

The laughter rises like air in balloons
and floats into the miniature distance
where thousands of bright kimonos hang on pegs,
colorful strokes from a tiny brush
dipped in you know what.

PORLOCK BEACH

The horizon is clear enough to show
its curvature, continuous and perfect,
like a line from Picasso's hand
uninterrupted by a backfiring car
or a phone call from Man Ray.

LIGHTYEAR

Light did not do much travelling this year,
mostly just shone around the house,
too dim even to read a magazine by,
developing a squint.
Odd behaviour for a force that is usually
zooming through the cosmos
at a speed with as many zeros as a shut-out.
But everybody has a slump now and then,
even principles of the material universe.

Physicists were less tolerant of this
mopiness and gathered on her from lawn
first trying to cheer Light up with flattery.
"You're our beacon, our candle in the window,"
then letting loose with the ridicule.
"Something wrong with your photons?"
"And you call yourself a constant!"

Their articles in scientific journals
mocked the theory that lovesickness was to blame,
though neighbors returning home at night
from a movie or a party would notice her
sitting out on the veranda, rocking slowly,
and holding in her luminous hands
a photograph of Einstein as a young man.