

# Remarks on Poetry and the Physical World

By Mary Barnard

After reading *Ash Wednesday*  
she looked once at the baked beans  
and fled. Luncheonless, poor girl,  
she observed a kind of poetic Lent—  
and I had thought I liked poetry  
better than she did.

I do. But to me its most endearing  
quality is its unsuitableness;  
and, conversely, the chief wonder in heaven  
(whither I also am sometimes transported)  
is the kind of baggage I bring with me.

Surely there is no more exquisite jointure  
in the anatomy of life than that at which  
poetry dovetails with the inevitable meal  
and Mrs. B. sits murmuring of avocados.

Mary Barnard, "Remarks on Poetry and the Physical World" from *Collected Poems* (Portland: Breitenbush, 1979). Used by permission of the Estate of Mary Barnard.

Source: The Collected Poems of Mary Barnard (Breitenbush, 1979)