**Mid Life Crisis Mark 2**

Lately you have been worrying about how to continue the poem

with the clever title, such as the one you called *Brigade in F Sharp With Lime.*

Your strategy was to let the titles respond to the tip of the tongue feeling

or that sense of cloudiness in the mind that is inevitable after dark,

and there were successes, but there was little beyond the smart titles.

Your work in progress began to feel like a room full of disinherited

third sons of east European nobility. A single line of text above

a blankness. This was not how you hoped to be remembered if at all.

Soon you began to suspect that it was a symptom of the fact that all nowadays

is surface. There is no substance. Everything you touch turns to ash,

unless it is already ash. The brightest light is a flickering, pale green candle,

and it guides no one, and certainly not the ships of the desperate people.

And everyone is desperate. Something has gone out of the world.

When and what is unclear, but there is a hole at the centre now, huge and black.

And it is different to the yearning that religion met for centuries,

and cannot be touched by opium, or alcohol, or sporting ecstascy,

or even love, which has comforted millions for years, but is now a wet fish.

The long lines of washed wedding dresses are turning to grey in the wind.

The heart, become emoticon, is papery and thin, and bears no difficulty.

The painters are daubing the walls with geometrical shapes and coloured patches.

The poets are writing as far as the end of the title.

Here is another one : *The Black Hole, A Synergic Resistance And Evacuation.*

But nothing follows. Books of poetry like this are appearing, and they are bought

in their thousands for their smart titles and their beautiful covers.