APPENDIX

UNCOLLECTED POEMS
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Fiction And the Reading Public

Give me a thrill, says the reader
Give me a kick;
I don't care how you succeed, or
What subject you pick.
Choose something you know all about
That'll sound like real life:
Your childhood, your Dad pegging out,
How you sleep with your wife.

But that's not sufficient, unless
You make me feel good —
Whatever you're 'trying to express'
Let it be understood
That 'somehow' God plaits up the threads,
Makes 'all for the best',
That we may lie quiet in our beds
And not be 'depressed'.

For I call the tune in this racket:
I pay your screw,
Write reviews and the Bull on the jacket —
So stop looking blue
And start serving up your sensations
Before it's too late;
Just please me for two generations —
You'll be 'truly great'.

(appeared in Essays in Criticism, Vol. IV
January 1954, No. 1, p.56)
The difficult part of love
Is being selfish enough
Is having the blind persistence
To upset someone's existence
Just for your own sake —
What check it must take.

And then the unselfish sick —
Who can be satisfied
Putting someone else first?
So that you come off worst?
My life is for me:
As well deny gravity.

Yet vicious or virtuous,
Love still suits most of us;
Only the bleeder who
Can't menace either view
Is ever wholly rebuffed —
And he can get stuffed.

Continuing to Live

Continuing to live — that is, repeat
A habit formed to get necessaries —
Is nearly always losing, or going without
   It varies.

This loss of interest, hair, and enterprise —
Ah, if the game were poker, yes,
You might discard them, draw a full house
   But it's chess.

And once you have walked the length of your
   mind, what
You command is clear as a lading-list.
Anything else must not, for you, be thought
   To exist.

And what's the profit? Only that, in time,
We half-identify the blind impress
   All our behavings bear, may trace it home
But to confess.

On that green evening when our death begins,
Just what it was, is hardly satisfying,
Since it applied only to one man once,
   And that one dying.

(appeared in Keepsake for the London
   School of Oriental and African Studies)
The Life with a Hole in it

When I throw back my head and howl
People (women mostly) say
But you've always done what you want,
You always get your own way
---A perfectly vile and foul
Inversion of all that's been
What the old ratbags mean
Is I've never done what I don't

So the shit in the shuttered chateau
Who does his five hundred words
Then parts out the rest of the day
Between bathing and booze and birds
Is far off as ever, but so
Is that spectacled schoolteaching sod
(Six kids, and the wife in pod,
And her parents coming to stay).

Life is an immobile, looked.
Three-handed struggle between
Your wants, the world's for you, and (worse)
The unbeatable slow machine
That brings what you'll get. Blocked,
They strain round a hollow stasis
Of havings-to, fear, faces.
Days sift down it constantly. Years.

(appeared in Poetry Book Society
December 1974).
Aubade

I work all day, and get half drunk at night
Waking at four to soundless dark, I stare
In time the curtain-edges will grow light
Till then I see what's really always there:
Unresting death, a whole day nearer now.
Making all thought impossible but how
And where and when I shall myself die
Arid interrogation: yet the dread
Of dying, and being dead,
Flashes afresh to hold and horrify.

The mind blanks at the glare. Not in remorse
— the good not done, the love not given, time
Torn off unused — nor wretchedly because
An only life can take so long to climb
Clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never;
But at the total emptiness for ever,
The sure extinction that we travel to
And shall be lost in always. Not to be here.
Not to be anywhere.
And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true.

This is a special way of being afraid
No trick dispels. Religion used to try.
That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
Created to pretend we never die,
And specious stuff that says No rational being
Can fear A thing it will not feel, not seeing
That this is what we fear —no sight, no sound.
No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
Nothing to love or link with,
The anaesthetic from which none come round.

And so it stays just on the edge of vision,
A small unfocused blur, a standing chill
That slows each impulse down to indecision.
Most things may never happen; this one will,
And realisation of it rages out
In furnace-fear when we are caught without
People or drink. Courage is no good;
It means not scaring others. Being brave
Lets no one off the grave
Death is no different whined at than withstood.

Slowly light strengthens, and the room takes shape
It stands plain as a wardrobe, what we know,
Have always known, know that we can't escape,
Yet can't accept. One side will have to go
Meanwhile telephones crouch, getting ready to ring
In locked-up offices, and all the uncaring
Intricate rented world begins to rouse.
The sky is white as clay, with no sun.
Work has to be done
Postmen like doctors go from house to house

( *Times Literary Supplement*, December, 1977)