

SURVIVE

They met at Oxford, post-war.
Kingsley Amis, confident in his abilities
A poet then, unformed:
A one hit wonder, or so it seemed.

Larkin was the leader then:
His two albums with the Stooges
Unsuccessful but respected.

They both wrote novels:
A Girl In Winter,
Lucky Jim, and Jill.
But Amis' star rose fastest.

Larkin went to work in Belfast
Amis stayed at home and drank.
And then, the new creation:
Ziggy changed it all.

Kingsley's star exploded
Larkin went to Hull, and sulked.
Fame lay between them like a bolster:
Til Larkin's mental health declined.
They fuck you up, the liquor and drugs.
Amis rescued him from sanatoria: in doing so,
he also saved himself.

And then their greatest moment came: Berlin.
Two friends on the spree.
The Whitsun Weddings, Heroes, Low
High Windows.
Two sides of the same Deutschmark.

Then the passage of the years.
Aubade, and Blackstar, side by side
The silence waiting.
For them, for all, for you and me.

So long since 1945
And 1969.
So long: but some stars never go out.

