Beauty and the Beast

They say they want to see your work
Would *love* to watch your play;
In praise of the poetic
They have a lot to say -
But words are anaesthetic
Unless they're matched by pay
These genies grant us wishes
Or snatch them all away.

They pick at all the figures
Flicking flesh from bone
Fingers tapping triggers:
Bullets from a phone
As brilliant ideas
Are blasted off a page
They barricade a gallery
And cordon off a stage.

They do not see what you see
They haven't time to look:
    Tick a lot of boxes
    Do it by the book
You've got to paint by numbers:
Dot-to-dot-to-dot;
Testify to how and where
And why you hit the spot.

When Art is a commodity
The artist knows the cost
And understands the irony
Of what is gained and lost
With every act of compromise
The work will pay its toll:
Beauty can turn ugly
Once *The Beast* is in control.

The Beast subdues the conscience
And soon consumes the soul
Never let the monster in –
Or you'll be swallowed whole
Don't give in - do not give up
Don't say you have no choice,
For once you start to lose your heart
Your art will lose its voice.