

## writing a house

Imagine a fair-haired girl  
cavorting naked

from a cottage  
to the sea.

But why a girl,  
and why not dark,

beside a river  
ninety miles inland?

Why not an old man  
with a weathered face

and trousers  
down around his ankles,

stumbling round  
a thirteen-acre paddock

asking horses  
where to find the gate?

Or a country parson  
crafting homilies

on pathways leading  
to beatitude,

quite unaware  
his daughter's just run off

with the publican's  
wife?

Or scholars spruiking  
semi-colons

as defence against  
post-modern

silliness, or  
as pleas for recognition

of a long-dead  
canon?

But a puzzle  
lingers:

why  
amid this

hullabaloo  
has no one noticed

that the house  
is on fire?