**Delight in Disorder**

A sweet disorder in the dresse

Kindles in cloathes a wantonness:

A Lawne about the shoulders thrown

Into a fine distraction:

An erring Lace, which here and there

Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:

A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby

Ribbands to flow confusedly:

A winning wave (deserving Note)

In the tempestuous petticote;

A carelesse shooe-string, in whose tye

I see a wilde civility:

Doe more bewitch me, than when Art

Is too precise in every part.

—Robert Herrick

**Distraction**

O knit me, that am crumbled dust! the heape

Is all dispers’d, and cheape;

Give for a handfull, but a thought

And it is bought;

Hadst thou

Made me a starre, a pearle, or a rain-bow,

The beames I then had shot

My light had lessend not,

But now

I find my selfe the lesse, the more I grow;

The world

Is full of voices; Man is call’d, and hurl’d

By each, he answers all,

Knows ev’ry note, and call,

Hence, still

Fresh dotage tempts, or old usurps his will.

Yet, hadst thou clipt my wings, when Coffin’d in

This quicken’d masse of sinne,

And saved that light, which freely thou

Didst then bestow,

I feare

I should have spurn’d, and said thou didst forbeare;

Or that thy store was lesse,

But now since thou didst blesse

So much,

I grieve, my God! that thou hast made me such.

I grieve?

O, yes! thou know’st I doe; Come, and releive

And tame, and keepe downe with thy light

Dust that would rise, and dimme my sight,

Lest left alone too long

Amidst the noise, and throng,

Oppressed I

Striving to save the whole, by parcells dye.

—Henry Vaughan

**Politics**

How can I, that girl standing there,

My attention fix

On Roman or on Russian

Or on Spanish politics,

Yet here’s a travelled man that knows

What he talks about,

And there’s a politician

That has both read and thought,

And maybe what they say is true

Of war and war’s alarms,

But O that I were young again

And held her in my arms.

—W. B. Yeats

**What is Poetry**

The medieval town, with frieze  
Of boy scouts from Nagoya? The snow

That came when we wanted it to snow?  
Beautiful images? Trying to avoid

Ideas, as in this poem? But we  
Go back to them as to a wife, leaving

The mistress we desire? Now they  
Will have to believe it

As we believed it. In school  
All the thought got combed out:

What was left was like a field.  
Shut your eyes, and you can feel it for miles around.

Now open them on a thin vertical path.  
It might give us—what?—some flowers soon?

—John Ashbery

**Always Something More Beautiful**

This time I came to the starting place

with my best running shoes, and pure speed

held back for the finish, came with only love

of the clock and the underfooting

and the other runners. Each of us would

be testing excellence and endurance

in the other, though in the past I’d often

veer off to follow some feral distraction

down a side path, allowing myself

to pursue something odd or beautiful,

becoming acquainted with a few of the ways

not to blame myself for failing to succeed.

I had come to believe what’s beautiful

had more to do with daring

to take yourself seriously, to stay

the course, whatever the course might be.

The person in front seemed ready to fade,

his long, graceful stride shortening

as I came up along his side. I was sure now

I’d at least exceed my best time.

But the man with the famous final kick

already had begun his move. *Beautiful*, I heard

a spectator say, as if something inevitable

about to come from nowhere was again on its way.

—Stephen Dunn