

## Wasps

Yellow wasps  
pour from over-ripe pears  
in the shed, the boxes black  
with old rain : Plato's wasps.

Every year I have one chance  
to separate from language  
one word  
that is the pigment of these pears  
whose skin  
has the leathery look  
of the skins of angels: real  
late-medieval angels,  
sallow-faced,  
half-drunk on green wine,  
shabbily dressed ;  
that walked the sooty streets  
during the Black Death,  
grim, helpless  
lizard-creatures coalesced out of living air,  
earth-angels.

Overhead, the medieval stars pour.

HAROLD RHENISCH