

**Malcolm Guite**

## **The Cutting Edge**

At my back, like you, I always hear  
The edge, the cutting edge is coming near.

Not the blind fury  
With the abhorred shears  
But this is what I fear;  
The stealthy scissors of a blinded time  
Cutting through accretions of the past  
Dully and daily deleting, whatever is not next  
Sneering, and sniping and snipping,  
Excising every sign-post from the text  
Paring all the parts that point away  
To something other than our circled self.

I know the angels were the first to fall,  
Cherub and Seraph spiralled down  
In circling curlicues of sacred text,  
Flaring in ink and paper to the floor,  
The shredded evidence of our affair  
Our old, embarrassing affair with God.  
And God himself will follow soon enough;  
A little word so easy to excise  
Another snippet for the cutting room  
A sweeping on the heap of history.

But still at night, I tiptoe to the door  
To rustle through these severed strips of love,  
And strew my heart with scraps of poetry,  
Forbidden hopes and shards of mystery.  
They rustle through me in my waking dreams  
And so I'll have a heart-, a head-, a handful when  
The scissors come for me.

For at my back, like you, I always here  
The cutting edge, the edge is coming near.