

## Weaver

Richard Dawson

I steep the wool in a cauldron  
Of pummelled gall-nuts afloat in urine  
Add river-water thrice-boiled with a bloodstone

Then let it breathe  
Under the beams  
While I prepare the lichen

Half a fist of wizardbeard and rock-tripe  
Yields a dye enough the whole town to paint  
Lavenders an echo of the beeswing  
Dazzling foxgloves ashake in the salty wind

It looks like a thundercloud  
Suspended from the gables  
High above the bobbing heads  
Which now and then look up to see what's dripping on them

So we begin  
Feeding it in  
Combing through the fibres gently

Searching for a yarn to spin

My lady takes a nasty tumble  
Down the crumbled steps of the merchants guild  
Precipitating the early onset of labour

There is a crab  
Caught in her hair  
Stretchering through the market

Fearful are the bellows to behold  
Even with the spindle firmly clenched between her teeth  
With a snap the baby's head emerges  
Onto the sodden eiderdown bedpages

Even though the new born child  
Is not my kin  
And still lies dangling by a string  
I ken the rising mystery of love  
My very ancient friend