



The Man Who Lost His Voice

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What was it?

Had you wandered
too far from your home patch?
Too many hotel lobbies,
Maids and waiters tipped and bowing?

Had your voice been grated
by trying to compete
with the noise of traffic?

you were once a teacher
but the cords had worn,
so you learnt to cope,
to survive the drone
of touring –
every city-face
in duplicate,
photocopy music.

What was it?

You still possessed
a house in the mountains,
you still spoke
in up-down intonations.

For all those grand intentions
you left us behind:
terraces trailing from sky,
the rough-tough estates spied
from planes –
you wrote *worker-ants*,
but they could carry
your weight a hundred times.

Red Banner 15
March 2003