At the Turn of the Century

We’ll brace the day then
city the machines
girt the circuses
now that it’s gone noon
not long before lamplighters
heighten the hectic
of lipstick and rouge.

With spat and swagger-
cane clubfoot denstep
nestwards we’ll perform
separate customs
in the same conformity
damp stairs leading down
piled marble rising.

Come let’s celebrate
the perfume putrid
the high as hung game
gaudy marketplace
where nothing’s not for barter
if counterfeitors’
coined faces fit.
The hunt is human
quarries in cahoots
with quick pursuers
windows mirrors eyes
reflect the prizes
and the kill if lingering
is rarely lethal.

As streetcleaners
and the first birds sing
we'll stagger home
throw nightstained costumes off
and fall foul asleep
failing to dream of milkmaids
beyond the city walls.

ANTHONY EDKINS