

Thomas Merton's Cambridge (1933)

David Scott

71, Bridge Street
is now opposite a bookshop
over a camera shop
beside a bookbinders
(which was there when he was).
You can't really get a good look at the flat
except by stepping back
on the opposite side of the road
against a record shop window.
Looking up to the first floor
there is a 'TO LET' sign.
(This is of course for devotees,
who else would want such detail?)
So you could rent it
but the pile of rubbish
swept into a corner of the empty room
would remind you
of how much he hated the place.
It was 1933,
King Kong was on at The Central
and *The Tempest* at the Tivoli.
Stumbling back to the room
above the 'Athletic Stores and Hairdressers'
after a bull-nosed journey from London,
was, in the end, no one's idea of fun.
Even the river was seeing double
in the dark months of that year.