Two Poems
by Peter Porter

Komikaze

Each of us thinks he is a suicide
(and we do too, the women say), and this
despite our dread of disappearing
and losing the discipline of self-distaste.

Great then to follow Fundamentalism,
live on forever in the fires of Hell
with all of Evolution pointing to
a point of view which views the point of you.

And Comedy will make it even better —
Saint-Simon’s bowels exploding at the Court
and showering shit on ermined sorrowers,
with Heaven laughing at true reverence.

You need to judge the moment to go mad.
Nietzsche heard a tortured horse’s scream
and recognised his cue. But Turin now
is just the average sound-frame of complaint.

I’m sure my Father lived so long not out
of fear of death, but more because he knew
he hadn’t the profile of the Great and Good
yet wasn’t needed where the damned are stowed.

The old joke goes that we sophisticates
will be surprised by hideous prods and pains
from hornèd devils just because we think
such torments silly: already we’ve seen worse.

Is death a joke? Depends on who is laughing.
I have a friend who tossed into a grave
an avant-garde review to give the corpse
some reading matter for eternity.

Compression

Heaven has no libraries and once
we’ve read a book or heard a score we know
that to exist it must be born again.

Thus far our Classicism, and we seek
a joy forever in a thing of beauty.
A fuck today presumes a fuck tomorrow.

Or prorogues it. So the mind has muscles.
It values essences. It says what’s done
is the unmediated way of doing things.

Witness the templates, whether true or not,
which Plato conjured. Imagining must be
discovering, but ‘Make It New’ fills up

The world with noblest bits of its detritus,
our books, our CDs, letters, memories,
all yellowing and drying in their files.

Into the grave goes nothing. The poet, leaving
a Winter Funeral observes a bird
peck at a berry soldered in the ice.

A word would only strain the shape of grieving.