

What Herod Knew

He,
Who had already killed a brother,
A wife, a son and then another,
And then another,
And found certain peace,
He knew the dread power
Of an idea to wrench
The mind from ordinary ways.

But the travellers,
With a star in their eye
And their tale of a king,
He thought quaint,
Sending them south to the predicted place,
And waiting for their disappointed return.
Then long year long he pondered their absence,
Knowing that seekers may make truth of coincidence.

He knew
A child will grow;
That innocence may turn to threat;
That hope may storm
The empire of the heart;
That the wind may blow
A seed to a hilltop death.

He knew.
And just to make sure
Suffered the little innocents
Spiked on his rebel crown,
And found a certain peace.

He knew.
And would rather have killed him in the womb.
We, too late for that with no taste for blood,
Would simply drown the rumour of an empty tomb.

By Mark Greene from 'Opening Night'