COCKROACH

doesn't like himself at all, sitting silent and wasting days.

Only the window to visit, cold streets and empty pavements.

Doesn't like himself at all, sleeping late and missing meals.

Only the corner shop to visit. New owners who don't say hello.

Doesn't like himself at all. Wishes he was his old self again.

Only the past to visit. Memories becoming distant.
ON COCKROACH'S DESK

This conker was not dull when collected from the lawn by the palace.


This pot was cheap in a potter's sale. It still holds nothing but dust. I watch the glazed light.
A striped stone from the beach. Dulled smooth from years of sitting silent. We both wait for waves.

* Chipped prism. Heavy glass paperweight changes the view when I peer at the room. Dug up from a wartime garden. A different sort of shrapnel.

* Several shells from Greece, my days in the sun. White brittle whorls shiver like crockery.
Construct a society
who look like me.

We might talk about situations,
the precise arrangements.

Everyone is so nice here,
I quite feel in control.

There's no normal life.
Twist a poke in the eye.

from Cockroach

Rupert M Loydell
1.
A listless evening sprawls out.
We hardly touch.
Through the half-pulled blinds
lights appear in the apartments opposite.
Slumped in our room
we leaf through books and music.
Neither here nor there,
A heavy heat in the apartment but ice in the streets.
You turn and look at me

2.
That thin divide
between courage and stupidity.
To have acted and gained
heaven or a relentless hell;
or to have withdrawn and be
haunted by futile regrets.
The dizzying thoughts that
cut into a daily routine.
"What am I doing here, when...?"
But we grasp the "known",
the silent days, sat by the kitchen window
staring out across the rooftops at the sea.
Alone in my rooms I have my place,
solitary and silent, and in the mirror
a face that's mine, self-absorbed
and lost in its mirrors.

3.
In a remote village the snow
lies heavy around your cabin,
weighs down the trees' branches.
You dream of spring,
of the orchards in blossom,
of the scent of crushed grass.
You dream of
and the cabin door
groans with the wind
4.
Despite it all spring comes and summer follows. Now in amongst dark full trees your cabin stands dry and open. The white curtains sway in the breeze.
You lie there alone on your bed listening to the birdsong outside and the wind rustling the leaves, a photograph and a star map beside you.
Some miles away the ochre cliffs and dark blue sea.

5.
From capitals to small towns to villages to remote stretches of countryside or coast. We fly back and forth like trapped birds.
On the hill tops edging the sea flocks of birds swirl up in clouds then descend again into the fields and long grass then up again and at some unknown signal suddenly fly south across the sea on their way. The autumn to be filled with such disappearances, so much to be packed away.

6.
In a winter dream "I fly to you". The wells in the villages are frozen. The pipes in the apartments are frozen. Naked heart to heart could warm us, yet my fears, our fears, freeze us.

7.
The full moon heavy and oppressive over the village. The dusty dreamland above peopled with letters and imaginings.
I talk to you crowded by my own lies and our mutual foolishness that gives glimpses of the heavens. But in love with being in love, with feeling precious.
8.

At dusk
you stand by the well dreaming.
At dusk
an owl slowly flaps into the yew trees.
You return and quietly work in your room.
You lean into the lamplight to thread a needle.
Above the dark outline of the hills
the full moon rises, mottled, orange,
heavy as our dreams where we talk.
A glimmer of its light runs across the sea
and meadows.

Lee Harwood
1987

MICKEY MOUSE WATCH

Song and saffron song to end.
Our harried way.
The love in the hills, bird
noted for its tune.

Inclined yellow hits that
reflection from the display case,
insufficient art.
All her silks, and she goes by
I think and cry white and the snow empties me. my death ends.

Hopscotch I use for vocabulary, it might be tartan.

All those nights ago my shadows boxed themselves alone; I was family

Here I shout for God, that His servant time will butcher me thin for righting.

They said each slice of love lay pine needles against earth's floor, what

a forest, my

even my love dims: hear our lost chronicle

ii

Once against a mezzotint, up against the light all of John Martin captured hell twisted so fine it became Heaven. The radgiest lecture ends. Hop to the dazzle in the tune, "My love"