

Extracts from *Travelling Light - Waterloo Samplers No. 12*, Norman Buller

Short Break *Ennui*

Summer falters,
the heartbeat slows
as the motorway slides behind
in a hurry it knows

too well. Each crowded place
closes in, parasites sucking one's helpless
blood, their hordes crawling
everywhere, leaving no space.

The sea enviably dawdles
over rearranging
successive shores, the sapping grind
of day finally changing

to a slow turn on the spit
of humid night
when the ebb of life is somehow wearily measured
by the poems one will probably never write.

Ragged Bridegroom

Dreams have seen better days,
his passions better nights;
now he must mend his ways,
those tatters of delights,

into one daytime suit
and one night attire,
by tailoring refute
worn fashions by desire.

How It Goes

Unsullied at sixteen, you'd see her blush
at anything risqué; seemed like a rose
in bud. Yet she was married in a rush;
he left her with the kid. That's how it goes.

A shop assistant, coy regarding bed,
shot a dark line in seedier-than-thou
confessions. Grandpa raped her, so she said.
I doubted then - but I'd believe her now!

A civil servant, pretty, slightly lame
though popular, would weep in church and pray
forgiveness for a lover she daren't name.
Her brother was her secret fiancé!

Past relics; now all grandmas, I suppose.
We jerk to nature's strings. That's how it goes.

Portrait of Madame Cézanne

Offended eyes, blotched skin,
pinched nose and twisted head,
she screws her tense lips in
a bitter smudge of red

at being used, like fruit,
the landscape, vases, friends
or anything to suit
the painter's avid ends.

'Pose like an apple; you
must be sheer form, still-life.'
But what she felt came through;
we see a living wife.

Fate set them in this mould;
she leaves him, but returns.
Diminished love is cold
but how resentment burns!

The Long Goodbye

Each year that passes is a requiem.
Her thoughts are focused on exchanging rings
and practising *I do* ad nauseam.
His thoughts turn languidly to other things.

His thoughts turn languidly to other things
like girls in single bars, his bachelor state,
the cash he's saved, the interest it brings...
She needs an answer and it hurts to wait.

She needs an answer and it hurts to wait
in Never-Land where hope trails jaded wings
and cannot fly. She asks herself (too late?)
who is the puppet and who works the strings.

Who is the puppet and who works the strings?
Is it that stubborn silence threatens hate?
Is it to reason that her courage clings?
One can't have all things handed on a plate!

One can't have all things handed on a plate.
Who is the puppet and who works the strings?
She needs an answer and it hurts to wait.
His thoughts turn languidly to other things.