

## A Boy

He's always standing still – in fields of long grass,  
at the side of a road, in the corner of a living room  
full of noisy, singing adults. And it's summer  
or New Year, and what is happening around him  
happens so quickly, spinning round his head  
in a swirl of colours. Everything smells fresh,  
not always good but strong and vital. He can taste  
the smell of washing day, feel the itch of waving wheat  
as it springs up from black earth. And everywhere the sea,  
in his mouth, his ears, his eyes, his pounding blood.

He's always standing still, but his limbs are in motion  
every waking minute. And the flight of his mind leaves  
a vapour trail of conquered castles, rescued girls,  
bareback rides on dragons. He looks everywhere –  
at the row of grey council houses sheltering at the foot of hills,  
at old men smoking pipes over talk of war, at his sisters  
in print dresses back-combing their hair, at purple lobsters  
stacked in creels on harbour walls – unaware that the reason  
he's always standing still is that he's pinned like a butterfly,  
held in this memory pulsing with the fever of his time.