

*Wayne Price***Lids**

All across the city
mouths are meeting in the dark,
as if eating the last of the words
out of warm bowls.

I dreamt I lifted
the flat white stones
in the garden like lids,
and every deep jar was full.

Moles

Their lives are a kind of whispering
under sunny lawns, like the hurry
of blood in the veins goes on
under clothes, ceilings, conversations.

Their mounds are neither towns nor ruins.
Dead, their hands upturned are pink –
nerved and naked as our own. Tall trees frame
the narrow gardens they mine.

Night comes down. Thieves in dreams
quarter their own homes. What if
the blind frenzy of moles in the ground
is the buried, lifelong panic it seems?

October Again

October again. Harvest spiders,
beetles slip indoors like prodigals.
This morning on TV
somebody told me
I must make my 'life-statement'.

My life-statement! Partial this, partial
that, and the single thought
that unwraps sleep, slits
the packet that was tied
neat as a fat cigar, so snug in its own leaf

the small cold hands of insects
might have packed it, perfect. Always
the same gift. What could be more natural?
October makes
callers of us all. Everything

would come indoors if it could: scurry-legged strings,
snails weeping themselves
against the windowpanes. Why are we
so afraid then
of wearing out our own welcome?

Llanwynno

Everything becomes a turning outward
 here, either quick or slow: the narrow paths
 that branch year by year, the splitting acorns
 and ravelled ferns, the armoured plates of pinecones
 splaying on the forest floor, the white
 and brown and yellow mushrooms billowing.

Water lipping the Clydach's round stones
 releases their mineral perfume, like rain
 on thicks of nettles and raw, turned fields.

Memory opens like a country door
 on the space the language needs to enter:
 a sudden clearing – the neat, bright grass

 as if something were tending it there, for
 no reason, for no-one, for nothing.

Wayne Price's poems and short stories have appeared in many UK and international journals and anthologies. His pamphlet collection of poems, *Fossil Record* (Smith|Doorstop, 2015) was chosen by Carol Ann Duffy as one of her inaugural Laureate's Choices. He teaches English and Creative Writing at the University of Aberdeen.