The Great Be Empty

Fighter jets hurl themselves
down the valley then bank
and careen up over the spruce
clad ridge. They thunder above
the wee white house designated
quarry for this exercise; the
wee white wooden house
whence emanate all those
indignant missives to Min.
of Def. regarding flight
path nuisance and think of
the children, I’m at my wits
end; but what jolly japes for
bored or nervy pilots whom
will soon enough be pounding
the stockades and mountain
hideouts of hirsute despots
now grinding teeth, whetting
scimitars and plotting what
new outrage. And the wee
white wooden house rattles
in the turbulent wake and
the smallest girl erupts in
tearful, fearful hysterics,
while out in the meadow
the trefoils, vetches, yarrow,
cranesbill and the national
flower sway gently in the
afterburner’s fading roar.

Tim Turnbull
Tay: Autumn

The sluggardly Tay can hardly be bothered, rolling in umbers: burnt by the far bank, raw in the shallows. Desultory fish slop out in the black pools. Fishermen colonise half of the river, and waders are optional, the water’s so low. There are bales in the cornfields, potato tops cut and awaiting an influx of cheap Euro-labour to sort them and stone them and send them to Tesco. Away in the distance the Cairngorms are blue, and the stones on the riverbed slick with green weed. The water’s recession exposes the boulders and channels that govern the currents. Pebbles in reds and greys speckle the bank edge. Why aren’t you thinking about words. I am looking out at things.

Tim Turnbull