

## 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 counterfeiters'  
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**