

Chrysalis

Martin Robertson

The chrysalis age of waiting is not wasted.

The prisoner has time to think, and learn

lovely precisions for all future practice

when time comes to be free.

Good, if new warmth new-quickening his straining

loosens the bindings and the close walls burst,

but if the strong straining dissolves in weakness

and the walls stay, distilled knowledge grows black,

an unbalance, an ache,

breeds nightmares and throws dark veils on the day.