

crows step
in the
quarter

print edition poems
by david devanny

nmw6986

it is an asthmatic gasp when
bent across two bicycles
and cranetwisted neck extending
my lips toward the gap i suck
hungrily on fresh air

the windows here rise above the city
outside and beyond:
something indeterminable drags you up

and cold wind riding past the sill
makes the smoke escape the same way

the building has lost some of its cathedral charm
since they divvied it up
with partition walls
extra ceilings

the rafters are boxed in

but like a cathedral still
the many foul things spring there

spewing from under their slimy edge
guttered out below the parapet

nna5907

i.

let us name him oberon

(the man
who did not want to be
named)

he had (after all) spent the night
in envious pursuit
of – or rather fawning for
the boy in the red checked shirt
who had been hitting on his girlfriend

and not humbled by
the delicate ease
with which she teased redshirt
– twisting his body about
hers on the dancefloor –
he popped another whitey

but in the end neither of them went home with him
and rather were in the usual confusion
sicked out of the rave
into the morning

walking – also as usual – in the graveyard
while she soothed his ego – turned him on –
and waited an hour
for the bar at the queen's to open

ii.

DOZENS of police officers
carried out the raid
at 11.30am yesterday morning

officers were seen to burst in
to the queen's hotel on charles street
and a number of people were arrested

the man
who did not want to be
named
said

they were shouting at us
but i couldn't tell what

they pushed my face down
onto the table – went through
my stuff

and then
they left quickly
taking many people with them

proem

*it was built with –
suave and brutal optimism
said the critics, who always
have
something to say
and serves as iconic elijah
prophet & herald to [some form of]
regeneration*

75

my husband and i used to
keep the teapot
said mrs duckworth
of oadby – head house keeper
at the magnum hotel
i wouldn't like to stay in a
modern hotel even though i love
working in one

79

the centre hotel has been ordered to pay
£500 to two west indian men
the new management
lasted only as long
as the previous [thank god!]
following prosecution on a charge of
racial discrimination
against the two leicester residents

82

& 2 girls have made the final for the title
miss centre hotels
writes a journalist in
the mercury – a feature
no less [!]
& now the buxom barmaid is judged
to be a thing of the past – chic & feisty
has arrived

89

anger – as lights go out
on big fight
and where now is that optimism?
the penguin's a long slide off sophistication
flickering into the long winter
500 people bought £9 tickets
to watch the bruno –
tyson fight [before the power was cut]

91

disappointing
just disappointing

is the typical verdict
of guests – as reported
in the mercury

[no last lurch for iconic
elijah herald inauspicious to
regeneration]

nnbo779

it is imperative
that i remain

anonymous – unrecognised –
without reputation

so that i may continue
to come and go freely

i am getting rather old for
breaking and entering;

i do a good 'old lady'
and do it sweetly

'my husband used to work here
and i miss him dearly

it would mean ever so much to me
to see it one more time'

so if you use my work again
leave out my face and name

i say this sternly – a final warning
my privacy is mine

nmv4376

it is no real wonder
the cowboys came

the front elevation of urray
cut-out – like a film set
a flush facade-drop
down from the crow stepped gable
as much dutch colonial
as scots baronial

it is no real wonder
the cowboys came

the faces of jobless men
(and jobless women twice a week)
lined up like
rows of shelved pears

drinking cheap beer
jeering the band
tonight – and taking advice
from the old men there – herb-like

it is no real wonder
the cowboys came

and tumbled down the set carefree
as though it were not stonework
but painted wood and plaster

the straight roads of small town America
on their arrival – tumbled too
smoothed about with a dramatic sweep

– and rounded off