

## Explaining the Circumstances

*Christopher North*

(Some of these lines quote statements made on actual motor accident insurance claim forms)

Coming home I drove into the wrong house  
and collided with a tree I don't have.  
I crossed a garden that receded and receded  
and met some people who chose to remain silent.  
Time braked and the clock hands fell to six;  
a drop from the tap hovered an inch above the bowl.  
I saw a slow-moving, sad faced old gentleman  
as he bounced off the roof of my car.

Then an invisible car came out of nowhere,  
struck my car and vanished.  
The road became a fan of streaked permanganate  
as my left hand took flight in a cloud of feathers.  
These events ceased with a clatter of Chinese thunder  
as coloured rain showered through the greenhouse roof.  
I stared and stared at the rising waters  
and a pedestrian hit me and went under my car.

Later in an attempt to kill a fly,  
I ran into a telegraph pole.  
The hay field rolled over and went to sleep,  
spores of bracket fungus seethed from the old oak  
and a rain-coated female person said repeatedly:  
'You must stop this! You must stop this!'  
I had been driving for forty years  
when I fell asleep at the wheel.

Thrown from my car as it left the road,  
I was later found in a ditch by some stray cows.  
I could not understand what the fox  
was so earnestly trying to tell me.  
Why were those men burying the cemetery gates?  
I became convinced that the church was melting  
and I collided with a stationary truck  
that was coming the other way.

This poem is the title poem in Christopher North's recently published full collection  
(Oversteps Books, [www.overstepsbooks.com](http://www.overstepsbooks.com))