

BORDERLINES

Trish Bennett

This land is sword-scarred from centuries of invasion.
Vikings, Chieftains, Kings, and Queens, come and go.
The scores they leave take time to heal.
People still fight
over the language we speak,
or the colour of the cloth on a pole.

We who live on the wound line,
have been sliced apart by those that wield the sword.
In the 'troubles',
armed forces severed arteries to our villages and towns.
"For security," they said,
as parents watched their blood drain
in planes, trains, and boats.

Now frackers come,
to sit in suits in air-conditioned rooms.
They circle contours on maps, as they plan
to drain the innards from the Geopark
— the lifeblood of our land.

They fence off test bores,
know the drill to spin.
"For security," they say,
and promise when all's fracked,
they'll restore our borderlands.

We don't believe.
We've heard this line before.

Frackers don't know what it is
to be reared amongst blue daub, bog and limestone hills,
to cycle full tilt down a grass-lined lane,
or Sunday stroll through the woods of Glenfarne Demense,
to eat wild strawberries from ditches while the roast is in the oven,
or take a boat on a soft-spoken day to fish our glacial lakes;
Lough Melvin, Lough Erne, and MacNean,
to breathe that brisk heather air
at the top of Cuilcigh or Thur,

to feel connected to God,
in the terrible beauty of this place.

*Note: This poem was Shortlisted in The Hedgehog Poetry Press,
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*At swim...one bird
Sculpture by the Shannon
in Drumsna. Sculpture by
Ann Meldon Hugh.*

PHOTO: NOEL DUIG-
NAN

SLICES

Trish Bennett

You caught me today, at the turn
of that tight hill, before home.

When the sun dissected the trees,
a slice of the past shone;

that summer's day
in our shop,

your suet-softened hands
held the knife,

as you dissected a liver
to show me fluke

Keep a tight grip, you said,
so it won't slip as you slice.

You carved the disease out,
diced the rest for cats.

I could be a surgeon in another life, you remarked
and we laughed,

before the memory fades,
replaced by the last sigh from your lungs,

as the grip tightens
around my heart.

WHINS AND LOSSES

Kevin Patrick

Not even the whins get a look in.
Once the Forestry gets in.
Our low rise Drumlins have been
topped off with a dense green
impenetrable spruce sheen.

No bird song here or curlew's call.
Once the Forestry gets in.
Our Townlands are choked
with a monoculture joke
a tax-efficient marginal yoke.

The last Homeplace falls.
Once the Forestry gets in.
It never gets out - that land is gone
for a government funded marginal song
where frost lingers now daylight's gone.

Nothing gets out for the next thirty years.
Once the Forestry gets in.
Deadwood/Deadland/Deadhand
nothing left after - but badland
for some outsider's tax band.

Once the Forestry gets in.