

THE MOON CALF

Confute
confess

confound
confuttle

sell posters
for picnics

get fitted
with springs

.

Conjobbling
in the kitchen

or settling
down to conjobble
al fresco

cuts little
difference

either side

.

In a cosy
wee cubbyhole

malice
and avarice

clanging
like conkers

.

Ruminate
on that

she used
to say

.

Pressed
in a corner

they'll come up
with anything

beans dogs
knots in clothes

.

Remember
those spiders

that dropped
in the tropics?

mantids too
like birds

dissemble

.

Agrippa's hound
ran howling
away

.

No good
I guess

however you
arrange it

connexity
gone and no

contrivance

.

The bittern
booms

the bishop
plummets to
the floor

.

Beyond knowing
what it might be

nothing in practice

(foul smoke
up the flue
pipe)

some don't have
the courage

some don't have
the craft

.

The baker below
bereft of bread

the butcher

clean out
of bacon

.

SWITCHING CHANNELS

I watch a mantid snare
a snack (returning to the self-same
spot) and realise that she could take
a score of snacks: snip-snap, snip-snap,
and scarce one second would elapse.

One flick over, a man
from Jodrell Bank displays
an image snared from radio waves
of spiral galaxies exploding (not
unlike our own perhaps though several
million times enlarged). We see the jet
of fire (or something like a fire) shoot
out one side (or something like a side)
and realise this cataclysm took two
lifetimes on its way. Not mine nor yours,
you understand: the Earth itself had
just as much time left again to spend
as has been spent on everything
that's been or here.

A quick review: I know
you know the speed of light: one-eighty-six
times ten times ten times ten miles
covered for one brief glimpse
of one iota.

So the yellowish smudge (quite
arbitrary yellow) against the blue (quite
arbitrary blue) – that spume of worlds
dissolving – had its birth times Earth
times two times speed of light
per *second* to get here (plus the time
it took to be compiled
on Channel Two).

Being plausible
about what might give mass
to this miasma the man from Jodrell
Bank jumps to pluck one word
("neutrino") from his hoard of words
and perkily confesses physics as we
know it now is dodo-like
to guarantee what's what.

So let me tell
you, so you know:

it is a mantis taking prey,
it is the disposition to believe,
it is a *bumbast circumstance*,
it is a beauty and a *bel esprit*.