

The Bat, the Bell, the Bird and the Body

Outside there is an admixture of emotion with milling sunlight
heating at the foot of the steps a browned black package,
an overnight decayed Gould's Wattled Bat messaging the path
having been lost by off course sickened flight, its fine nostril

hairs twitter alive, seemingly wet with the silicone gloss
of the day's watering and whispering sunlight, sunlight that
is sticking to everything like pasted glue as little dust motes
cable-car, ascend, descend and counterbalance themselves in

the beams of glow, realising they have no future or fortune
they rat about in the early morning ocean air watching as
I do the bird channelled wind shunting in from the south and
off to the west there is that limey light over the mountains

making woeful some traveller's family holiday with rain like
bullish needles to be thrown at will, like watermelon seeds
shot as pellets from a pop-gun, this afternoon levelling in
slanted then hunkering in for days, I am just pleased to sit,

the sun's flowering bulb of heat pulsing in finger poking intensity
while way out, the deep trenched water has caught an early poem
and the board riders smother-spot-bother the water's surface like
black grubs on coloured paddle pop sticks and if you squint-eye,

narrowing your vision to a coned view you gather quickly the
mordant morsels of real life that are revalued here, this place
is important, as popcorn elephant clouds safari park the sky and
now the wild willowy wind submarines low and precise, patrolling,

and the leathered carcass of the bat tremors, just jiggers slightly
from side to side like the innards of a ruptured bagpipe still
somewhat alive with old pocketed and locked in air, eking out
survival with every wind elbowed twitch but it is the heat that

turnstiles it into quick decay, into a wretched mass, leathered fur
leeching death as the stone church that dragged the polished pebbled
path up the hill two centuries ago closes in on itself as the Angelus bell
sounds its Passover of sentiment and as a Paradise Riflebird sews ancient

air travel stories in and out, over and across the belfry, the solid ground
below is winked in sunlight, pin-pricks of shine teeter on grass tips,
this shine licks the pebbled path, polishes the wood of the trees, and
there is no noise, just sound, no silence just the cadence of things

moving, coming and going, drifting, working in fine adjustments, then
expectedly an ambulance crumbles the gravelled driveway, two young
paramedics rush "inside", wide-eyed I nod at them, then watch the board
riders in the stilled distance seven or nine per wave stitching their way in.

TIM COLLINS