

## LORIS GOOCH

### *Come to Dinner*

“I hope you can come to dinner.”  
His smile was enigmatic as he faded  
away and dissolved into the atmosphere,  
swallowed by the smog of the city.

Perhaps I imagined meeting him again.  
I remember our first time, so full of hope  
and promise, my heart expanded with joy  
and dreams of a rosy apple garden  
at the back door. I shoved a spade into the soil.

Jonathon apples went in first, my favourite,  
so special, so particular, so juicy. I planted  
other fruits of the earth along with broccoli and  
bok choy, borage, basil and buttercups, while  
bees and hives flourished and I waited,  
watched and tended but he never returned.  
Still I waited.

And here he was again, before me. My love.  
I searched for his name in my memories of men  
lost in the mists of time, swallowed  
by wars not of their own making although

someone creates the rumbling war machines.  
When will they learn not to be drunk with the power of it,  
to flick a finger and send our youth tramping off  
to destroy what they don't know

where destruction is the measure of success  
as we leave so many wounded  
in the mists of time—alive or dead,  
they no longer know where  
they belong—with the living or dead,  
in the ruins of civilisations where thin-stemmed  
dandelions sprout yellow crowns  
and still I hope  
you can come to dinner tonight.

When will we learn both the end and  
the means exist on the path of peace  
and goodwill towards all, surely not just idle words  
uttered in a church on  
a Sunday morning but  
words of strength and meaning and wonder,  
even as we notch up the wars of the twenty-first century,  
Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine—all are throwing stones  
as we ponder what can be built  
on the bitter fruits of war.

(cont)

When will we practise peace and goodwill and  
thou shalt not covet even as  
dreams resurge and people rebuild, while  
grinding dandelion roots for coffee and  
savouring the aroma of a freshly brewed pot.

When will we learn  
to use our energy to heal the earth and  
march forward together  
for the common good  
before any shrine, in the open air, in the fields,  
under the stars, the moon and the sunshine.

Let not goodwill be lost in the mists of time  
where blossoms fade and ripen  
and still I hope  
you can come to dinner tonight.