

Chapter 19

Yann Tiersen

To live outside the pale
is to wither and die.
Beyond the pale
there are only dressed-up cadavers.

They are wound up each day,
like alarm clocks.
They perform like seal;
they die like box office receipts.

But in the seething honey-comb
there is a growth as of plants,
an animal warmth almost suffocating,
a vitality which accrues
from rubbing and glueing together,
a hope which is physical
as well as spiritual,
a contamination which is dangerous but salutary.

Small souls perhaps,
burning like tapers,
but burning steadily—
and capable of throwing portentous shadows
on the walls which hem them in.

All goes round and round,
creaking, wobbling, lumbering,
whimpering some-tunes,
but round and round and round.

Then, if you become very still,
standing on a stoop, for instance,
and carefully think no thoughts,
a myopic, bestial clarity besets your vision.

There is a wheel,
there are spokes,
and there is a hub.

And in the center of the hub there is
exactly

nothing.