

POEMS FOR KEITH PAYNE'S TALK ON SEPT. 19, 2022

THE KITCHEN ISLAND

No. 3 relished the chance to marvel at his kitchen cabinets:
the soft-closing drawers, the toe-kick,
the red lacquer finish that showed his reflection
as he walked through the door

and sat at his very own kitchen island
to a Wall's Viennetta ice-cream
that crackled as the cake slice cleaved
the glacial chocolate layers.

But this was just the start of deserts to come.
There was a whole palette of sorbets,
an endless cascade of profiteroles and before long
he'd be striding back from the garden shed
with crème brûlée in his head and a blow torch in his hand.

(from Part I, *Savage Acres*, W.I.P. Keith Payne)

Published online *Write Where We Are Now*, 12th May, 2020.

<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/write/he-relished-the-chance-to-marvel-.php>

THE SOUND OF THINGS TO COME

The idea of neighbours had never occurred to No. 4
so every Sunday gave him the vapours
when that man from next door stood in his garden
and raising his alto sax
brought his lips to the nipple
warming the morning with scales;
the notes poured over the wall
insinuating themselves into his neighbour's ear
as he stood by his kitchen sink
watching the sun clear the capstones
to 'Beauty is a Rare Thing'
rising and teasing through the estate;
the distance between them closing in

– the sound of things to come.

(from Part I, *Savage Acres*, W.I.P)

No. 3 would serve his county with his tongue sharp as his mother's secateurs she kept for pruning their "Emerald Gaiety" spindle hedge, though he preferred the "Emerald 'n' Gold" variety, which he admires from his window as he runs over his next statement to the Press: "The Minister does not think it is incorrect to describe a sink as a fitted kitchen." How he enjoyed these moments at his window flicking through the *Oxford English Dictionary*, smiling as he reads *develop*, from *voloper* c. *envelope*. The roads take ever-widening turns and yes indeed they would vote with their wheels, and for those without a car of their own, a shopping trolley would do.

(from Part I, *Savage Acres*, W.I.P. Keith Payne)

BUILDING A HOME, No. 11

There were nights she came home and the house was gone,
so hanging her coat on a branch, she grabbed a trowel
and set to laying blocks.

Course after course she laid, till in through the front door
she painted the walls; then hall, stairs and landing
– the cornice was the tricky bit.

Then switching on the kettle as her kids turned in their sleep
the stars spinning in the sky above,

she stepped into a garden that had grown back together again
and hung the washing on the line.

(from Part I, *Savage Acres*, W.I.P. Keith Payne)

From THE SHOULDER OF MUTTON ESTATE

IV

They'd place the television on the window ledge on warm days
and move the house outdoors,
wheel the *Superser* out and make a table of it with a throw
gifted by a neighbour;
the bottle of *Kosangas* was hooked up to the burner
and they'd bubble a pot of stroganoff
as Jaime talked them through wild mushrooms and strips of beef
cooked in a flash.
The kids were sent round the estate with bucket and spade
In search of parsley
as the deckchairs they'd swapped for a card of SuperValu stamps
were placed round the rockery
and the salt from a day at the beach lay drying
on the hatchback's bonnet.
In the evening they lit fairy lights round the wisteria
as the crows settled in the plane trees
and in their navy flip-flops that came with every purchase
of *Nivea Sun Cream*
—and thanks to satellite TV— they all settled in to watch
Birds of a Feather.

(from Part V, *Savage Acres*, W.I.P. Keith Payne)