

### **The Thought Fox**

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:  
Something else is alive  
Beside the clock's loneliness  
And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star:  
Something more near  
Though deeper within darkness  
Is entering the loneliness:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow  
A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;  
Two eyes serve a movement, that now  
And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow  
Between trees, and warily a lame  
Shadow lags by stump and in hollow  
Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,  
A widening deepening greenness,  
Brilliantly, concentratedly,  
Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox  
It enters the dark hole of the head.  
The window is starless still; the clock ticks,  
The page is printed.

### **Snowdrop - Ted Hughes**

Now is the globe shrunk tight  
Round the mouse's dulled wintering heart.  
Weasel and crow, as if moulded in brass,  
Move through an outer darkness  
Not in their right minds,  
With the other deaths. She, too, pursues her ends,  
Brutal as the stars of this month,  
Her pale head heavy as metal.

## Esther's Tomcat

Daylong this tomcat lies stretched flat  
As an old rough mat, no mouth and no eyes.  
Continual wars and wives are what  
Have tattered his ears and battered his head.

Like a bundle of old rope and iron  
Sleeps till blue dusk. Then reappear  
His eyes, green as ringstones: he yawns wide red,  
Fangs fine as a lady's needle and bright.

A tomcat sprang at a mounted knight,  
Locked round his neck like a trap of hooks  
While the knight road fighting its clawing and bite.  
After hundreds of years the stain's there

On the stone where he fell, dead of the tom:  
That was a Barnborough. The tomcat still  
Grallochs odd dogs on the quiet,  
Will take the head clean off your simple pullet.

Is unkillable. From the dog's fury,  
From gunshot fired point-blank he brings  
His skin whole, and whole  
From owlsh moons of bekittenings

Among ashcans. He leaps and lightly  
Walks upon sleep, his mind on the moon  
Nightly over the round world of men  
Over the roofs go his eyes and outcry.

## Night Ride on Ariel

Your moon was full of women.  
Your moon-mother there, over your bed.  
The Tyrolean, the guttural,  
Mourning and remaking herself.  
It was always Monday in her mind.  
Prouty was there, tender and buoyant moon,  
Whose wand of beams so dainty  
Put the costly sparkle  
Into Cinderella. Beutscher  
Moon of dismemberment and resurrection  
Who found enough parts on the floor of her shop  
To fill your old skin and get you walking  
Into Tuesday. Mary Ellen Chase,  
Silver nimbus lit, egg eyes hooded,  
The moon-owl who found you  
Even in England, and plucked you out of my nest  
And carried you back to collage,  
Dragging you all the way, your toes trailing  
In the Atlantic.

Phases  
Of your dismal-headed  
Fairy godmother moon. Mother  
Making you dance with her magnetic eye  
On your daddy's coffin  
(There in the family film). Prouty  
Wafting you to the ballroom of broken glass  
On bleeding feet. Beutscher  
Twanging the puppet strings  
That waltzed you in air out of your mythical grave  
To jig with your Daddy's bones on a kind of tightrope  
Over the gap of your real grave.

Mary Ellen Moon of Massachusetts  
Struck you with her chiming claw  
And turned you into an hourglass of moonlight  
With its menstrual wound  
Of shadow sand. She propped you,  
On her lectern,  
Lecture-timer.

White-faced bolts  
Of electrocuting moonlight-  
Masks of the full or over-full or empty  
Moon that tipped your heart  
Upside down and drained it. As you flew  
They jammed all your wavelengths  
With their criss-cross instructions,  
Crackling and dragging their blacks

Over your failing flight,  
Hauling your head this way and that way  
As you clung to the sun - to the last  
Shred of the exploded dawn  
In your fist-  
That Monday.

### **King of Carrion**

His palace is of skulls.

His crown is the last splinters  
Of the vessel of life.

His throne is the scaffold of bones, the hanged thing's  
Rack and final stretcher.

His robe is the black of the last blood.

His kingdom is empty-

The empty world, from which the last cry  
Flapped hugely, hopelessly away  
Into the blindness and dumbness and deafness of the gulf

Returning, shrunk, silent

To reign over silence.