Lost in the Funhouse

The wonderful thing
about department stores
she was often heard to say
at bridge club or after church
is that one could live in them

She would imagine herself
locked in, parading in furs
eating sweets by the fistful
touring the silent, untenanted store
— a babe in toyland —
with only mannequins to address
undress, dress  Donning ski
apparel, bridal gowns, or modelling
in mirrors accessories of alligator
chamois and silk, she would plunk
at a Steinway, or make her face
and those of her quiescent company
in shades she would otherwise
disparage

The afternoon she died
her husband out of town
her daughter still unmarried
she was seen to twirl
in an aisle of cosmetics
her face a confusion, a fright
She was the child in the funhouse
as the carnies pulled
at the walls
Carreglwyd

In this heart of fields
a small wood stands

— from Llanfaethlu
all is seen as a cloud of green
in a yellow sky

and in the wood
the great stone house
an apron of lawn
the lilypadded pond, the boat-house
the walled garden
— a garroted pigeon, caught among peas
twists on twine, reminder to its brothers

Broken bells in bush
two gazebos lean

On a far rise
— a ruin

Nettles prick

Sheep people the fields like little cars
and the horses breach, the fences
to reach the farmers’ barley
At the footbridge
a row of weasels and stoats
spiked on barbs
shriveled and dry, while hedgehogs
squat in death like seaplants
and spiders cloak the head and eyes
of a jackdaw jammed on branches

It is a medieval place —
the dead glower from walls
and Lulu rants in the kitchen

In the punt on the pond
we row to the weir
and back to the bank
The springer barks

The children bowl on the green
Willow snorts from a dank and cluttered stall
and Lulu nods in her chair
waiting in trees
like this house
for a final end to things