

A walk on the wild side

**You would think, after weeks of punishing sun,
that the graves would lay baked, naked,
little more than structural remains,
devoid of the deep greens of growth,
but one evening in July, we spy
a plethora of wild flowers; with discerning eye
our guide, a modern-day oracle of delphiniums,
pointing out each specimen, with its pertinent features,
and of course, we are not alone,
the butterflies, so delicate, so slow as night nears,
the squirrels always busy, with no sign of fear,
and the sly old fox, who we chose to believe
had not noticed us at all, this was our conceit
as we walked upon his hunting ground.
We left only footsteps as advised,
collected the odd piece of strewn rubbish
cast carelessly amongst the Ragworts
and then, first stepping carefully across the rocky remains,
in a secret hollow, the unexpected guest,
Atropa Belladonna, the deadly nightshade,
with black poisonous plums, like dark tomatoes,
we stand in awe and calculate the deadly dose,
thirty for an adult, far less for an unfortunate child,
before moving on to fennel and teasels,
cow parsley and cyclamen,
transfixed by the abundance,
until the bell tolls nine.**