

Here is the News

The French authorities, accused
of serving soup with pork
to homeless folk, said:
"No intention to provoke!"
(And none to feed, if you
happen to be a Muslim
or a Jew.)

In England, an almost longed-for
panic – Avian, Asian flu
killing turkeys. Asian, this deadly
virus, Asia, it comes from, Asian
this lethal strain, we say again.
I ring the number to complain:
"How would you feel
in this unfriendly land? It's not as if
the flu has got no other name."

An old man sits on a bench.
You can see him from the bus stop –
backdrop of Regency facade, and sea.
Around him heads are bobbing,
pure white necks, some young ones'
flecked, all fierce bright eyes
His slow, bent fingers take bits of bread
from tattered trolley, mess of bags.
Excitement shrieks among hundreds
of sharp beaked gulls.
They're all around him,
some rise and land on his arms,
one gets on his head,
balances there, on his worn cloth cap.
He reaches up, it takes the bread,
and flies. The next steps on.
They're queueing, taking turns
on his head, and not one pecks him.

I turn to share delight (old woman like)
with a person passing. She looks,
says "Vermin!" and walks on.