

FOR DILBERTA

(Biggest of the elephants at London Zoo)

The walking-whale
of the earth kingdom – Dilberta.

The one whose waist
your arms won't get around – Dilberta.

The mammoth one whose weight
you pray won't knock you to the ground.

The one who displays toes
like archway windows,
bringing the pads of her feet down
like giant paperweights
to keep the earth from shifting about.

Dilberta, rippling as she ambles under
the wrinkled tarpaulin of her skin,
casually throwing the arm of her nose,
saying, "Go on, have a stroke."

But sometimes, in her mind's eye,
Dilberta gets this idea – she could be a moth!
Yes, with the wind stirring behind her ears,
she could really fly.

Rising above the boundaries of the paddock,
Making for the dark light of the forest –
Hearing, O once more, the trumpets roar.

