

HELEN MOORE

Hedge Fund

*Little lines of sporting wood run wild
where hands heaved stones
to enclose – drove John Clare crazy.*

Today those walls left to crumble –
cracking bark, and Hawthorn
boughs once plashed,
now ancient elbows' fold
and sinew; Hazel, Ash –
all create a delicate asylum.

*Money markets usually lie
at the core of the financial
system, functioning quietly*

Colonies of Snails,
feathers, crush of brittle
lime – a Song Thrush
sings up its midden.

Startled mouths –
White Dead Nettle flowers
open where a shot Fox
crept to die; here lies
minus an eye.

Maggots;
rubbing its feet a Fly – tip,
the yawn of a fridge;
Autumn leaves, debris
rots, spawns Hips and Haws
to feed the Songbirds and Badgers.

*and so efficiently that they're
barely noticed. Like the human
heart, which beats continuously*

A few bushes on,
the Elm where a Barn Owl
stared, burped its pellet –
grey ossuary of Mice,
Amen.

*without conscious thought,
their global operation takes
place night and day, while*

Still, Life finds its niches.
On rocks Lichens crottle,
and warty Elder stems
ooze with tar-black berries.
Below – cutting corners of tins,
and soft, ambulant Toads.

Gusts, tendrils – the scarlet fruit
of Woodbine flowers,
which lured Moths
on warm, moonlit evenings.

Glossy black plastic
stripped from silage;
Pheasants, beaters,
ha-ha,
shots, Retrievers;
coats hooked with Burdock;
shocks of electric wire.

*a seizure of the market is like
a cardiac arrest, threatening
the orderly rhythm of the system*

Dog Rose – thorns
like bloody fangs;
memories of blooms
that tea-cup Butterflies in June.

Cocoons, gossamer-stretch
between stems;
new risings of Ivy up old posts;
a Wren's nest tight as a child's fist;
Spindle, Holly;
and snagged on Bramble,
these newspaper flags.

*on which the modern world
has come to depend. Now
it seems it's on life support –*

Switch mechanical,
stink-horn diesel,
the implacable wheels and reach of a tractor's machete.
Random execution,
the insane-making crunch,

while the contractor sits
muffled in his cab,
on the wheel his hands
stiff as supermarket quotas...

*share values in free-fall,
as investors predict their own
dwindling margins and returns.*

