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.


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