

TOURS

In the morning, with his bell-frocked dog
he pushes his pram behind St. Stephen's church;
he takes rags out of it, pieces of string,
and sits down with an old woman to sort it all out.

In this little backwater, they sit all day together,
not having time to wonder why they stop alive.

But where do you go at night, mister
in your sack tied round with string?
Where do you lay that body
dry, and hard as the crusts you gnaw at?

You have white, venerable hair,
such as our fathers might have had,
but you, you have made terms at last.

And what did you get for the bargain you struck?

A blessing, perhaps, like saints, who take
on their shoulders more than we ever could,
yet, at the same time, shuffle off their bonds?