

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.