The Time Machine

Stephen Edgar

It's not by that contraption, nor inside
The worm holes to be bored
Through outer darkness to its farthest reaches,
That this tight knot of noon will be untied
And loose the morning's bonded hours toward
The otherwhile your constant prayer beseeches.

Who would believe that now — poised plainly over
The harbour's wintry haze,
As far off in the littered blue inane
Mir, error-prone, still manages to hover,
While west and north, despite the massed berets,
The old deals are all brokered yet again;

Shares do their magic on the stock exchange;
While to consolidate
Some fly-blown tyranny the usual slaughters
Fall to the usual goon squads to arrange;
While sleek yachts ride, as though absolved of weight,
Tinkling upon the pleasure-blinded waters;

While mountains stand still as their photographs
Somewhere beyond the edges
Of cities that turn earth to neighbourhood;
And though the papers press their epitaphs,
Babies will drink the white lie that milk pledges
And sleep on it, dreaming the world is good —

Who would believe this moment now might hold
A past remoter than
The pyramids? that like the bright, oblique
Plume of the comet falling unforetold,
An era that is yet unknown to man
Comes plunging into the middle of next week?

Wisps writhe above the river's fancied rind
As though it might soon boil.
That pebble in your shoe; what lies behind
The hand clasped to your forehead; the blue voile
Of the elapsing vista: name your year.