

Christopher Reid

Solar System

A pole's the South Pole,
a cherry-tree's the North,
and I am slung between them—
the planet's shut and dreaming eye
in my abstract hammock
of longitude and latitude—
not seeing but feeling
the far, fierce,
fatherly frown of the sun—
while an intermittent breeze
passes across my swaying,
on its way from somewhere to elsewhere.

La Tartuga

From one back window, piano practice:
repeated attacks on a trap of chords
repeatedly sprung;
 and from another,
soprano arpeggios, intricate as hopscotch.
The dauntless human musical endeavour!
It's touch and go, too, in the animal kingdom,
where a tortoise tilts and bumps itself down
 some concrete steps,
like removal men managing
a large, dusty but once-loved

piece of farmhouse bedroom furniture,
and a bee gang carries out a spot raid
on the deep, deep-purple flowers
of a shaken sage-bush.

Raga

A complete nervous system
is singing:
 supple, delirious
evening meditation music—
verandah shutters
wide open
to breezes and insects;
the horizon gulping the sun—
the bulbous, gravely jangled instrument
swooning
 ever more urgently
over a listening drone,
a drone that listens and responds to everything,
not least
the visceral throb,
the pulse and peristalsis
of two companionably babbling drums:

and the mind—
 scattered among the stars—
is content, at last,
with its place
 in the general scheme.