

The school canteen.

He sits, quiet centre of the midday maelstrom

Of shoulders slapped, ruffled hair, digs, and shoves.

He ignores the shouts, the crass guffaws, the clank of cutlery and the slam of doors

He's lost – adrift - his moorings gone

On mighty seas of wanton waves.

*Will she? Might she?*

He tries to focus, fends off the hordes

Denies the din of voices that clamour and scrabble at the hatches of his mind

Demanding to be let in.

Incessant, insistent, persistent

Sound

Filling his head with a thousand things.

Irrelevancies.

Of long-gone kings, and faded queens.

Till the sluice-gates open

And consigns them to the deep.

The mess of burger, bun, and chips remains

Untouched.

And then the bell that sweeps them out

On a rising swell

A seething wave, of flotsam, jetsam,

Untidy stream of half-formed things,

That sucks him down the tight funnel of the corridor.

He stands, shrugs his bag, and is taken on the tide.

Jostled, jabbed, from right, from left, the thrum of white noise fills his head.

And so, at last, his indecisive hand (the twitching thumb) takes charge.

Message sent.

He surfaces.

A single breath allowed, he looks about

To find the golden strand that is her hair.

In a single pulse of his racing heart

His words have girdled the world

And come to earth, like a silent fall of snow

Amid the pencils, papers, mirror and mascara.

She stops, consults, then hides the phone again.

Looks around

To find his face

And to him she sends a silent look

A siren song

That calls him

To the rocks.