



In an early spring clean, our Poet in Residence, Jim Taylor, has been looking behind the settee, to see what's gathering dust there. What's behind yours?

Out of Work

Living behind our settee
is an out of work
French horn. It has the benefit
of a padded case, moulded
to a perfect shape,
keeping it snug and warm
like a swaddled, abandoned child.

In its early years
it triumphed in Stockport,
Blackpool and Wigan,
later it revelled
in Mahler and Shostakovich
at the Royal Albert Hall,
sighed over Tchaikovsky and
Sibelius
in the Bridgewater Hall,
wept over Cavalleria
Rusticana,
Il Pagliacci and Carousel
in provincial theatres.
Finally breathed its last in
Leeds.

In 2001 it was made
redundant,
and now lives quietly
behind the settee
with a tarnished bell
and sticky valves.



It can only look forward
to those rare occasions
when familiar hands will briefly
oil its valves, familiar lips will
linger over snatches of a forgotten
concerto, hear again

the faltering explanation
as the case is closed.



For days after
those few notes hang in the air,
echo into every room, following
a shadowy figure
in a white shirt,
and hope seeps through the cracks
around the hinges.

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