

Symphonia

Golden fingers creep the curtain from below

To tinker at the horizon's edge

A quiet interlude

Anticipation

A tuning up.

Then heavenwards shoots and weaves a celestial trellis

A filigree of burnished light that bursts from high

To explode and fill the eastern sky

With vermillion, scarlet, tangerine and rose.

It's daybreak.

Dawning.

And so, the yawning world comes alive

To stretch

And shake the mantle of the night

To fling it to the furthest corner of the universe.

To banish it from sight.

At home

There is a stirring

The pad of slippers on the stair

The sound of kettles, spoons, toasters, plates, and dormant wirelesses come-alive

Blackbirds, robins, mewling babes

The rolling out of bins

Morning smells

Of bacon and of toast

Twitch the nostrils,

They raise the spirits, fill the house, and draw the risen to the table

Car doors slam

A jarring syncopation

As quiet streets start to fill

With traffic that crawls, coughs, then catches its breath

In a gasping logjam brought to a slowing, eddying, stop.
The air lies heavy with man-made clouds
The unseen now made visible
Suffused with tastes
That chase away the morning meal.

The noontide sun
A shadow of its former self
Peers down from height
Small, diminished, and almost white
The glories of its golden birth
Snatched
And lost to mobile phones.

Lunchtime sounds:
The shouts and squeals of schoolyard games, of workers' gab, and orders at the bar,
Of radio news, the screech of brakes, motorcycle, bus and car
Then back to work.

Quiet hum of conditioned air, coffee mugs and biscuit tins,
Desktops lost to paper piles
In, out, pending
The chit and chat of office life
Clock hands seem not to turn
But the workday ticks towards its ending.

And so for home
The traffic's reeling in
Reversed
The stop
The start
The door
The key
The glass of wine
Familiar smells, a favourite chair

To sit, eyes closed, to slump

In the cooling evening air.

The jumper's on

As lengthening shadows

Distance from the sun

And branches stretch their reach

Grey flickering flames

They creep the lawn

And silently climb the bricks.

Decision made:

key turns

lock clicks

the swish of curtains drawn.

The evening settles like an old settee

Stuffed

With dishwasher sounds that turn and tumble

A jumble of soaps, rock, arguments, and laughs

A dib, a dab,

Of whispered news

A painter's palette

Of oohs, and ahs, and well-I-nevers

Colour added.

Impressions made.

Now yawning and stretching again return

Watches checked

The duvet beckons

and

one

by

one

the

lights

go

out.

As night-time falls

Slippers climb

And peace descends upon the close.

But beyond the pane

In shadowed alleys concealed

Or bathed in lunar lambent glow

Or in neon starkness caught

The darkness brings

A new dawning.

The bark of fox, the cry of owl,

Alarm and siren

A chained dog's howl

The smash of crockery...

To fill whatever time

Remains of the day.

493 words

The Remains of the Day (Kazuo Ishiguro)

