

Maggots

Turning compost, I stuck the fork
through sodden kikuyu grass-rot
and lifting saw, limp on the tines,
a rat's wet-furred, riven carcase.

Maggots swarmed in the intestines,
pale, pudgy, like muscled nozzles,
like a litter of mouth-eyed pups
humping and burrowing the maw.

The stench was nauseating. I bent,
wrestling revulsion, then marvelled.
The carrion nurseried renewal.
Its cleaners were spawned by decay.

Toothless, they spewed a subtle spit
that foamed their meat into a broth.
They were the Greeks' sarcophagi,
the listening that eats up sorrow.

I heeled the carcass off the fork,
held in my breath and bent to stroke
the cherub worms of metamorphosis,
which soon would chrysalis – and fly.

