

### **THE TIE**

Just an old man alone in Piccadilly.  
You may have seen him walking here before,  
Pausing to gaze in this window, at that store  
In the Burlington Arcade. A little silly  
Perhaps, a bit too eager child-like bright-eyed  
Looking at all the lovely little things.  
He sometimes hums to himself, sometimes sings  
And if he appears to be less than dignified  
Well, he's irrelevant now. He's had his day.  
Straightening his tie he turns away.

The Fortnum and Mason storefront mechanical clock  
Strikes the hour. The Georgian figures march out  
Formal slow and slowly turn about,  
Return to silence. The doors snap shut and lock.  
It makes him smile, always has, ever since  
As a little boy taken out for Saturday treat  
They stopped there for something to drink, something to eat.  
(Berries and cream in summer, in winter mince  
Pie). They sat by those murals of the tea  
Plantations. Such lovely colors politically

Incorrect now, those paintings long since gone  
From a world that no longer exists if it ever did  
Though it surely did for him, he thinks it did  
As he remembers those paintings painted on  
The panels of those walls, those holidays  
Out with relatives, family, friends  
Not as they were but such as they might have been,  
And are, for him, remembering today  
And straightening his tie he turns away  
Into the rush hour crowd against the stream  
Of a thousand faces swirling in a dream  
Plunging toward bus or Tube at the end of the day.  
Darker early now. Early December.  
The smell of coal smoke, peat: the smell of old.  
They are homeward bound. He feels cold . . .

Just an old man alone down Piccadilly.  
You may have seen him wandering here before  
Stopping in front of a window in a store  
In one of the arcades. A little silly  
Perhaps, staring a bit too eager wide-eyed

Child-like in front of all the lovely things.  
He sometimes hums to himself, sometimes sings.  
A bit disheveled, not very dignified –  
Well, he's irrelevant now. He's had his day.  
And straightening your tie you turn away.