

SOFA

A million years ago, he said,
"If you'd rather, I could sleep on the sofa,"
and I said "No".

It was autumntime, wet streets outside,
there was a park, and then him and me and a huge white bed,
trees tapping against the window outside,
and the two of us
half-sleeping in each other's arms or thereabouts,
till an alarm rang out at dawn.
I remember us kissing goodbye in the rain next morning
at the bus-stop at the top of the street;
goodbye.

Half a million years ago - last time - we kissed goodnight,
whispered goodnight, sadly sighed goodnight,
before he - you - tiptoed off to sleep on the sofa.
Leaving me to slip under the covers - your covers - alone.

It was springtime, windy and cold.
We'd huddled in front of an electric-fire
and shivered hands-held back from the pub.

I slept in the bed, you slept on the sofa,
we neither of us slept.

Tonight - maybe we're both just tired.

Heads swimming, hopes dashed,
it's been a long day, a long week;
Christ, it's been a long time.

I stalk the room, headache still burning from last night's drinking;

you're already collapsed on the sofa.

And we neither of us can create a peace between us.

It was always bound to end in tears.

Angry words hang in the air, heavy as the fog that freezes outside.

Wintertime.

Angry tired words; we can't go on with this much longer.

I can feel you slipping slowly from my world;

and distantly I watch myself pass up this chance
to reach out and stop you, keep you. How could I?

If I slept with you tonight - but how could I? - and

does a tear run slowly down your cheek onto the cushion of the sofa,
as one runs down mine onto your pillow?

(That could've been my last chance back there)

And do you too savour it half-proudly,
tasting the accusation "you made me cry"...