



Hotel Gordon

An Irishman with holes in his boots,
fresh from the soup kitchen and Victoria station,
a South African, sleeping in night buses,

visitors, not even speaking the language
of the country, let alone the sense of sanity,
women with histories of sad adoptions,

a man from Eton, addicted to drink and crack,
a black man, knifed, and abused as a child,
yet gentle as the father he became at sixteen,

an Italian who lost her mother aged four:
all these I mean, people lost in the in between
of life, as some make good and others fall back.

Sarah Wardle

from "A Knowable World" publ. by Bloodaxe Books 2009. "Hotel Gordon" refers to an NHS psychiatric unit in South London, called the Gordon Hospital. Sarah Wardle has been a patient there. Reprinted by permission.

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