

Poetry

MICK GEELAN

THE POET

Writer, poet, mentor, friend,
The night I met you, in Barry's pub,
You were flying home with Jimmy Foley
And leaving your wings by the fire to dry.
I asked you to hone my writing skills
But you had limited success.

I told you that I made you a dresser once,
And you got me to paint your kitchen.
I tried to get the painting right, while
We shared a glass of your wine.

We talked and laughed, discussed
writing and writers,
And you made soup in the evenings.

The wild geese had come and gone
The next time I did your painting,
And even though your armchair
Had grown bigger around your frame;
I never once thought I was doing it,
For your funeral.

GERARD GILL

REMNANTS

In the cold light of morning
The remnants of battle
Are scattered in the fields,
And the sunlight shadows
Stretch long and solemn.

The stench of smoke
Clings to the air,
Scarring it, tearing shapes
Through the infinity.

Where evil walked in the night
Those that are left, weep
In the daylight.
They walk away, huddled, alone,
Towards another war.

ADAM ROOKE

LOWING

The cat is slowed by the bell around her neck.
Her silences tear like the train of a dress on a nail
before she can move to pounce, paw still in the air.

It's well lit, so I record it.
The flies turn their maps of the sun about the room
with only the light bulb for direction.

I stretch my arms but the sky is building
and there is no rest in it.
I just watch the screen and it repeats something-

In this quiet room, stop dragging life back in.
peace is enough voices to drown your voice in.

There is a throat in the field, deep.
From its lowing, the thunder comes in.
and the air is beaten till it rings.

The depth of it makes us as small as the teeth of a
comb
and we are more ordinary in its breaking.
And between the lowing, there is more silence than
there has ever been.

I bring the cat calm under my side
and I see what life really hides from
and it makes me think nothing

ROSEMARIE
ROWLEY

A LAMENT FOR THE BEES

Wild forces and wild horses held me down
Deep in the earth where the voles slumber
And nature's enemies offered a crown
To me if I help eradicate their number
Their dancing and humming all of summer
With golden suits and stripes to match
Their giddy flight and queenly hummer
Their love of the earth and ours to watch
And keep guard, like being in clover
Their golden hoard of honey and wax
Bees which were wanted on the list
Of the apothecary's potions foreign to the earth
To mint new prescriptions and poison mist
Like talc for the corn, so no plants would give birth

KEVIN PATRICK

THE WINDOW-MIRRORED

In love and life the mirror does not age
yet round the sill, time wipes her weary hand,
in tandem with the passing of each stage
the window-sill degrades and fades to bland.
As seen through scenes, all change then rearrange
for fortunes passing seasons, rise and fall,
I find the mirror, sees me, passing strange
in mirroring myself and nothing more.
Yet windows will within and will without
allow me pass; or stranger, pass within
leaving me little room to doubt, without
that pane I see, is mirrored pain of sin.

As cracked and peeling frame does now degenerate
I reflect, on the errors I have made.

ESTHER HOAD
LETTER TO JOE

We did well you and I
despite doubting ourselves, often
hovering anxiously over his cradle
playing Musical Beds night after night
muddling through
sleep deprivation
mealtime mania
oh, and those five painful minutes
of his teenage rebellion...
sharing anguish and heartbreak
in his annus horribilis
rejoicing in his restored wellness
and, this morning
on the hard shoulder
there he stood
our boy
tall, handsome, confident
under all his layers
skin bearing pictures
of his story so far
bright blue eyes
eager for adventure
we did well you and I

COLM FLYNN

ENNISKILLEN ON A SUNNY DAY

The beauty in the lough-encompassed setting
Of Enniskillen on a sunny day
Means there is not a single reason for fretting
About what people are inclined to say.
The island of Ireland has spent the summer waiting
For the proper sort of meteorological sky
And it's an afternoon for celebrating
By joining a family on whom to rely.
The water is like deliquescent glass
For turning into delicate works of art
And the parents all the way from Aughavas
Are so happy with their girl it's off-the-chart.
The rendezvous is in Blake's of the Hollow
Where drinkers have a lubricated swallow.

THE FALLS BY TORCHLIGHT

There's a formidable climb up to the top
Resulting in an intensifying thunder
And it's an impossibility to stop
Being full of unadulterated wonder.
Infinitesimal droplets are in the beam
Being utilized to scrutinize the cascade
Until it is a microcosmic dream
Where subatomic particles are sprayed.
The pandemonium of the cataract
Is reverberating through the Leitrim air
And it's a great encouragement to act
For the balance of life with considerable care.
The shaft of light illuminates the falls
Of glorious Glencar so it enthalls.

SEAN MACLOCHLAINN

ALZHEIMERS CARER

That face is on our minds many times in a day,
Your sweet voice it sings in our ears.
Lady please don't abandon us to the grey green walls,
Of golden but now shattered almost forgotten dreams.
Our admiration is great and will never diminish,
Your smile is our comfort and your friendship we cherish.
You are an angel of mercy a bright beacon of light,
As you care for the cared for from morning 'till night
That love it is given from a heart kind and warm,
As you do your rounds, we will meet with no harm.
Your work is so vital, but is so underpaid,
As some Care Homes insist on paying just the minimum wage.
Now life can be cruel, it's battles hard won,
But you have won most of yours and lost maybe one.
So go climb your mountain, set your goals in the sky.
And no one can stop you from climbing so high.

KEVIN PATRICK

EMPATHY

If I were you and you were me
then we'd have true empathy.
If just for one, earth's axis spin
we lived inside each other's skin.
We each other, for just one day
random thoughts, the things we say.
The secret fears, the spoken voice
the daily choosing, thousandth choice.
The ebb and flowing of the day,
bargains won to avoid affray.
To truly see, as I see you
how you see me, the way you do.
To swap Man for Wife and Wife for Man
to be part of each other's plan.
To be you, so you be me,
feel as you, as each other see.
How similar-different we really are
how strange-familiar our thinking's are.
How many things we still don't know
about each other, yet chose to show,
And when the earth, it's axis spun
to ourselves return, with the rising sun.
Like seeping tide on stranded shores (shush)
we wouldn't need to speak at all.
As we would now, each other know
what we feel and why we show.
Our many faces, our varied ways
to each other, across the days.
I in you and you in me
then we'd have: True Empathy.

MARY GUCKIAN

MILKING COWS IN SUMMER

Meandering into the lake field
with scoured buckets in our hand,
we enjoyed soft green mossy grass
where winter flooding left growth.
Our tiny toes comforted after walking
across higher ground where thistles
stung and pushed sharp needles
into the fragile soles of our feet.
Sometimes, Francie sang songs
and the melodious tunes moved
across the water as he cut hay
with the moving machine sounding
like background music or he worked
at saving his oat crop, a swishing
sound keeping up with his words.
Reaching our cows they were quiet
waiting for us to take the weight
from the over flowing udders.
Chewing the cud while we pulled
the tits we filled our buckets.
Heading back over bumpy fields
we got home, straining healthy
liquid into disinfected muslin.

JEANNE MALONEY MASON

CATHAOIR SYNGE

In the middle of middle Aran Inis Meáin,
Whitewashed and fringed with thatch,
A stone cottage nestles midst shrubs and roses wild,
A winding way welcoming to its green door—
But Syngé is not there.
Neither near nor far, but up and down the curvy lane,
Past Church of Our Lady and Saint John**,
Past stone-fenced fields of sheep and cows,
Past Dún Chonchúir or Conor's fort—
To lane's end.
Over stone stiles and across grassy fields
With dung and wildflowers dotted,
Head tucked against the mists and gusts,
To where only rock and wind and sea lay claim—
To Cathaoir Syngé.
Formed from the rocky cliff, a small ring fort,
Its slab seat surrounded by snugly fitting stones
Shelters Syngé from wild Atlantic winds,
To gaze beyond the whitecaps, beyond to Inis Mór, and, yes—
Beyond to inspiration.
we got home, straining healthy
liquid into disinfected muslin.