

i.  
a furtive moon  
    high gothic behind breakneck clouds  
    the red of royalty's thin blood  
    against, among  
    the glowing greys  
    of this September sky  
    is suddenly transformed into  
a mottled, tarnished silver coin

ii.  
as we discussed the weather,  
the elegant old man and I,  
    by some dishevelled  
        sleight of hand –  
    he turned into a tree stump, slightly rotten,  
    home to a hundred kinds  
        of creeping, scuttling thing  
                with legs from six to  
                who knows what?

I ceased my earnest disquisition  
    on the causal link between  
    red skies at dawn or dusk  
    and hedonistic herdsmen, though  
        my manners           (thank my parents)  
    just prevented me from too  
    conspicuous a horrified recoil.

        Judging further conversation  
        to be probably one-sided,  
I departed                   bowing fractionally, just  
                                  in case the stump retained  
                                  some sense of what was proper

iii.  
                                  dried poppy heads  
                                  and greater reed mace  
vased and                    filmed with dust  
    shimmered slightly, squirmed,  
    and were transformed  
  
but into what I cannot bring myself to say