

Extracts from *Talking the Town Red - Waterloo Samplers No. 6*, Helen Buckingham

Spot the Ball

Last night I dreamt
I was watching the football,
only it wasn't a football,
it was a leopard, rotating,
adrift between kicks,
like some fifties motif
on a Liberty pitch.
I gritted my teeth
for I gleaned a low hiss
through the roar of the crowd,
and the fur on my neck
warned that any time now
the design might unravel...

This morning over breakfast,
your Game Plan was silence.
(Turned out Spurs had lost.)

By lunchtime
I'd earned my spots.

Animal Nexus

The dog is howling.
He is coming to fetch the rent.

I sense his approach:
drab coat and grubby feet;
up the stairs, barking,
wagging his bigotry -
'Night-birds with ragged nests,
preying on Benefits!'

I crow through my bigotry:
post-date another cheque.
(Where would we be without demons
to pay the rent?)

Amoeba, Amoeba

The rain clouds my window
like death on a slide,
delivered for heated inspection.
The room is hermetically sealed.

I don my white coat,
check through the manual:
'focus the lens,
stake out the microscope'
– wait for an old bug
to lend some new meaning to,
nothing like having some old bug
ascribed to you,
nothing like wasting time
chasing amoebas...

Whilst deep in the forest
your tiger
is turning blue.

Talking the Town Red

Recall the phone box
in our street?

I'd call you up.
You'd call me back.

They took it out
and left this seat.

As though to talk
might plug the gap.

Postcard from Heaven

It had been raining
forever.

I balance my heart
by the books on the mantel
relaxed my umbrella
laid down my umbrella
when through the net curtains
I spotted a rainbow
all sunshine and deckchairs
from Minehead to Heaven
delivered by angels
wind-surfing the skies
and I watched as they played
till the sun crept away
until all that was left
was a surfeit of grey
then I raised my umbrella
held high my umbrella
shook blind till my heart
toppled over the fender
to ponder the postcard

I had been cursing
forever.