SCRIBBLING SISYPHUS/ MARTIN BENNETT

To spur his way on the next

and umpteenth editorial

hill, he removes here an

adjective, tightens there

a rhyme. Up, up, up –

then heart’s thud-clatter:

in through the letter-

box self-addressed envelope,

standard rejection slip.

He’s back down where he began:

‘We liked this but…’ No matter.

Beckett’s mantra –

Ever tried. Fail again,

Fail, fail better, et cetera…

High time to refill his pen.

Odds defied, again

he’s picturing Parnassus,

be it as far as Mars –

fixed boulder or pebble,

bearings that shall not slip.

‘All the untidy activity’

continues…’ Twitchery

of Thesaurus and spell-

check, unsuccess

a blessing even?

Tired phrase gets displaced

by fresh one, weighed,

selected, let drop in turn,

what’s not yet well-

enough expressed –

Eel, cactus, stone –

Without rest,

incorrigibly protean…