decision flirts with butter, margarine  
And sickly neon moons advance or slide  
From floor to floor.

Yet something stirs and sparks. Some sound  
Deflects me from my course. I turn, protest,  
Then yield to music fluted unobserved.  
Somewhere a cricket, bold and minuscule,  
Pursues glissante, crescendo, Mozart, Bach.  
And are there more, perhaps? Symphonic crickets  
Running rampant over shelves?  
Turning crochets, staves to shafts of gold?

I pause, anticipation fixed.  
But no. The piper pipes his last,  
Becomes a distant, polished coal,  
Embedded deep within my head.

## Royce Nicholas

### THE WORDS WERE THE SAME YESTERDAY

I remember when grass was something you played tennis on,  
and a deal meant you were either playing poker  
or buying a used car.  
Coke was something you drank from a bottle  
or burnt in a fire.  
And a reefer, a reefer was a blue jacket.  
A joint was something me mum burnt on Sunday  
And a head was a white froth on the top of dad's beer.  
A pusher was something you put a baby in.  
Hash was a cheap meal  
and L.S.D. was an abbreviation  
for pounds shillings and pence