



In the familiar safety
of the living room,
I encroached on nothing,
Created by many years of its occupation.

Conscious of a malignant guilt,
I walked across this faux Persian field.
Each knotted thread,
A chapter of life,
When the fire burnt coals,
Before it was time for bed.
The lurid sweet miasma of roses,
Had been sprayed in the air that morning, As it
had every morning,
To veil the stale air of old upholstery.
A lingering haze, Like a soft focus lens.

It was a sensation
I had found comfort within, Yet now,
With endless Earl Grey tea,
It overpowered me.

Once colossal furniture,
Had appeared as heavy as granite.
Drawn out to the limits,
It danced near the edge,
And played with the wall.
Yet its position had been static.
For as long as I could remember.

The distant hub of passing traffic resonated,
To splice the endless nothingness,
Of the world outside.
Every printed flower entwined,
Around the fluid lattice of the billowing sofa,
Surrounded the hearth of the three-bar fire,
A sign of modernisation.

The broad arms,
Faintly stained by chocolate fingers.
The cushions slowly imploding .

As the electric heat grew stronger on my face.
I sat on the rug,
Leaned against the sofa with my back.
Touching with my feet the warming slates, that
were to guard the furnace.
The constant heat was no substitute,
For the glowing coals I had watched,
Flicker around the room.
The dark winters,
Like the colours of fallen leaves.
Turned in my mind.

The weathered peach floor,
Pitted by the burns of stray embers,
Seemed as deep as the sea,
As it drowned my turbid memories.

Could I still jump from island to island,
As I had as a child, keeping the crocodiles at bay?
I could hear the words ingrained,
During those senseless years.
Keep your dirty feet off the furniture.

The oversized coffee table,
Carrying its unread Radio Times,
Acted like a buoy floating on
this swelling tumulus.
Its polished teak veneer,
Embossed by the partial ring,
from a chipped commemorative mug,
Of Charles and Diana with perpetual smiles.

Out of the single-glazed sash window
That rattled in the breeze,
Dusk had settled.
The slothful armchair was in need of rest.
I could have stayed forever.

I lay on the sofa, Inside this cocoon.
I could recall everything.
I had seen it all I had lived it all.

The hand cut vinyl wallpaper,
Lapping over the skirting boards,
Like an estuary tide,

Whose slow camber appeared too still.
Each chair leg with its cluster of impressions,
Like divots on a well-trodden bridal path.
The gritty battered brass of the coal bucket,
Now reduced to decoration.

In the dark shadows of the back wall,
Were I once played toy soldiers,
The oak sideboard, Like a tired plinth,
Held the proud collection of silver plated frames.

Like an urban landscape with skyscrapers to the
heavens.
I played on this woollen street,
Formed behind the sofa,
In a fictional city,
As large as my imagination would allow.
The dining chair,
With mother's circular back cushion,
Sat obediently at the feet of its master,
The elegant mahogany writing desk.

Strewn with thank you note-lets and old Easter
cards,
Of a time when all seemed politely innocent.
A painted scene of bluebells by a water mill,
Had little in common with the life I had known.
Was this the life I was supposed to remember?

Never before had the frosted panel,
Above the closed door been open.
I could hear the chink of Grandma's china cups.
It would soon be time for tea.
Egg and tomato sandwiches and warm sultana
cakes.

The twisted wooden standard lamp,
Had a Centurion's stance,
as it proudly waited its turn in the far corner.
It had seen it all, yet knew no other.
The heavily floral curtains a portcullis,
From their rusty metal rod.
Under siege from the flamboyant valance.
Like corrugated iron,
Each fold,
Kept the world firmly outside.

In the white morning,
The armchair now sat alone.
A sphinx,
Guarding the trespassing sunlight,
That pierced the window. Sculpted by elbows of
fourteen years.
The sullen rests acted as boulders,
On which the light crashed.
Bearing the impression of my fathers body
It cast a form that I had grown to love.
A territory secured through time,
That was not mine to occupy.

The family portrait,
A large emblem of vanitas past,
Hung as if hovering on the edge.
A marker of progress.
The tensile brass wire strained at the picture rail,
Declaring the forgotten vertical presence of the
wall.

The room hadn't been used as much,
Not since the children had gone away.
The rug lay empty,
Like a stage,
On which all of life had been rehearsed.
The chora where everything had started.
The past eight years,
A lifetime from this theatre.
The vast distance to the window,

Had become almost a single step.
I felt ever more removed,
As though a canyon had appeared.

This life had left me.
I was now intruding.
My belonging was a fallacy.