**The staircases of this place**

The staircases of this place  
chug like trains, upward trains,  
empty to a locked door whose eye  
glimpses sky and painted pipes  
while level upon level stacks a kitty flap   
squeaking open, shut, unloading office refugees.  
  
Carriage atop carriage the conveyor belt  
moves smoke and distant murmurs,  
occasionally shaping into fragments   
like a torn letter from long-ago times  
"obviously... doesn't understand"  
                     "...had to abort, but then"  
"...work, and work, and work..."  
                     "a bitch, she thinks she..."  
  
, moves the sound of zips like a plunge in dark tunnel  
the wind whooshing in a rustle of skirts  
a swerve of bitten gasp

a rumble of tracks in thumping   
movement  
  
, moves slow breaths and the tick,   
tick of watches.  
  
Outside each kitty flap the green-lit "EXIT"  
outlines a silhouette

of a running man;  
just two metres away,

a loaded elevator stops

on every floor.