

This place, close to Kites Nest, below Whiteshill,
Lies in an avenue of careless elder, hawthorn and maple.
The space is lopsided in light and linear in purpose,
For across the slope that otherwise slips eastwards
Into the distant Painswick Stream unseen,
A terrace has been cut, indubitably by hand,
That now carries this path.

But in our habituated state of sleep and selfish fuss
It is all too easy to pass by such an undistinguished place as this
With no thought for the labour that formed it -
And a satisfying result that endures so simply
Maintained only by countless feet following.

Now on this late summer Monday it is so still here.
Outside in the heat and light of the coombe
Dragonfly and delirious cabbage white
Dance their instinctive counterpoint of hunger and joy;
A horse works its way step by step across the slope beyond;
In the ash tree crows utter their desultory complaint.
The air too now is tired: it barely reaches up to the woods and is lost.

Here within this tunnel of shade the path seems to wait,
There being no function without use.
A falling leaf of ivy becomes an audible event,
Each joining the last on the floor, as gravity and breeze dictate.
Shells of snails that had caught a hungry eye;
Seeds of the hawthorn shorn of fruit
By thrush and vole alike,
Nuggets of possibility, pressed ever deeper
Into the embrace of soil
In this sublime dance of death by blending
New life arising.

That spider there, amongst the lamium, is hungry, barely visible.
There is nothing more to do; he has cast his blanket,
Littered as yet with only lifeless detritus.
He too must needs wait.

This path threads a line that is open to all
Through land that is not;
A current of uncertainty,
An irregular pulse of humanity, flows here.
All orders of mankind may pass and meet;
And though we judge the other so quickly
To discern those 'above' from those 'below',
This is foolish, merely animal -
We cannot know.

Being does not advertise.
Look only in the eye, stranger,
Be quick to love.

From here the eye escapes most readily to the East -
This is definitely 'the view'.
It is a matter of scale.
On the far side of the valley a field has been ploughed
In part horizontally, in part vertically, like a furrowed flag.
The afternoon air sits quiet, loathe to move.
Above Wick Street the dark green dash that is Lynnswood
Lies like a Mohican dreaming
All is well.....

Chosen by chance
This place then reveals - should we love life - only ordinary wonders.
No glamour or grandeur, no sensation,
Unless heart and eye open
To allow some degree of innocence and stillness.
Then of course there is much to behold,
And everything to wonder
But this - alas! - is not so ordinary.....