MAN IN A GARDEN

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Creation's monster, metaphysical man
Across the garden moves his doomed machine,
Propelled by timeless fuel, caught in time,
Changing, unchanging, mobile, half at home...
His legs in Croydon, head for Eden bound,
Between two stars he tills the promised land.

A budding snowdrop beckons to his eyes:
'As flower in soil, so mind in body grows,
Wept by the primal dark'... He tastes the weather,
Sweet on the tongue, loosening his lips to gather
Breezes like manna; but his lungs expel
Polluted vapour, warm and personal.
He listens: blackbirds fluting... pigeons talking—
But in his entrails hears a time-bomb ticking,
Planted at birth, set for the mocking hour...
Screaming, a sea-mew hurtles through the air:
'Birdsong is praise because a bird can die;
We do not leave but take the world away;
Almost we dare not look or love our fill,
Almost we dare not live our lives at all'.

And still he digs, digs in his grievance there,
Long after dusk; digs till his mind is bare
Yet in its bareness holds one metaphor:
'Stars in the dark and out of soil a flower'.