

RUPERT RUSHBROOKE

Deep Time

Time moves slowly because it does not want to change.
Like an old man, it finds the world strange.
It remembers the land before Stonehenge.

A girl plays hopscotch with her friends.
One step, two step. At sunset the game ends.
Her bones are archaeological finds.

Virgil is a boy, scowling impatiently while his mother
Combs his hair. In the schoolroom, learning Homer,
He reads unevenly, keeping his place with his finger.

Leonardo grows old, eating soup in an upstairs room.
His servant's footsteps fade. He grasps the spoon,
But his eyes are far away, inventing the telephone.

In Hampstead, Marvell's mistress throws back her hair.
Sitting on the bed, she undoes her bra.
Andrew watches the TV. Snaps open a beer.

A bus circles Trafalgar Square in sleeting rain.
Inside is a girl in love, aged seventeen,
Heading for Camden Town, reading a magazine.