

Poetry

ROSEMARIE
ROWLEY

FIFTH COLUMN— TO NEWSPAPERS IN THE TIME OF WAR

Still in the dark heart of the radiant day
Your words come with me to sport and play
And though they tell of battles lost and won
Of cruelty to creatures of the sun
Of boys' gleeful hurt and beauty stooping low
To make a parade of loveliest show
Yet sparkling news seems in your handsome gaze
To light me through the terror of the age
End of now, with joyous rueful leap
As upon the years and tears I go to sleep
With islands, archipelagos of castles and birds
Drafting scientific fables made of cards
Ringing there in skylight's vision whole
Reducing all to what deflects a soul.

ROSEMARIE
ROWLEY

The Reply in Peacetime

So divine are the languid displays of love,
Their slim-shank bones and beautiful norms
The shimmering skin radiance of forms
Rippling and shining – the stretch of cove
And sand hugging hungrily the hunkering shore
Of hope and faith, renewing at source
Like the ring-dove of calling songs to pour
Out of the throat like a spirit force
Of occult magic alchemy of lore
Bright on the wing the speckled deckled store
Accretions of angels' messages a core
That you will be gone for nevermore
In union with the self, the love will last
Like an arrow to the future from the past.

COLM FLYNN

WHEN THE SUMMER WITHDRAWS

The Indian summer is entitled to
The effervescence of tremendous praise
And the circumrotatory planet is askew
So the nights are getting longer than the days.
The array of roses in a local garden
Is motivating pedestrians to pause
And not a solitary person should harden
Their heart against the way the summer withdraws.
The Norway maple's foliage is turning
A ferruginous colour by degrees
And it's impossible to be undiscerning
When autumn is transmogrifying the trees.
Was it the principalities who canted
The Earth on its axis so we'd be enchanted?

COLM FLYNN

THE BLOODLESS DAY IN LEITRIM

Those in jodhpurs choked
On the stirrup-cup
Or were catapulted
By a conspiracy of horses
Into slurry pits.
Foxes scoffed and hares
Led huntsmen a merry dance
Round the bosomy terrain.
Beagles were found to be unbudgeable
As contradictory scents
Wafted into sensitive nostrils.
Beaters eschewed
The heath, muttered
Over pints of well-brewed beer.
Guns jammed in the valley
And the fox with the notched tail
Laid a false trail
To an ant-hill.

ESTHER HOAD

UPCYCLING

It was at the end of a journey
on a still spring morning
at the side of the road
in a patch of last year's nettles
that I first saw you

big bellied and ancient
your white enamel
perfect in places
riddled with rust scabs in others
your spout still proud and sturdy
your handle barely clinging on
and straightaway I knew
you were coming home with me

I held you and heard
the kettle's shrill whistle
saw the loose black tea
smelled the hot brew
heard the sounds of men
in from the fields, from the bog
from the mart, from the byre

and the voices of women
in from the town
during the birth
after the christening
at the wake
once the kitchen was read up

I felt the heat on my fingers
clasping a tin mug
a china teacup's handle
an old glass jam jar
tasted the hot sweetness
laced through with milk
fresh from the cow

and here you are now
gracing my garden
in all your antique glory
pouring out Narcissi
having drunk your fill of teatimes