TO escape onto PAPER
into the woods

into the woods walked the man

dedicated to ecology, and he walked in

without a pen, I said, without a pen!

incredulous that joy should have no record,

as if the self would boil and bubble

unrecorded, all of life clammering

to escape onto paper
she walks in and desolates
the day, a particular flavour
of face, a blonde face, greyish
hair, loose blue shirt,
pressed jeans, wordless,
slender as a knife, eyes
like weapons     me
working hard to word
her off
victim of story

Philoctetes remains true
to his pain, the festering
leg, for years abandoned
on the rocky island, and no
words of Odysseus the political,
no promise of fame, of victory,
they are but words to the pain
which is his, which is
who he has become, but myth
more strong than self
and the god from the machine
drove Philoctetes to Troy,
another victim of story
at the end of his fifth whiskey
he became certain he was certain
and those who spoke of the price
of gold of shares in Nortel of the
Cayman Islands as grand tax haven were
he was certain in his brilliant head
dead wrong and dead dead
the dead tired poem

on the day of the hangover
on the day of the hollow chest
on the day of the body in charge
on the day of the rapid cloud
on the day of the tossed trees
in full bloom
on the day of the dead eye
body working to hold its head up
everyone else exuding health
like a plague of grin
a day on which the first beer
lay on the horizon
on the dead day of
the dead tired poem
the anonymous clouds

90/
there is no centre on
a glum day the anonymous clouds
over the river whose cross-hatched
waves cannot be named
one from another
or the weeds the bush the trees

sit on my bench for a minute
or by some other method
of measure shadows moving
in the short-hair grass
never start from here

in the metropole
the weight of opinion

we live in a thin country
poets slip out sideways

traffic is heavy and art
brief poem inert
lives in an unmarked
grave never start
from here
Samuel Beckett

I sat next to Samuel Beckett
He didn’t say a word
I didn’t say a word
He said nothing
I said nothing
He had a pint of Guinness
I had a gill of whiskey
He read nothing
I read a script
I looked up
He lifted his glass to his lips
I think it was Beckett
His face looked like
an Ordinance Survey map
He cleared his throat once
I drank
He drank
shifted in his chair once
and it creaked
He didn’t say a word
It must have been Beckett