

## HELEN MOORE

### Hedge Fund

*Little lines of sporting wood run wild  
where hands heaved stones  
to enclose – drove John Clare crazy.*

Today those walls left to crumble –  
cracking bark, and Hawthorn  
boughs once plashed,  
now ancient elbows' fold  
and sinew; Hazel, Ash –  
all create a delicate asylum.

*Money markets usually lie  
at the core of the financial  
system, functioning quietly*

Colonies of Snails,  
feathers, crush of brittle  
lime – a Song Thrush  
sings up its midden.

Startled mouths –  
White Dead Nettle flowers  
open where a shot Fox  
crept to die; here lies  
minus an eye.

Maggots;  
rubbing its feet a Fly – tip,  
the yawn of a fridge;  
Autumn leaves, debris  
rots, spawns Hips and Haws  
to feed the Songbirds and Badgers.

*and so efficiently that they're  
barely noticed. Like the human  
heart, which beats continuously*

A few bushes on,  
the Elm where a Barn Owl  
stared, burped its pellet –  
grey ossuary of Mice,  
Amen.

*without conscious thought,  
their global operation takes  
place night and day, while*

Still, Life finds its niches.  
On rocks Lichens crottle,  
and warty Elder stems  
ooze with tar-black berries.  
Below – cutting corners of tins,  
and soft, ambulant Toads.

Gusts, tendrils – the scarlet fruit  
of Woodbine flowers,  
which lured Moths  
on warm, moonlit evenings.

Glossy black plastic  
stripped from silage;  
Pheasants, beaters,  
ha-ha,  
shots, Retrievers;  
coats hooked with Burdock;  
shocks of electric wire.

*a seizure of the market is like  
a cardiac arrest, threatening  
the orderly rhythm of the system*

Dog Rose – thorns  
like bloody fangs;  
memories of blooms  
that tea-cup Butterflies in June.

Cocoons, gossamer-stretch  
between stems;  
new risings of Ivy up old posts;  
a Wren's nest tight as a child's fist;  
Spindle, Holly;  
and snagged on Bramble,  
these newspaper flags.

*on which the modern world  
has come to depend. Now  
it seems it's on life support –*

Switch mechanical,  
stink-horn diesel,  
the implacable wheels and reach of a tractor's machete.  
Random execution,  
the insane-making crunch,

while the contractor sits  
muffled in his cab,  
on the wheel his hands  
stiff as supermarket quotas...

*share values in free-fall,  
as investors predict their own  
dwindling margins and returns.*

