Meeting Point

By Louis MacNeice

Time was away and somewhere else,  
There were two glasses and two chairs  
And two people with the one pulse  
(Somebody stopped the moving stairs):  
Time was away and somewhere else.

And they were neither up nor down;  
The stream’s music did not stop  
Flowing through heather, limpid brown,  
Although they sat in a coffee shop  
And they were neither up nor down.

The bell was silent in the air  
Holding its inverted poise—  
Between the clang and clang a flower,  
A brazen calyx of no noise:  
The bell was silent in the air.

The camels crossed the miles of sand  
That stretched around the cups and plates;  
The desert was their own, they planned  
To portion out the stars and dates:  
The camels crossed the miles of sand.

Time was away and somewhere else.  
The waiter did not come, the clock  
Forgot them and the radio waltz  
Came out like water from a rock:  
Time was away and somewhere else.

Her fingers flicked away the ash  
That bloomed again in tropic trees:  
Not caring if the markets crash  
When they had forests such as these,  
Her fingers flicked away the ash.

God or whatever means the Good  
Be praised that time can stop like this,  
That what the heart has understood  
Can verify in the body’s peace  
God or whatever means the Good.

Time was away and she was here  
And life no longer what it was,  
The bell was silent in the air  
And all the room one glow because  
Time was away and she was here.