

## MARRY IN HASTE

Pull down the white curtain –  
nothing you already have will do.

Cut a little distance from the outline of yourself,  
you have to have room to breathe. Then sew.

Stitch by stitch it should come together.  
It doesn't matter about the weather,

you don't get married to feel warm, or cold.  
It turns out you can repent at pressure,

from when you are young,  
till when you grow old.

## BASEMENT

The gutted basement is what  
we *like* about the house.  
We can live perfectly well  
upstairs, over our dreams  
of those new interlocking  
floorboards, eight centimetres  
thick, that we'll have laid  
downstairs. Sliding  
doors, walls we imagine  
in different places,  
it is all we talk about  
for months, while  
we leave the gas leaking  
upstairs again, forgetting  
to light the flames.  
I quite *like* the smell.  
We'll put the children  
downstairs, when it's built.  
And build a basement  
under them, more gutted  
floors, broken concrete  
and disconnected sinks,  
somewhere to move  
the junk down to,  
and plan to floor as well.

## BADMINTON

It's not a dumb *game*, you're dumb  
*at* it. Though it doesn't help  
to say that, and you're getting  
better. This is probably  
the only day we'll ever get  
to play like this, you realise,  
it won't work in the wind, and  
this is *Wellington*. We  
don't have a net, we're just  
counting volleys, pretty  
good to hit three, then  
we hit five, then our world  
record of seven.  
We're going for eight,  
even if the clothesline  
gets in the way, even if  
that lunge back has me falling  
backwards over the wall  
that came down in the storm,  
into the compost, trying to get up  
in time for your next shot,  
stepping further back  
down the bank, stumbling  
over the blackberry vine,  
feeling for the concrete steps  
buried somewhere under the grass,  
because we've got to beat

eleven now, and although  
it is getting dark, there is still  
the thwack of *something*  
on the strings I've hit,  
and I can hear someone  
stumbling down the bank  
after me, hitting  
*something*, and who  
could it *be* except  
for you?