

## Courtyard Reading

A line of shadow divides the courtyard.  
The poems reverberate  
against steep stone walls  
and occasionally chime,  
quartertones or the full hour,  
unconditional as dandelions  
rooted between paving stones.

Through rows of seats  
arranged in lines of free verse  
bustle couriers and delivery-men,  
searching for the offices  
whose outsides form the courtyard,  
whose insides accumulate  
disregarded harmonies like dust.

Applause, shadows, conversations  
between the revs and whispers  
of the traffic - the afternoon  
resumes its unscanned rhythms,  
bus routes, turnpike stairs,  
impromptu breaks outside  
to inhale the last of the August sun.

Ken Cockburn  
from *On the flyleaf* (Luath, 2007)