

Bonfire Night 96

Dusk , with drenching , horizontal squall

Slicing flat across the windmill ridge ,

Last edge of moor above the plain of Wharfe and York .

Mingling with sodium trace of man , a thousand flames

Commemorate a failure , slight , long ago ,

Yet strangely still recalled .

Leaves , brown and hardened now , join packets , scraps ,

On frantic , polka-ing air , ignored

By driven , planing birds that corkscrew past .

A bin , misplaced and overturned , redecorates

Ground swept clear of Autumn ' s odds and ends ,

Hedge bottoms catching debris as it flies and clings .

Folk , come to wonder at Man's ritual ,

Engulfed in shrilling , jarring , dinning blast ,

Bent half askew , and sodden to the pelt ,

Instead submit to God ' s own mischief night .

05 .11.96

on Windmill Hill