Stephen Robertson

Sounds

Triolets

On Rushup Edge

Voices far across the valley sound
through still, warm air,
clear to my vantage point on higher ground.
Voices far across the valley sound.
The hills ranged all around
—they little care.
Voices far across the valley sound
through still, warm air.

On the top deck of a 68

Voices, ipods, phones speak out—
add to the road's cacophony.
Through air and ether people mutter, shout,
voices, ipods, phones speak out.
So many people talking: can we doubt
that somewhere herein lies some deep philosophy?
Voices, ipods, phones speak out—
add to the road's cacophony.

Dialectic

Voices coming from the room next door:
thesis and antithesis, debate
about it and about, and evermore
voices coming from the room next door.
For and against, and more, against and for;
debate is all—a synthesis can wait.
Voices coming from the room next door:
Thesis and Antithesis debate.

This poem is reprinted from Slanting Lines, the website of the poems of Stephen Robertson, at https://www.slacktide.site/slanting_lines/

In the lecture room

His voice is lively, gestures wide—
there is much sense in what he says,
through these ideas he makes a worthy guide;
his voice is lively, gestures wide.
The sun and wind upon the trees outside…
I try to listen, but my musing strays.
His voice is lively, gestures wide.
There is much sense in what he says.

Small hour

No voices in the almost-silence that I hear,
the soft subliminal sibilance of night,
no words, no human language in my ear,
no voices in the almost-silence that I hear.
The words within my head, what do they care?
They rattle round, and link, and split, and fight.
No voices in the almost-silence that I hear,
the soft subliminal sibilance of night.

December sounds

Even I, atheist, find some of them sublime—
Britten's Ceremony or the ones from Kings.
If I can filter out the rest, the aural grime,
even I, atheist, find some of them sublime.
Must just ignore the shop-committed crime,
the muzakal banality which stings.
Even I, atheist, find some of them sublime,
Britten's Ceremony or the ones from Kings.

What the thunder said

Whipped wide awake by what the thunder said
flashes silhouette the trees against the blind.
A storm is raging as I lie abed,
whipped wide awake by what the thunder said.
Rain rattles on the rooftiles overhead
and beats against the window with the wind.
Whipped wide awake by what the thunder said,
flashes silhouette the trees against the blind.

Under canvas

Night-time noises permeate the air
with voices human, animal, machine.
An owl, a leaping fish, a fox afar—
night-time noises permeate the air.
Someone snoring in the tent next door,
a motorcycle coursing up the lane.
Night-time noises permeate the air
with voices human, animal, machine.

In hospital

Voices from the curtained bed next door:
someone else's fragile life is there.
Each new doctor asks the same once more,
voices from the curtained bed next door.
Responses muted, though the sense is raw,
to questions orderly, while exuding care.
Voices from the curtained bed next door:
someone else's fragile life is there.