

New Medium

(with all kinds of apologies to everyone, especially W. H. Auden)

This is the New Medium crossing the border
Between the upper and lower order,
Tweets from the rich, tweets from the poor,
The big-shots, the tinpots, the stranger next door.
Getting accepted, a steady climb:
The gradient's against her, but she's got time.

Thro' sparse counties she rampages:
They've had nothing to do for ages.
She blathers New York into Lincolnshire farms
And wraps you in words when you need someone's arms.
Pushing some wastrels off the rails,
Taking up time you could spend on emails.

Never a thought of a watershed:
You're waking up as your @friend goes to bed.
Unfollowed acquaintances sit there and smoulder,
Re-using hashgags that never get older.
Snorts and thoughts from endless talkers;
Silent miles of tweetless stalkers.

Folks get confused as she approaches,
Write to the papers 'bout how she encroaches.
Failwhales cannot turn her course;
They dangle on with strings across.
Some places she passes no one wakes,
But a pen in an inkstand gently shakes.

Dawn freshens. The night is done.
Down towards our screens we descend
Towards the public timeline yelping down the glade of trends,
Towards the field for search terms, the direct message link,
Set on the side bar like one's morning soldiers.
Some do not wait for her:
In the dark hours, beside the pale-green smartphones
Men check for news.

Tweets of thanks, tweets from cranks,
Tweets of joy from (who knows) girl or boy,
Re-tweeted thrills and invitations
To inspect new sites or join demonstrations,
And speculations on corporations
And male fertility medications,
And celebrity nonsense from all the nations,
Tweets circumstantial, tweets financial,
Tweets full of links to holiday snaps,
Tweets that are NEEDLESSLY IN ALL CAPS,

Tweets from comics of varying mirth,
Tweets from Hubble to planet Earth,
Tweets of compassion on love, death and fashion,
Links to cheddar cheese and eye disease,
Written in language of every hue,
The pink, the purple, the white and the blue,
The gaming, the flaming, the tiring, admiring,
The lovesick, the slapstick, the uninspiring,
Clever, stupid, short, too long,
The txt, the l337 and the spelt all wrong.

Thousands are still asleep
Dreaming of stultifying spambots,
Or of acquiring famous followers like @JohnCleese or @neilhimsel:
Asleep in mind and office, asleep in all but name,
Asleep at life's wheel,
They continue their dreams,
And shall wake soon and long for @replies,
And none will press the refresh button
Without a quickening of the heart,
For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?