

## Once and future

Once you'd say '*one day....*' and  
my pulse would quicken like  
I'd seen through a chink  
in the castle wall a land  
of plains and hills that  
curved to the horizon.

We'd follow on with '*what if..*',  
feeling the words trip  
off the tongue, or '*shall we?*',  
till the phrase rolled round  
our greedy mouths ready  
for feasts of possibilities.

Today '*one day...*' has a smaller sound  
subsumed by the hiss of '*once..*',  
slipperiness of '*should have*',  
bitter phlegm of '*could have*'  
or that weary drum beat:  
'*why didn't we do that?*'

Come on! We'll descend the castle steps  
and walk towards the open gate.  
The next field promises  
a shower of catkins. Let's say  
'*Let's go*', tasting the lilt of it  
from tongue to lip.

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