**A Martian Sends a Postcard Home**

Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings

and some are treasured for their markings --

they cause the eyes to melt

or the body to shriek without pain.

I have never seen one fly, but

sometimes they perch on the hand.

Mist in when the sky is tired of flight

and rests it soft machine on the ground:

then the world is dim and bookish

like engravings under tissue paper.

Rain is when the earth is television.

It has the properties of making colours darker.

Model T is a room with the lock inside

a key is turned to free the world

for movement, so quick there is a film

to watch for anything missed.

But time is tied to the wrist

or kept in a box, ticking with impatience.

In homes, a haunted apparatus sleeps,

that snores when you pick it up.

If the ghost cries, they carry it

to their lips and soothe it to sleep

with sounds. And yet, they wake it up

deliberately, by tickling with a finger.

Only the young are allowed to suffer

openly. Adults go to a punishment room

with water but nothing to eat.

They lock the door and suffer the noises

alone. No one is exempt

and everyone's pain has a different smell.

At night, when all the colours die,

they hide in pairs

and read about themselves--

in colour, with their eyelids shut.

*Craig Raine*

**Questions**

1. What are the "caxtons" in the first six lines?

2. What is the "haunted apparatus/ghost" that is being described?

3. What is the "punishment room" normally known as to humans?

4. What does the act of reading about ourselves in colour refer to?