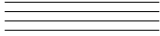


# C O M I N G U P F O R A I R



S T E P H E N E D G A R

Like that recurrent dream  
In which a world of rain begins to pour  
And drown the house, to stream  
Through windows, down the walls and, inches deep,  
Spill out across the floor,  
Daylight already, as we woke from sleep,

Was rising, liquefied  
By heat and, lapping wall and window pane,  
Starting to seep inside.  
We screened the garden in a desperate sortie,  
Watching the sun ordain  
Its record-scoring peak of more than forty,

Then rushed to barricade  
The house with drawn blinds from the ever higher  
Degrees of centigrade,  
In which, one fancied, the perverse intent  
To breathe might well require  
Adapting to an alien element.

Out in the city's west  
We seemed deep on the seabed of the heat,  
Which bending fathoms pressed  
To airless temperatures, while in the east  
We'd surface to the sweet  
Sea breezes of the coast, our lungs released.

And there we went: that night,  
Dinner with friends, perched in their top-floor eyrie,  
Watching the sky recite

The sun's late lessons in the clouds and preach  
Its pyrotechnic theory  
Over the revelers on Coogee Beach.

Now we could breathe at last.  
And now the southerly came at us, smack,  
With an exultant blast,  
Chucking the plastic furniture about  
And rushing to attack  
The living room through open doors, to clout  
The dining table, scatter  
The napkins, snatch off posters from the wall,  
Play havoc with a platter  
Of antipasto. Rollicked in the seethe  
And racket of the squall,  
We gulped great lungfuls down. Now we could breathe.