

**POEM**

**HEDGEHOG**

Outside my senses, known as printed words,  
as tinted woodcut half a life ago,  
the crouching hedgehog on the roadside sward  
epitomised in spike and panting flank  
the world of things I know and do not know.  
True to the legend, when I threatened it,  
the ball defensive coiled before my eyes;  
the twitching snout, the small pathetic hands  
Withdrew and left me utterly expelled,  
no longer free of Adam's paradise.  
Patient I waited till the fear was spent,  
and watched the waking from the little death,  
a fellow creature native to my sod,  
nervous and mortal, meant to be alive,  
and eager for the purposes of breath.

John Hewitt 1952

