

Saddhus

Some chew necrotic weeds. Some sleep
in charnel fields. Some are purified
by the putrefactive quality of time
and happily multiply in eternity's folds.
Some dig ditches and like refuse

throw themselves in. Some don't mind
the urine of town dogs. Some don't
mind their buttocks becoming sharp
as heifers' hoofs. Some are ever-walkers,
men of good sense but small gesture,

small-moment journeymen wearing
out their feet with stones. Some find
no answers in the ever-commuting sky
and lie still on bramble palliasses,
or they become ever-sitters and vow

not to straighten their limbs. Some
make leashes of their penises and walk
chastity's heavy stones. Some are lost
to an ever-administered distance,
clouds and wind their error of alliance

and so they never find peaceful homes.
Some come down from the mountains
into the searing belly of the wind,
and sit between six fires, then turn,
already blind, towards the seventh fire,

the sun. Some live sting by sting,
ache by ache, and wait for the smells
the tidal breezes bring, still not knowing
what is gathered, what is won
beyond the vermin, beyond the dung.

Judith Beveridge