March

In dreadful light March evenings when the violets stain
Decorous collared doves complain complain complain
With black by Aphrodite ribboned necks.
Pretty pink birds so ill at ease
Raucous in our still naked trees
Spring makes you tell us love is pain, is pain.

[From A Year of Birds, a collection of twelve poems by Iris Murdoch and engravings by Reynolds Stone recently published in a limited edition of 350 signed copies at £20 and available from The Compton Press, The Old Brewery, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6NH]