

The Last Page

On Reading Horace Odes 3.2 with Rusty Latin

Just after the Roman poet said
it was sweet and pretty to die for the fatherland
he added that even if you ran and hid
death would still shoot you in the knees

but only the first bit makes it regularly into marble.
Then he said that no man worth the name
would let the polls tell him what to think.
And if there was justice in the world

he'd feel safer in a boat with refugees
than with the puppet-masters of the press
whose lies send them back to sea:
even with their wings clipped, chickens
come home to roost.

Or maybe it was me who said that about refugees.

Jonathan Shaw