

TWO POEMS BY DAVID PUNTER

Poem for Kiyo'ko

Overfull mouth of golden teeth, one  
Slightly rotted at the centre; fresh from  
Nagasaki, your face folded in glazed paper.  
Where would you lead me, Kiyo'ko? Blindly  
Under the tremulous fountains could your  
Gold-leaf body curve; or is it for the snap  
And purity of breaking and bloodless  
Flesh that I hold you, the dragon king's  
Perilous and abandoned daughter? How  
Do you dare, mimicking old Japan on this  
Slender bridge, your feet captured like birds,  
And all the yellow history of slaughter  
In your carven nose and the slashes  
At your temples? Perhaps you can turn your wrists,  
Endlessly; where I touch you there are  
Silver flakes matching perfectly the whorls  
On my finger-tips; before the blood comes.  
And here, with ice-cream, your immaculate  
And punctilious husband, casual gesture,  
Pointed jacket: your smile and the exact  
Inclination of your neck as you bow before  
The gulls and bombers coming gives the lie  
To guilt; the murder born of perfect innocence  
Matches the smooth fall of your satin.

## The World's Neck

The north-west coast of Alaska,  
Bright and green with summer, beside a  
Surprisingly narrow channel, the water foaming  
And speeding through the Bering Strait, tossed white;  
I have brought you here to show you  
The world's neck; without this flow of white joy  
The shape of the oceans would change, for it is  
Only here that water curls upwards,  
Crosses the bar, rears and shouts. As we watch,  
A radio floats by, and then a pale blue  
Volkswagen, in which there is, perhaps,  
Someone shouting. We are so near the edge,  
But out of danger, speech drowned,  
Knowing the sea will freeze like a postcard  
If we want it to; beside the shape to end  
All shapes, on this ridiculous strand,  
We are futility's jesters.