

## Dorset

Birds perch on telegraph wires  
like music notes on staves. They shift  
in stop-go cinematography  
as cattle with black and white maps  
on their backs lumber across fields  
under curving shadowy hillsides,  
sunlight-slashed. Two horses, one white  
with white lashes, the other sorrel  
with a blonde mane, stand flank to shoulder,  
static from poll to croup but facing  
opposite ways, like a couple  
not talking. Hook-headed, a hawk  
hovers. In woods, all elbows, knees  
and contorted spindly limbs vaguely  
gesturing, that tap of Morse means  
woodpecker. Nerves in soil inch  
a foot, and clumsy butterflies,  
flimsy as the earliest planes,  
brush a chrysalis on a shrub  
that hangs like a parachutist  
caught in a tree. Kite-like, the soul  
tugs. A heartbeat of hooves, the flicker  
of birds against coastlines of cloud  
and all the sweeps and dips and folds  
of countryside invite one to  
follow dreamy rivers out to  
where the sea broadcasts to the world.

MARK KIRKBRIDE