

Richard Barrett

from a sequence titled, **The Hard Shoulder.**

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Distract us! Please
This week is over
whir + hum. Clatter
and the neon - it doesn't blink
not here
Yet (((while you queue I
read Baudelaire.
Looking crisp and white
Catheterized - erm - e - eh
Just what are you trying to say?!
we are here now,
/// while echoes out
(((the sound of))) revolutionary shot.
Please-----but
your eyes.
Your eyes, they look so empty.

*

Antihistamines taken
of necessity / 'This isn't seasonal
She has a thick, luscious pelt and
things live in it. Look, it catches the light
Out-foxed, again
by geography / My teeth bared
Yeah, sure, they may as well phone in sick
Your customer feedback system -
implemented last year - is what I think is to blame
Makes me sneeze / A child
sat on the shoulders of another wearing
a long coat. Be punctual
with, whatever, the visit or call
Once we've missed the train, we shall have a drink
This line seems out of context
My nose is running.

*

Slide past shop fronts (like
snow melting / down a sloped roof
I didn't shower yesterday
Bill, just hurried / Those kids
out. Their thumbprints In HMV
And the tallest will always be
looked up to / Them changes over time
numbered - stick em behind glass +
charge an entrance fee
Lists mean a dead poetix / with no one
at all to buy them booze
Begun in October. Not quite forgettable
Write something about cats
is the text that came through thirteen lines in
So there it is Christine / And
we can live in England.

*

Drum-skin stretch

Taut, shout

Surface area

Looping

back on ourselves

At Piccadilly

Twitch

wait / missed a

beneath ground advance

reverberate

long, and narrowly

The chiselled

parameters

A fine point

Dear, not necessarily

Have courage!

*

How precarious this shit is
I mean: the door swings closed and
it's that way
the car park / you could
wear the weather. Hanging like
a tailors shop window
That's some sort of edifice
Keep your fingers crossed and
overcoats: they 'swish'
as what I say forms stalactites
up there / Before the carriage moves
How slow the inspectors are /
And if you want reassurance - time
has stopped...

Keep replaying each moment and then
Goodbye. I will see you tomorrow.