

Oyster

You could always talk,
Great torrents of invective delivered at speed,
The mad woman's lingua franca, all pith and criticism
Later on it became a spray, scattered
Important pieces missing.
You talked like a sprinkler onto dirt,
No nutrient, no sun, no seed. You grew nothing but rust
In the wet patterned dust, you recognised other flaws:

Your heart — gone, the ticker out of time
Your head — stopped, stalled on the questions
That did you in, in the first place.
You caught yourself shouting
At the living room wall, inconsolable
Wringing guts wrecked by an ache and an anger
Part acid burn, part umbilical tug
Shouting: is anybody out there?
That stagey, age-old cry, made for
Movie moments such as this, when thoughts align at last
With some universal script.

I recognised it before you did; that churning urge.
I saw how you stood downwind of echoes
To hear an answering voice. Clever, clever you.
You knew the risk of such self-reliance
(The inevitable folding in, the compacting and the
The bitter repetition:

'Oyster'

p 1
BP301

You answered your own questions with a question)

You shrugged and said something tart, ironic.

But the trap was laid: you fell.

How sharp your senses, how hard your carapace —

But they were of no use.

It got you in the end,

That yearning for an answer and a God.

You tumbled through your own questions

Had your shouting moment, then

When you were done turning yourself inside out,

When you were shucked like an oyster,

You revealed your soft bits to the sky and said:

Tell me what I am.