

# Lightning in the Fall

From morning light I stayed out in the fall air  
never wanting to come in, to miss anything,  
how the sun shone, how the clouds travelled across the land  
the cold land and the golden trees  
once were green pastures of quiet.

I walked abroad as far as I could  
I was surprised at the calmness of people  
in this sepulchre of bright days  
this burial ground of lions.

Everything was ordinary, only a murmur on the wind  
and two strangers, bent old women, walking  
slowly raised thin hands in triumphant style.

All the day long history had cleared its throat  
preparing at last to cough out long-collected phlegm.

I stayed outside to wander in the night  
to see what beauty might still be hidden  
after the day had gathered in its toll of deaths  
and marvelling, marvelling at the stars  
and, suddenly, a leap of lightning in the sky.

*Ian McDonald*