

Seán Hewitt

[The sash rattles up]

The sash rattles up
then catches.
I clamber clumsily
into the slow
black treacle of the night air
and see the simplicity
moonlight
brings to an autumn frost.

I am, and Woodlands court
is the same as it always is:
at once a place to be
and a place to be absent from,
at once somewhere that is home
and somewhere that is utterly devoid of remembrance.

It's everything you'd expect
of a Cambridge courtyard:
the library, the chapel,
the fluster of lights
in windows of work-stale rooms.

Stepping out,
the crisp, exhilarating
assault
of night-time on my radiator-warmed skin

And the crunch of the season underfoot

And the smell of the raw earth

like a jolt
in the clockwork
of memory.

Not here, but elsewhere,
the places were
myself:
different ages, different
moods, different company,
but me nonetheless.

Here, the courtyard is blank.
Still just a courtyard.

Still just me and Woodlands court,

separate beneath the stars,
at 1am.