

## **Brightly Shone the Moon**

Two cows, dumb, three asses, a manger,  
a stunned man and woman, shepherds stranger,  
who cower, a light to adorn her,  
and a cash register glistening in the corner.

It's again devotion's loveliest season  
when managers lease smiles with fierce reason  
and goods lie round about, believed in  
utterly, tagged and crisp and uneven.

People lifted a touch in such regular lives  
and humdrum spending habits. Everyone believes  
“centre” a just word for shopping,  
families come together at last. Copping

it sweet are burly-bellied men, their  
guts slumped over their belts, aware  
of once young bodies now in disarray;  
and women who have felt in a tired way

for donkeys' years. Their frisky daughters spar  
at the Coke machine, each in her first bra  
enjoying the just discovered shape of faking  
— all models and pop stars in the making.

And the loudspeakers are counting still  
the number of days, number of hours until  
few but the young can still scrabble  
awe from Christmas' towering babble.

When stars in the east have stopped shining,  
refining all that Christmas can do, only  
one language is talking, and time is slipping  
over everyone's fingers like money.