

When the Time Comes

When the time comes you
shoulder the rocking-horse ribcage
of the sledge onto a shelf,
exhume the greening carcass of a seat;

an act that says it's not so much
a change but more a trade-off
between seasons: eggs for trees,
sandals for skis,

this arrowing of greylags
for that tumbling display
of lapwing-love, the sticky clots of
crows choking the elms.

Across the Carse, Ben Mhor
still holds its fractured arm
of snow and yet already there's
the crashed-gears call of sheep,

the starter motor answer
of a lamb and all the rattled
cutlery of birdsong in this
drawer we've labelled spring.

The seat needs stripped
and oiled but what the hell,
instead you watch a pipit
climb the ladder of its song.