**Pilgrimage**

There’s a soft-gravelled misery  
here, at Ebbsfleet Int’l  
where the ‘railway station’ has gone  
in favour of dry riser inlets  
and I am stuck   
here, two months late  
for my pilgrimage  
but it’s ok  
because the climate is two months behind  
  
Grumble-voiced uvulars  
wheel undercarriage-grey vowels  
across tandem tannoys   
and a grim mirage of weeds  
vein the tracklined sojourn   
before Ashford Int’l and then Canterbury West

Black lichen florets slab the rail-verge:  
sow-thistle and chickweed seem lost  
so far in the South  
and white-clover, ribwort, bittercress, tansy  
toadflax, flixweed, and ivy-leaved speedwell   
all sound as medieval as Chaucer--   
Taraxacum and ranunculus  
sound better in Latin  
but under this ‘new town’ nucleus of brownfield earth  
it is said  
lie the remains   
of a Pleistocene straight-tusked elephant.