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EXERCISE BOOK

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Poems by John Hewitt

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Passages not used in final draft of
"The Angry Dove"

Demall speaks before St. Finnian's row.

This is a gambit which I much advise:
an older man half sick with jealousies
of his own pupil. It can hardly miss.
The older man will seek accomplices
in his grey cronies, and when these are slow
to rally to him, he will make a show
of slights on him that fall upon them too,
till all are huddled in a raging crew.

For those that like the lad he will suggest
in words of praise, fair-seeming, but expressed
in halting phrases, grudging, diffident,
that were less than kind he might dissent
from their good judgment; if they could but know
what close acquaintance with the lad must show.

Let this be done in secret, for a gust
of open truth would blow it into dust.

The young man must not know the web of lies
that gathers round his name. The sheer surprise
of his discovery when it is made
should make him flounder, angry and betrayed,
an easy object for accusing thumb
that hinted at his nature to become
thrawn and perverse, rebellious to all rule,
in no wise fitting master of a school.

Dernall

Such ploys are mine and rightly so belong
to what is the main region of my song,
the heart of man so tainted from the start
that mother Eve had but a little part
to play in drawing Adam to his fall,
for Lucifer is the final low of all.

Discarded Scene from The Angry Dove

2. The court of King Brude of the Picts

King's Herald The King, my lord, will graciously allow
an audience with the kinsmen of his friend
King of the Northern Picts and of the Isles
bright as the Northern lights in majesty.
I bring these envoys from your neighbour prince
to give you greeting and abide your will

King Brude Bid them come forward to the royal chair.
Which is your leader?

Columcille I am, Columcille,
and this is Conall, Canic, Conan this,
but we are envoys of another king
that you have reckoned.

King Brude Your name is strange. I have not heard it
in any saga yet. You come in peace?

In peace I greet you - You have travelled far
and must be weary. Let my servants wait
upon your wishes. But ere you withdraw
name me your monarch and your errand here.

Cicille We come from Heaven's King to bring relief
to any heart-oppressed by sin and shame:
we offer mercy to the open heart

Congall - and judgment to the heart that will not open

King Brude This is a strange outlandish embassy
talking in riddles, standing up in rags
with no respect for kingship in your bearing

Conan Our hearts are bound in higher loyalty.

Archdruid But this is treason, master. Shall they live?

King Peau, Brocelian; they amuse me with their talk.

Conan You should not mock us, Sir; for we have come
out of the loneliest land in all these isles,
the Land of Ulster, where the nearest lord,
though his domain be but a league across,
measures himself against the tallest prince
and strides his marches proud and jealously.
We've given High Kings to the other kingdoms
and ravaged Europe to its farthest alps:
Our slaves have every tongue west of the Rhine.
I myself can call one King my uncle
and this our leader Columcille can count
his line to Adam back through royal lions
and younger sons who left the court for fortune
Like nestled half of Alba from your grasp.

Congall You will provoke him, boasting to this height!

Brocelian You should not heed those hairs; they are mad,
but use their madness to disguise their plotting
as mountebanks at fairs obscure their tricks
with a soft flow of lies and ribaldries.

29. T.

The groaning doves of why must wait
 beyond the contrapuntal gate
 till I have lifted latch and found
 familiar footsteps on the ground
 that lead me safely to the field
 where times their secret seconds yield;
 Then found and named the why's will run
 and loll and laugh in endless sun.

16. 2

Our nights lesser by dreams, by destinations
 our days, on beaten paths tell we are worn
 like ancient flights of stairs that turn and turn
 endless in time, familiar as our names
 These traits we break but on each vacant floor
 the voice calls hollow echo to confirm
 the loneliness the frightened heart expects.
 If we could make our dreams our destinations
 green sap would run again in splintered wood
 that all which happens has might be good.

1. 3. 53

As misted dusk drifts over the chill land
 a large bright evening star between vague trees
 remembers light and holds its golden note
 against the coming darkness; and the birds,
 intent on their spring traffic, bring the gloom
 with challenge and response each to its kind
 not yet persuaded that the day is over;
 and as I slowly climb the narrow road
 I preach myself a sermon on this last
 and muster courage where was emptiness
 but by the time the peroration's reached
 a monstrous moon has clambered from the sea
 red and distended, and the leatherbleat
 beyond the ash trees in a flooded corner
 offers no comfort with that dying fall.

1. 3.

Returning after winter you shall see
 not merely the ploughed field where stubble was
 the hedge laid neat, the stump that was a tree
 the pillar smashed to let the tractor pass,
 but deeper tracks upon them, troubled, ace,
 see how vague infants into persons grow
 the old man gone from his familiar place
 or if no one, how noble now and slow.

Spring ploughing

20.3.

In the mild March weather the songbirds are stirring
 churring in hedge-torbs or shouting from trees
 or maybe the curlew high over the valleys

No not a leaf yet adds its hiss to the breeze
 the streams run lower but still find their voices
 round now, not over, the obstinate stones
 but like a ground bass to the full orchestration
 day long down the hill-slope the blunt tractor drones
 black rooks and white ravulls may speckle the furrows
 the brown rods heel over in parallel rows
 but this is far from my image of springtime
 the shadows lengthen, the March dust blows

It sounds like Spring

20.3

Tho' it is dry and bright the spring is late
 primrose in ditch and celandine by water
 repeat their ancient archetypes
 and flowering currant blotsches the black hedge

The sunlight shows the branches not the buds
 and no new grass comes up; the streams are low
 lacking the resonant confidence
 that falling water in the spring should give

Only the birds, only the bleating lambs
 assert the season. If you shut your eyes
 it sounds like spring, but on your face
 the air is mellow like October sun

The Chaffinch

20.3

Now is the time we look at chaffinches
 to count
 also the colours and remark the song
 no flowers distract or put their tents to shame
 and other singers are not yet too strong.

But when the leaves choke every tangled hedge
 and branches shake green arms against the light
 the crowded world of summer may be known
 to overburn the heart with sound and sight

but we shall still remember in the stir
 and opulence this moment when the spring
 over the waiting earth was heralded
 by this small friendly rainbow that could sing -

The Song is a Star

20.3

Pure song as clean as bone
 achieved by wind and rain,
 personal feeling gone
 and gone the crooked thought,
 let only this remain
 as the first star is caught
 for one bright moment clear
 between bare winter boughs
 and is forever there
 the constellations singing
 and the blind seasons cross
 from winter into spring.

20/21-3

O birdsong was like stars at night
 with star on star till out of sight
 we know far constellations spin
 and suns are quenched and suns begin.
 So on this day bird after bird
 named and unnamed was heard and heard
 till the far rim of hearing gave
 me many a near-guessed-at stave
 and out beyond that limit lost
 awareness of unnumbered host
 as when a man beneath the sky
 contents him with his galaxy
 and stands secure in having known
 his earth - and he are not alone
 for far beyond the reach of sense
 spread offers of experience.

A Country Walk in March

"Lord How Manifold"

22/23-3

a sudden madness like the heat of May
 As we went up the lane that warm March day,
 though two months early, set us on our way
 in gentler weather than we'd known in May

you and our friend the quiet botanist
 some small leaf
 with tansey aromatic in his fist,
 and as we walked, our resolution chose
 we told him of the last time we had been
 the same gay round wad faced in muddy shoes,
 in this same sector of the rural scene,
 we two together, half a year before
 and what is now and what we might yet see,
 when windy autumn was a steady roar
 succeeded winter's grey economy;
 of tossing tree tops and bright squalls of rain
 as he revealed in kindness an adept
 cuffed the last leaves and scattered down the lane
 so much it seemed that walking we had slept.
 But though the removed colours of the fall
 stood ready to be mastered at our call
 but now each instant to our open eyes
 we found
 was lit with recognition and surprise,
 for each side of the way the world was rich,
 field after field, with furrow, bush and ditch,
 all brimmed with marvel to invoke our care.

the flowering currant ~~warming~~ ^{warm upon} the cold air
 the neat post trotting ^{of}
 before cold touch it; and the nimble sow
 from our sproach
 vulgarly fork; the black-faced mountain yowle

with the quick lamb that skewed its Leicester score
in length of nose and tail; the squawking choir
of guinea-fowl with harsh pump-handle note;
and the horned ram with brambles round his throat.

We paused to watch and praise that yellow bird,
the yorker far less often seen than heard,
perch for a golden moment on the black
bare twigs of thorn before song called him back
to his high bush, where dark against the sky
he scarce skewed feather you could name him by.

We plucked the nettle tops and took away,
for flavour's sake, a single leaf of bay
over the low wall where the slope begins
to edge the tameness out with blossomed whins.
We passed stacked sacks of pratics on the sward
and loosed the last gate tethered by a cord,
and where before the ~~new~~^{jolted} nuts were full
of running water, and a shallow pool

hatches left right
marked where ways parted to the right and left
our matted arts were flushed with sound and sight.
There was no time to stoop to any left;

Rooted or simply each thing visible
as of with a
ring for a tether with the little bell.

The lonely drowning bee; the talking crowd
of black rooks rising in a flapping cloud
from the red furrows; and the curlew, high
calling for rain because the hills were dry;
light-^{loose} primrose drift and gay dog-violet
on the warm banks; and where the sheep was wet,
the hanging harts-tongue with the rusted rim;
the last dark wrinkled law that, tough and green,
held up its head against the first green leaf;
the knotted ivy like a hieroglyph
round the bowed ash-bole; and, above the burn,
it's like the weeping plant that would not return
till we had gone; and, rusting in the briers,
strange shapes of metal, looks and blunted shears
flung by, one summer, when the work was done
and the lean sheep ran naked in the sun;

wallflowers in blossom on the gable tops
 and sods with trailing stems, a shaggy crop,
 along the gutter of a sagging roof;
 the dry crisp mud that held the print of hoof
 clean as a moulder's pattern. Each of these
 we faced as facts or framed as smiles
 as fancy offered or withheld from each
 the grace of silence or the gift of speech.
 the trails of wool set us alert to spin —
 the tall pale reeds begged jars to set them in —
 the throttling ivy wore a dance of death —
 the lambs demanded cameras in a breath.

But still for me of all the tangled sight
 the deepest implications came by right
 from straggling beards torn off a heavy load
 of scuttled bit which had tumbled down this road
 and left its bear-sad litter, wedge by wedge,
 spiked on a dragging corner of the hedge
 since we were here before. At once they brought

the swift stiff memories of the aching thought
 when we had stumbled out across the hill
 and bugged the coarse lent, beat by beat, until
 the field was cleared and in the evening glow
 with weary lambs we hunkered by the fire
 and gulped the black stout down, with honour earned;
 but in a while the recollection turned
 to the sad wonder if in any place
 my passing leaves a more enduring trace
 and if the verses that I rush to print
 are worth much more than these stray wisps of lent

Sonnet

23.3.

How shall it be that after I have learned,
 by close attention to both whole and part,
 These ways, this country, having turned, returned
 till all's like some old story ^{got} known by heart,
 That I must leave and be no longer known
 where finches greet me and the valleys nod
 where even my heel was friendly with a stone,
 or is this all written in the mind of God?

Will the dead fallen tree forever bud
 and throw away its spent leaf year by year
 where time has lost its meaning and its mood
 and all stands shining in the noon day clear,
 or dawn, or sunset? Has eternity
 chosen the hour that evermore shall be?

Began 21.5.52
 and written save last
 two lines.
 completed 23.3.53

Sonnet

With small, if any, skill in abstract thought
 I have endeavoured fairly to define
 what purpose, lack of purpose, or design
 is in the fabric of my being wrought
 But from the first words written I am caught
 in questions begged: - if purpose, is it mine?
 Or am I it? and line succeeding line
 but pushes farther off whatever's sought.

For any case, I only can proceed
 from sense to sense, by what these each declare;
 the motions of my mind forever need
 texture and colour, sound and taste and smell,
 for by no other modes am I aware
 and who dare prove them unreliable?
 What then! There is more

Dane-geld

23.3

The Danes were here. The forts above the road
are still called by their name, and down by Layde
here you still can see the port - their longships used
when they left Ireland after their last raid

A sailorman from here in Denmark once
went walking when his ship was laid in dock
around some neighbour farms to satisfy
his interest in the quality of stock
crops at yield and

So he discoursed by chance a country man
who had some English at his back and call
and in the talk between them it came out
the sailor man belonged to Corkendall

The farmer laughed and gripped his hand and said.
"Many's the journey here my people made,
and I know rightly from what's landed down,
it's cold the night about the braes of Layde"

The Cock and the Hen

23.3

"I lay twelve eggs" says the Hen,
six
"I lay twelve eggs, I lay twelve eggs
six
and I still go barefoot"

"I've been to Yorkey" says the Cock —
"I've been to Yorkey, I've been to Corkey,
and I can't find a boot to fit you;
so what can I do, so what can I do?"

The clucking hen runs barefoot still,
and the rooster crows in the morning,
and you'll never find either gone over the hill
on any class of a journey,
unless to a fair in the well of a cart
or strung by the heels in a van
for everyone knows this name by heart
but the egg and poultry man.

Hens Fly

24-3.

The clucking hen on the road alarmed
 cleared the four foot ditch in a flurry,
 and flapped and glided across the field
 in a most unhenlike hurry.

The rooster followed but came to earth
 just short of his startled harem;
 There's none can say what creatures'll do
 if you feed the right scare to scare 'em.

Rann 20 June 1913

25

The Wake

12/13-4

We snicked the latch where one was dead
 compelled by ancient courtesy
 the kitchen scarce could hold one more;

The open coffin on the bed
 showed us the man we'd come to see
 made up the muster to a score.

We gave our greetings to the gloom
 I found a seat against the wall
 my wife was hustled to 'the room'
 where women were forgathered all.

Since turf and willow gave feeble light
 the croaking shapes seemed much the same:
 anxious ^{gathering}
 with sharpened ear as muffled sight
 I sought to join each shape and name.

of stock and weather was the talk
 of harvests fabulously great,
 - the distances men used to walk

26
The dangers of our pampered state
about leads unfeared of weight.

Then one would rise and say Good night-
and one who stood would take his chair;
the smoking turf would flicker bright-
with each fresh gust of chilly air.

Then suddenly the only sound
would be of crickets at the grate
^{James} ~~reach~~
and one would rise and here around
Tobacco on a dinner plate.

27

Hill Sheep

12/13-4

This is the lambing weather. But from dawn
the shepherds stride across the stormy hills
counting the lambs new dropped among the whins
or nestled on the steep burn's turf-y sides.

As they approach, the ewes rise up and climb
out of the tangled hollows, track by track,
and running dogs called Tony, Beauty, Sport
drive in the stubborn, head the shagglers back

till the whole wakened hillside is alive
with moving fleeces weaving out and in
while here and there a ewe with lamb at heel
turns anxious, bleating for the other twin.

Sonnet: Glenaen

13.4

I've come by lonely Orr road the Glen
 and stopped with men at turf upon the moss
 or had a good hour's crack with surface men
 about the snowstorm and the heavy loss
 of sheep that winter seven years ago
 for in that place this is the theme to broach
 carry long you are bound to
 just as at ~~Loughrea~~ you should know
 the tragic story of the powdered coach.

But farther down the Glen you'll see a slope
 pulling the bent to debt, or scythes in corn
 but you'd no more discourse with any man
 than man to tell him that his oats are ripe,
 or that the haws are thick upon the thorn,
 for comers have no errand in Glenaen.

13.4

Mid April now. Ploughed land is light
 with dust of lime. The sowers stride
 across the fields. The blossoms white
 of blackthorn by the quarry side.

The shafted sunlight on the when
 sets slopes afame with gold galore;
 and tadpole voyages begin
 upon the lent holes' shallow floor.

Just now
18. XI. 53

Belfast Telegraph
2. XII. 53

5. IV.

The Belfastman

In this my valley how should I never
against the stream that is the pulse of it
against the great hills rounded to the north
and the wide east from which each dawn is but
Should I go there the sea would change my tongue
and help hardly know its syllable
West lies the road we sought and travelled from
its falling petals always spell farewell
This then is home its clay has clenched my foot
its bitter factions pang in my heart
and I must wait until the bells clash fast
before I hear the latent bird song start.

The Long Way Round

And I have come the long way round
tree ^{field}
by field and tree and beast to man
I might have saved my spirit breath
and stayed within my little clan
as loved the land that held the spoon
the hands that drew me from the will
and placed me safely on the ground
and all the wordless good of will
not even finally withdrawn
by the swift insolence of death
but active still in cell and vein
solitary as I shall strike or feel
tinting the neutral drops of rain
and bending seasons on a wheel
that spins in its simplicity
from ^{man} ^{beast} from field to tree

Armorial Devices

The seahorse and the wolf,
 The little ship, the bell
 are symbols of the self
 I labour hard to spell.

The wolf must wear his chain
 else he should run wide
 in roaring pack again
 to vex the country side.

The seahorse rides secure
 within his element
 that must upon the shore
 gasp lungs and impotent.

The ship can only sail
 when rigged and trimly manned
 yet even so may fail.

To reach the harbour planned.

The bell rings loud and clear
 and shakes its echoes round;
 but, with no jolt to bear,
 it has a foolish sound.

The seahorse and the wolf,
 The little ship, the bell
 stand arched across the gulf
 that opens over Hell.

1. VII. 53

Why should we pause in our anxiety
 to shore the wall up that must surely fall;
 this is the very place where they must lie,
 the stones that for a moment were a wall?

Already this, the self-same, forty years,
 has kept my step and wept my ready tears,
 says on his shrinking armature of bone
 and sometimes begs me to go on alone.

35.

Moving since morning in the scudding rain
 that streamed and rivered down the rutted lane,
 hooped in the hoof-marks, blunted every thorn
 in the thick hedge, and laid the tossing corn
 in swathes a restless ^{mostly} creature might have made,

my thoughts kept swinging back to yesterday
 to the long lefted belts of new cut-hay,
 bright on the stubble, in the slanting sun,
 or to the yellow stacks already won
 that threw long shadows on the reapers' tracks.

and low in one snug field the hay ^{was} rapped,
 though hardly bleached, in bundles smoothed and wrapped
 to cast the rain off, if the wind should shift;
 and I thought then such caution overthrift,
 when the hot land shone like a brittle straw.
 Landscape glittered like a

The kettle sang upon the log;
 The fire burnt warm and strong:
 A lump of coal fell on its side;
 The kettle stopped its song:
 so shifting circumstance may rob
 The proud heart of its pride,
 and after so, or choke the song
 we dreamed came from the heart,
 that we recall with bitterness
 what seemed our chosen heart
 was but a mask that time put on,
 and, cheater from the start,
 we find the hand we thought could bless
 as heavy as a stone.

Intent on plucking from the changing seasons
 from repetition the recurrent truth
 naming the image, tree, from log and sapling,
 oaks studded with leaves and beeches leafed with stars,
 yet knowing bud and wood ash certainties
 and the clear water over the smooth stones,
 though gone forever still forever there,
 I have sought from natural things, from pebble and moon,
~~red~~
 splot berry and lamb in shelter of dry hedge,
 for the two points to swing my hammock on,
 the contradictions, though unreconciled
 that in their tension breed a unity:
 but suddenly upon my ordered mind
 that clenched its crystal brightly faceted
 the many sided truths of opposites,
 by the old common processes of time -
 all else in space and time itself is motion -
 by birth of children and the death of friends

I step with shock into the commonplace
 I'd heard and thought of, never realised
 That life's for living, not to be observed
 till fact or symbol offers talisman
 and then encountered; the observing mind
 is mortal as the object it observes
 and changes with the light and by the light
 which shifts with time
 yet well may leave its dusty residue
 that held up rightly in another light
 some clustered nest of feeling, sense-equipped,
 may recognise as crystal, hard and pure.

I Sonnets on my father's death

Unshaven, gaping mouthed, with muffled brain,
 with features stricken; with unseeing gaze
 the meanings tangled in th' infrequent phrase,
 and the long lassitude as the senses wane,
 so death rose slowly, brimming cell and brain vein,
 thick in his throat, through which the tired breath thrust
 like a worm pumps the doomed crew~~soul~~^{languidly} trust
 as the bulk slithers and goes down again.

Then when drawn capp'd along the polished wood
 as shadows ran before the light's slow brush
 and we were drained of pity and despair,
 death took him wholly; with a sudden push
 the loose mouth belched its black adjectived flood,
 and instantly my father was not there.

From this out-all's at odds! How was this death
 womb'd in his nature - and his proper bairn?
 Each aspect of its struggle to the air
 denied his practice as belies his breath,
 but with a grave and gentle dignity
 drew him among his fellows self-secure,
 clean-handed as his own bold signature,
 a discipline accepted quietly.

But this strange creature lurching from the dark
 grotesque obscene unshapely ill-designed
 Lauling and dragging him to this sick end
 was not the Roman death austere and stark
 that seemed to wait upon his persist mind.
 A man should make his death his lifelong friend

The men across the lane
 have trouble with the bay
 the reaper sticks again
 the horses disobey

The voices left in rage;
 the swords too close and dry,
 each circuit seems a stage,
 the field eternity.

14. VIII. 53

The glens grow silent

The people go

To the red-roofed houses

now on now

round the little towns

By the shore below

With the shuffling of hearts

The memory fails

The wine has gone

and the winter's tale

and this morning's news

is already stale

and an empty people

Stand in the square

as dull as the beasts

In the drowsing rain

and hardly a man

Has the sense to care

Just June

31. X. 53

29. VIII. 53

43

The little House

Within, the little house was dark with hate
and anger smashed like glass against the floor
while that grey heifer, down, paused at the gate
and a bird started singing near the door.

But Two in that shut house were caught and bound
in a close grapple none could disengage,
and silence after anger tiptoed round
through the bright spikes and splinters of their rage.

Unsleeping, each alone in time's abyss,
dealt out the hearts and shuffled them again;
in anguish clenched, what could they do but miss
day coming gently through the leaves in rain?

3. IX. 53

In this wet season when the tractor's bogged,
and the ripe corn is lodged with wind and rain
after the first dry day the scythesman comes
and with him one to bind the stricken grain.

So too when ruin beats upon the state
and the cracked structure rocks in jeopardy
we may remember half-forgotten skills
and save ourselves by our simplicity.

4. IX. 53

"Just Jones"
19. IX. 53
New Polans

45

The Owl

With quiet step and careful breath
we crept over grass and stone
seeking that soft light-feathered bird
among the trees where it had flown

The twisting road ran down beside
a straggling wood of ash and beech;
between us and the shadowed trees
a wire fence topped the whin-spiked ditch

We stood and gazed: the only stir
of dry leaves in the topmost boughs;
the only noise now, faraway,
the cawing of the roosting crows

And as we watched in waning light,
our clenched attention pinned upon
that empty corner of the wood,

it seemed the quiet bird had gone.

Then when the light had ebbed to dusk
you moved a hand and signalled me.

I saw the little pointed ears
beside a tall and narrow tree.

A further signal, and I moved
in wide half-circle to surprise
(that feathered slink beside the tree) that little feathered sheep of life
^{above the grass}
that watched you watch with steady eyes

But when I came by easy stealth,
at last, within a yard or two
the brown bird spread enormous wings
and rose and quietly withdrew

And we were left to carry home
a sense no mortal will devise,
that, for one instant out of time,
we had been seen and recognised.

Comment for a Councillor.

Justice is done in the end.

The rascal that for a day
walked with the world as his friend,
is dropped in the gaping clay,
and the mourners drive away
lies
to forget him and his fame,
and moss crawls over his ^{eyes} name.

But, Lord, it is long to wait
till the evil that man did
with the hurt born of his hate
lies under its coffin lid;
the earth may never be rid
of his malice this side of time
if I let it tarnish my name.

Revised 1962

17/18 IX

For a September Day

The afternoon had opened like a rose:
 the fallen leaves lay still; no others fell.
 Time, like that golden moment when the bell
 holds its round note before the dying close,
 seemed being not becoming. Even those
 whose movement and direction always spell
 the city's ordered habit, capable
 and expert, by their gestures spoke repose
 and not intention only. For this hour,
 all unexpected in the failing year,
 they peopled the warm world as if by right,
 and not so those wry shapes which run and cower
 whose faith's a threat, whose politics are fear,
 whose faces are averted from the light.

I have drawn this landscape.

I have drawn this landscape now for seven years, -
 longer, if sketches count, from lower ground -
 till moving to the heart of it I have found
 the changing vesture that each season wears
 walking one hillside; how the hour appears
 in wind, in snow, or when the valley's drowned
 in drifting mist, or when, with blossom crowned,
 the when-gilt peak rebukes the sun's arrears.

And I have taught my pen to draw each sign
 that peoples time and place within this frame,
 with plough and harrow, with the straggling line
 of bowed men pulling bent, that, when the night
 draws darkness over, you may mark and name
 each lonely homestead by its steady light.

Revised 1962

50

I-X-53

Gentlemen Adventurers or The Old Virginian

This colony is old and out of touch
with much that's bruted in the Capitol;
The ships are leaky, and the storms are such
that most who leave are driven to the west,
returning seldom, if they come at all;
in letters only show their interest,
scarce legible and clumsily expressed.

And strangers from the east come now and then,
the newest jargon lively on the tongue,
to make their way among us; - not so when
our fathers came to tame the land and till
and plant a thriving nation here among
the sullen tribes whose remnants lie yet still
by ready magpie or on barren hill.

but buskily to their fortunes they attend
and stuff their wallets while we stand and gape;

so schooled in old obedience, we lend
a stranger's voice authority and awe,
though he should have the manners of an ape
and no more substance than a man of straw,
his gestures restless, his opinions raw.

Yet we have seen them come and watched them go,
the noisy names forgotten in a week,
with not a shard of evidence to show
that they wrought with us long and prospered much;
while we continued soberly to speak
of love of place and loyalty - and such,
a colony grown old and out of touch.

51

Villanelle

The chestnut leaves remain
though yellow every leaf,
October's here again.

Along the rutted lane
they goit the last bright sheaf;
the chestnut leaves remain.

Day wakes with mist and rain,
noon offers no relief —
October's here again.

Though sharp gales tap and strain
and cry in student grief
the chestnut leaves remain.

The year is on the wane,
our footing is it brief;

October's here again.

That hope is never vain
is still my wary belief
the chestnut leaves remain,
October's here again.

It was no vast dynastic fate
when, step by step, my father died,
~~with~~^{no} mourners at the Palace gate,
~~and~~^{the} tall bells tolling slow and wide.

We sat beside the bed; the screen
shut out the hushed and tiptoe ward,
and now and then we both would lean
to catch what seemed a whispered word.

My mother watched her life go by,
two score and five the drafted years,
and never weakened to a cry
who was so ready with her tears.

Then when dawn washed the polished floor
steps and voices woke and stirred
wheels along wheels along
with footsteps on the corridor,

my father died without a word

The sick, the dying, bed by bed,
lay clenched around their own affairs;
that one behind a screen was dead
was someone's grief, but none of theirs.

It was no vast dynastic death
a nation silent round the throne,
but letting ^{slip} for his final breath
a lonely man went on alone.

Uprose the lion in his rage
 the forest rang with drummed stampede
 the full moon glaring in his eyes
 red as the fury of his need,
 lacked will or power to intercede

And Adam stood beside the tree
 remembering everything he saw
 with unalarmed and cynic eyes
 as strict fulfilment of the law,
 the flaming sword, the tearing claws.

The shapes that haunt this dreaming place
 are not for evil or for good
 they are a lost unchristened race
 whose veins are void of human blood

They have their gentle fields to till
 They have their proper crops to grow
 but with what quiet art or skill
 no mortal man will ever know

In highest moon or pitchest dark
 they leave their dwellings on the ground;
 the owl at dusk's their waking lark,
 the barking fox familiar sound.

and where the fields we know by day
 lie still and shadowed, waiting moon,
 they build their silver nests of hay

or say the new ^{hail} moon-opened corn.

And if they pause awhile to dance
and you hear a fiddle play
with nothing more than festive glance
and resolutely go your way;

that night, that time might leant your heart
to vex your arts till time's slow end
and you would walk - a man apart
as never have a mortal friend.

Poem

I

To the blurred edge of consciousness he comes;
on the blurred cloud of consciousness he sings,
sings without shape, sings loud and imageless.

The heart hears singing small and faraway,
song broken not in note or syllable
or any dance of line, essential song -

not absolute, a monstrous absolute's
image unlimbed and lacking quality,
yet played with logic in a setted game.

The singing comes and passes. Where it passed
is altered with a wave, a new dimension,
and, taller, takes the song across the stars.

II

When the spirit-senses can no more report,

and time rots through the silent terminals,
the song walks talking past the farthest star.

The pride's a ^{film} dust upon the beetle's shard;
the stonyed guilt wrinkles in the bitter dust:
an absolute can never be absolved

by song that lesses or by rotted time.

When the spent sense lies bent among the weeds
like an old spring, a tedious abstraction,

with no more image than a curious fish
deep in the waters underneath Japan,
the song's a mouth that answers to its kind.

The Bandstand

Remark the little bandstand in the park,
bird droppings on the iron balustrade,
and dead leaves in the corners.

After dark,

when the bell rings - and rangers lock the gate,
the tiptoe games the laughing children played
are little sleepy ghosts - and hardly wait
till the last footfall dies before they find
a quiet twig to hammock their repose,
and the quick birds are nestled with their kind:
but sometimes when the wind comes up and blows
dark clouds across and off the rocking moon,
between the gusts, in lulls within the storm,
you'll hear, by chance, a loud drum major tune
as shadowy men in moon-taled uniform
remember summer evenings long ago.

The Tumbling Spore

They set their angels dancing on a sun
or named the humours, smelt the witches out
foretold the fate of crops or kings by omens,
by doves or conjunctions of the stars
and out of that dark language made high song
and schooled their hands to give a life to stone.

The proofs gone from these images, we find
a narrowed base to raise conjecture on,
depicting all as race of motley spores
or raindrops dancing round a leaden box;
and so our songs are scrambled, difficult,
^{our gloved hands touch}
and what we touch with heads to rubble turns.

The Cripple Child

I take the unity my senses offer,
such as of birdsong out to hearing's rim
and known beyond its lights' edge, moving on
and coming over, or stars reported by
men with no names to clothe their words with style,
and so, uncoloured, passing true as stone
or taste and texture of the well-tried leaf.

Since touch, sight, hearing and the other two
have bettered my response to what revolves
around my centre and have spread it far
beyond the little pool that once was I,
I take without dismay what pebbles fall
or slates flick over it, knowing they will drop
through drift of depth far deeper than the self

My world's no sphere, for there are surfaces
which jail in rounded, places where my sense

admits a gneissine or a green-stained trachyte
where I lack skill to step or strength to climb;
yet these are part of it, of the account
that I draw up and keep for settlement.

This shoot me once that one, a cripple child,
loved by no mother, given another's love
not worn with kind but aimed deliberate,
which, in a space of months with some expense
of will and resolution, turned the way bone
in lifeway straighter, should, an hour unwatched,
strike a sharp dealt in signaled accident,
and all that duty-love deliberate
run twelve ways wasted in blindfold dust.
For I could sieve no metaphor from this
would lift the heart against adversity.

The cripple child, not allegorical,
summons no symbol or shining archetype,
that like charged metal draws the grains of ore

to shapely pattern in its field of force
or even accretion, palpable in bulk:
a twig snapped off by shoulder barking foot;
a straw snatched up and dropped by wifless pigeon
^{hole-cochere}
between the Laveinent and the copper dome;
a snouted buck on deserted building-site —
not even this last, for this has overtones
of Babylon and tablets, — nor a leaf
launched into shadow from a sunny branch.

to take the reason in the falling leaf
and measure it against that falling child
and there's an atom split that opens more
than all the pounding physicists contrive.

Who'd love a leaf and tie its brittle stem
against the twig it grew from? Let it face
the driven crystal and survive till spring?
A wiser hand would lay it in a book.
It would lie sad there, wisp of sentiment,

a fragment of a life, no more a leaf.

Take then a common object, say a chair,
a chair composed of living particles
(such is the schoolmen's fiction of the day)
will last so long as needed being chair.

Have I an answer to my felling child?

Do we name the needer and define the need
as we records the uses of a chair?

Or were the spinning particles required
to ease some balance elsewhere out of line?

Let us now mock me for my ignorance;

I grip the data that my wits provide,
and try the answers: if they cancel out,
that is the answer; and I know the sum.

Cushkib Fair

This house was once a noisy family,
of tall sons famous for their endless sport,
glad to be busy, even if they knew
the acres were too few to hold them long.

The only daughter charged her father and married
a seaman from a glen five miles away,
left church and home to live another life.
Then one by one the brothers took their bundles
and stepped out from the farm among the hills,
some to marry and die, some to grow old
by distant waters. When the father died
only the eldest son was left at home
to keep his mother and endure the land's
stubborn and grudging yield of root and grain.
He'd run with horses long and had a way with them
with them and carried certain secret charms
~~smug in coat pocket~~ for their rare ills.

No man could break a colt or ease a mare
like him in all the glens ; they sent for him
from Drumnesdale beyond the Carrig mountain.

The house was quiet now. When she was widowed,
he brought his sister home with two small girls
to nurse their bedfast mother. It was strange,
brother and sister of the ^{dark} ~~waxing~~ creeds
under one roof - and not at variance;
as when the bedfast mother turned to die
the sister stayed as woman of the house.
~~her officers and orders had devolved~~
on her

The girls grew up and married; one, at Llandaff,
to a slow fellow working on a farm
the far side of Stenaruffe, round the bay,
the other earthen to a man she met
at a dance or after Mass, across the seas
where every house here sent its fortune seekers.

Brother and sister older, let the land

and on their pensions - and the quarters rent
achieved a frugal comfort for the house,
which, though not at set times like Halloween
roaming with games and laughter, yet was known
as a good house to ceilidhe at, for still
the brother had his stories running on,
and his old way with horses, and the sister
was a noted talker, eager for all news.

But as the years came on the brother grew
odd in his manner, furtive; if he saw you
out on the road he'd step behind a bush
till all was clear; and after the Great Snow
that smothered drifts of snow in every glen,
his breathing bothered him: he took to bed,
was up and down and then did not get up,
but lay for months, and died before the snow
had turned the warm side up.

St Patrick's Eve

The country came to wake him ; men and boys
 smoking round the hearth, with one small lamp
 above the open coffin ; the women sat
 with the old sister talking in the "room" ;
 and next day when the Fair was at its crest
 we buried him and laid within that grave
 half of the wonders of the countryside,
 the hoard of stones and the hoard of charms,
 and the last spokesman of the old traditions.

The house is empty now. ^{farm} The ~~land~~ is sold.
 The sister's gone to join her daughter's throng,
 and all is ended. It will serve as store
 for seed potatoes, meal and implements,
 to keep the land in harness ; but the walls
 will never again hear that man telling how
 the bright sun danced at Easter over Perron,
 and never again grow shadowy with dancers
 gathering at Cuskit for Hallowe'en.

I heard your song among the trees
 snatch after snatch as here and there
 you stooped to lift the fallen sticks,
 clear in the still December air ;
 and suddenly the year was kind,
 the wintered earth was still a friend,
 and in my sudden joy I prayed
 that it might be so to the end.

29/30. XLI. 53

Sonnet

In the wan sun of a December day
when the chill earth seems waiting for the spring
and only running waters hurry up
down every slope, have anything to say.
There is a chance you'll maybe also hear,
when the west wind allows, the thresher's drone,
nameless
as sound (unnameable) if not already known,
like a lament for the departing year.

For now the seasons toward completion brought
have waited this last act that sums the creed
by which the ploughmen, sower, reaper wrought,
that seedtime and the harvest shall not fail
since men with sharpened sickle scored earth for seed
or threshed the tufted straws with thumpery clash.

Just June 8. V. 64

31. XI

73

The Thresher

Clouds from the west have covered the sun
and chaff gusts ripple the puddled lane
but the tractors throb and the long belts run
as the flanks of the thresher grumble and strain
for half of the stacks are still to be done
before the light dies in a flurry of rain.

So the busy man on the top of the stack
tosses the sheaves with a steady throw
and none of his mates have a minute to slack
as the bales run out in an endless row
and the clear grain bulges the open sack
and chaff drifts round like a golden snow.

The trees are bare

and birds are dumb

The hardest frosts

have yet to come

and all the streams

are full in spate

and hoofmarks strew

round every gate

The trestle drones

across the land

The clear grain's coppered

In friendly hand

So end Old Year

New Year begin

There's blossom in

The mountain whin.

Poems in 1954

22.IV

Blundering across the hard uneven turf
when earth was black beneath - a map of stars
we headed towards the dark bulk of a hill
knowing that somewhere at that black cone's foot
our cottage waited. For, by day, that hill
rises abrupt - and lifts its peak of whin
three fields' breadth from the road our side fence skirts.

Then suddenly the trees rose up to mock
the navigating eyes. Our blind feet found
the hilted track that cattle made to drink
at the full pipe which bogs a hollow place
bright now in April with brass celandine
and as we lurched on rut or hoofprints run
we caught, low down the sloping wood, the sharp
window of lamplight, and no longer elenched
on an intention let the free thought play
with all the lights in dark and threatened woods
that signal safety and compensation.

Now just when I have learnt to choose
 the swift word for report of sense
 and put with speed and ease the news
 that runs to my intelligence
 and when you'd think the ready phrase
 might answer need as quick as mind
 the menace of these anxious days
 forbids it's equation and I find
 the loaded heart in silence locked
 against the moments buckoring
 as yesterday the buds were marked
 by drought that sap had brimmed with spring.

Belfast Telegraph ^{b. vi}
 3. vii. 54

Lyric: Black and White.

A blackbird flew to a Hawthorn bush
 and brushed a flutter of petals down;
 they tumbled and turned like a flurry of snow
 and drifted slow to the waiting stone.

And though that blackbird, all summer long,
 should sing so long as there's light to see,
 he may never fly - a song as bright
 as that lyric flight from the Hawthorn Tree.

A blackbird flew to a Hawthorn tree
and loosened a flutter of petals down.

It's no sort of help to be told that he
is covered with parasites tail to crown;

for not till maggots have finished with me
at the deaf dark end of my hearing and sight -
shall I ever ^{again have the luck} ~~be lucky enough~~ to see
a bird so black on a tree so white.

A crooked branch of blossomed may
like a spray designed with consummate art
each clustered flower, with ^{superior} might power,
being a unity and a part.

White of all whiteness, symbol of all
that colour calls to the vivid sight
a single living of it mixed with whin.
Show me a Solomon gold and white!

Josh Jones

7-12 VI. 54

The Hawthorn Tree

The lateness of the season here
allows the hawthorn blossom now.
magnificent and brief career
each single bough is bent on show

Once walking with unquiet mind
I saw one bush of all inflow'r
that had a beauty of a kind
my senses had no measure for

As gazing at it long I stood
a strange awareness stirred within
not just of flesh becoming wood
as prickly when the buds begin

but of a flowing universe
that flowed and streamed towards the tree
drawn with a magnet's silent force

nts that are really

The running earth, the rushing sky
seemed thrusting with twigs and spray;
to save my small identity
^{plus myself}
I led 15 turn ad walk away.

This opening was later discarded

92

June

Pro Tanto Quid Retribuimus

For the 25th Anniversary of the Opening of the
Museum and Art Gallery, Stranmillis, Belfast

Walled round and bounded by green rim of hills,
where the slow river drifts into the tide
this city, stilted on the shifting sand
clay-red in sun - and grey in ebbing rain
this city numbers its half million folk
camped round the high mills - and the clanging yards.

And men have written or spoken bitter things
against your nature, named you black and hard;
the smoking bonfire and the banging drum
your voice and image: for they have not known
the white wings swerving leath the latticed halls,
nor, from Ben Madigan, have seen the dawn
twin steeple, done and clearing, stroke by stroke;
or if they have seen, have not understood
the swaying banners as the marching men -

Full and corrected version finished 12. VII
in abbreviated form was used at opening of
Exhibition 10. VII. 1954

83

Turn back in thought to when, - a little town
at Long Bridge End, this city wore the name
of Northern Athens, with no wrong
staining that title, for along its streets,
High Street, Ann Street, round the Linen Hall,
men walked of many skills - and sciences,
scholars, actors, philosophers,
physicians, poets of no meagre fame.

And now today remember that although
their names have written from the common mind
within these walls about no their bright hopes
have found their lasting home and covenant.

The preacher with a knock for making sense
of hieroglyphic puzzles, and the brusque
short-sighted little minister who charmed
his swarming boarders, extolled Latin verse,
and turned his couplets of geology;

The gentle farmer with an eager eye
for leaf as bird, or fish upon the slab;
the busy doctor with a hand to spare
for ammonites or harpers, and the stout
clinch organist who jolted down their lines;
the honest painter, Bishop Percy's friend,
and his boy-genius whose far-fabled gifts
were spoken of in the metropolis;
all these were ours, at round them kindly men
who shared their rising fortunes with the town
filling the plank leaves at the ledger's end
with tags of Pliny, Plutarch, Cicero.

Powered by these words, a generation grew,
some kin of the great names, like Drummond's brother,
ship's surgeon, town-doctor, pamphleteer;
some further fired by the fanatic ure,
glib deb's performer in the lecture hall,
with sparkling batteries and array of glass;
some, pupils of the teacher-disenchantment

who set their little trophies on his desk,
the flints and shells he'd schooled them well to find:
these, with their fellows from the mills and stores,
stencilled by fortune to the family gear,
mustered their solemn company of eight
in Dr. Drummond's house, and, minuting
protocols, propositions, resolutions,
formed their society, our fountain head.

And out of that grave play of mind with mind,
the need to act, the need to satisfy
the leaping questions, they conjured their strengths
to master Nature. Soon their labours brought
such wealth of wonder, such an urge to share
that wonder with their peers yet untaught
in the bright jewels of the teeming earth,
that they in compact form a plot of land
near the new college where the fields began,
and raised - a coney and capacious house
to hold and show all evidence of order,

in shells and pebbles of the varied shore
in leaves and insects never seen before
by any skilled to know a tabulae,
adding to these, the leafless metal blade,
the broken shard, the twisted ring of gold
and the gold crescent; for they held of man
that he was also under nature's law.

And through the long years of the new Queen's reign,
when most were vowed to commerce, some remained
not wholly captive to the turning wheels,
but grave and whiskered now, and grown sedate,
keeping their verses in a private drawer,
still held some heat of lesson to enlarge
the hoard of knowledge. One far wandering man
plucked trophies from the vast Pacific seas;
the chieftain's carven staff, the flat jade club,
and the great clock a bankrupt monarch sold.
Another went where the seeds of state
where Adams' foot still marks the pilgrim's path,

enriched with painted dancing nests and more
the lettered cases and the numbered shelves.
And one shipped home a mummy from the Nile;
unwrapped by soldiers, she was goggled at
by Easter Monday hundreds - To this day,
a child will hiss back where she may lie,
that little daughter of great Ammon's priest -
And one who walked into the waste of snows
and came no more to speak of what befell,
saying Antarctic ice in early years,
locked back the dry skins of those winged birds
that load the bergs and floe where no men live.
Another, a lean man with a poet's face,
found all the sample for lumber by the flet
as ready, torpedo, or among the hills,
as now infamed, twin-star, with Templeton.

The common names of these uncommon men
shout up and sing like lift of balladry ...
Thompson, Tennent, Croqui, Patterson;

and yet there are no ballads of their names,
for we have lost the ear for public song.

Yet if a man should try, as I have tried,
to set the story in deliberate verse
as a preserving amber, not the chisel
as a dead spirit of uncolored prose,
how could he wake the fancy overwrought
with tedious marvels of these latter days?
How could he stir the mind with chronicles
of artefacts as fossils, crumbling bones,
when all may crumble through our cleverness?

Let me be brief: speak quickly of the years
when that first arose and dwindled, as the dust
fell steadily on dancing mask and drum,
as all grew stale, and so this city threw
its clay-red gables at the leafy lanes,
all seemed consumed by progress of that sort
the men who kept the leaders reckoned with.

Yet of the few, one watched the falls' white way
over the deepened channel, as one crammed
his swinging vesulum with moss and lichen;
another tribes the playmen for the axe
his slow share gabbles to the jester's crest,
and kept a labelled till, his board complete,
he left the scarcely-leading town his heir,
through from Bronxstone among the copper beeches.

And in another sheet, a clear, broad sheet,
where once was haule of old crooked walls,
the Public Library, now built, gave 200\$
to painted canvas and to plaster Greek,
here space was yielded for such gifts as his -

O sandstone walls, I bless you as I pass,
for these, for me - for thousands - hope began
among your books, along your galleries,
reading the live words, seeing the bright shapes
that carry man's condition out of time.

And even the sheltered wounds across your face
are symbol that the quiet values last
beyond man's hate enduring, and the worm
of evil coiling in the human heart.

But all stood waiting on the bold design
till one rose up, a bearded noisy man,
bidding the City's Mayor and Councillors
assume a stewardship proper to their right,
and others later, rallied to his side,
but it was long before the voice as pen
achieved their purpose. Then, so long delayed,
the civic gesture met the people's need,
as borough and society were linked.

And so, together, clear-eyed and awake,
they summoned men whose craft it was to tend
the crowded objects fifty years less flung
into the dusty corners, mapping out

a bold and ample project to display
a people's treasures to a people's gaze;
choosing for flinty. the slope of that long hill
where once the sweet stream ran - Shannilles still -
beside the tuairis bush and the grassy mounds.

But war came on the staining Commonwealth,
and men put by the blueprints to savour,
and hot loose men were dead full twenty years
before the stones in structure placed, began
to mould the floors and open galleries.

The sturdy lone we now commemorate
fell in the twilight of an ebbing day
when, the wheels turning slowly, paused and stopped,
and men with empty pockets stood at corners;
then the full project, turned to meet the moment,
was carried forward to a half-completion,
set the high columns fronting to the trees,
as left the bare bricks footed along the flanks.

As so it stands, Sharniths, the sweet stream
of knowledge trickling where a flow should be,
so closely veiled the spring is over-brimmed.

But in the span of years, of weary five
eager and nervous, anxious, busy years,
sashed midway through with the dark pass year,
those summoned to the service serving long,
and others late beckoned serving still
in their known several ways, this heritage,
laid, by the nature of the causes served,
made life harder for this hill-rimmed city.
A child may grasp what once a scholar dragged
slow and by inch towards the light of truth;
a man, a woman may equip the sense
with images of meaning - and delight;
all may learn, if willing, how the land
through hasty centuries has taken shape
from rock, from plant, from creature, from man's acts,
to be their native place, the place called home

and loved most truly when best understood.

To mind and heart is offered nurturing
for all who come. And not without hope we say: -

Of man and nature: man the artificer
for use, for completeness; of nature bold
in stone and ore, or frail as gossamer;
here is some beth of that story told:
for man, for nature is one quest and care:
man upright; nature bound to rule as law;
the fossil in the rock, the wing in air,
the blunted weapon and the cross of straw. -

Of man who fashionis out of coloured clay
shaper that contains all living life beyond
the small vexations of our anxious day,
bright as the sunrise, fresh as broken green,
beauteous the winter, that man's stripping hope
finds sod and substance for its broad scope.

The Man from Malabar.

Here in this hush room
 the man from Malabar
 sits cross-legged on the floor,
 and beats his little drum;
 though there's no drum to beat,
 his mimicry is such
 that we imagine it
 as true as sight and touch.

To that accompaniment
 he lifts a wavering song,
 meandering along
 on some lost's errand seat,
 a narrow jingle track,
 -^{file}
 a six-note village mode,
 swaying and letting back
 as the dark fingers bid.

And somewhere round the room

28/29. VII

of that strange alien air
 a cadence makes its way,
 an old song wanders lone,
 that summons to the thought
 a cross-roads country fair —
 the strain some singer caught
 out of the misty air.

The Spectacle of Truth.

A masterly lens-polisher,
 a goldsmith,
 a wise old Town of Amsterdam,
 made of his guild in
 once set two lenses him by turn
 crystals sharp
 whose mutual power should make all clear;
 whose mutual power should make all clear;
 and when he clapped them to his eyes,
 they proved so purifying to the sight
 that all seemed as the last assize
 that every form was stripped of his
 in the strict justice of the
 and all was drenched in blessed light.

He saw the burgomaster stand
 beneath the towering West-Kirk's torch,
 and like a candle in a church
 he held his small soul in his hand;
 between one blouse ^{bent across}
 white
 one pinned ^{white} linen on the line,
 and whether shift or bridal robe,
 as bright as their sheets their spirits shone.

He saw the flowered barges glow,
 the men aboard seemed bowed in prayer,
 and at the stalls across the square
 where nameless figures come and go
~~the lessings~~ ^{estates} in a row,
 hand held to mouth or hand at side
 the watchman and the magistrate
 all stood for judgment, stirring not,
 one eye caught a holiday,
 he could tell from where he
 and one beside his bosom sat
 diamond sleepy
 beneath a perfumed tree.
 That this was wicked, this was good.

Then while he gazed upon the sight,
 a breathless moment or an hour
 the novel of it swift-declined
 his rocking bier grew still and sure
 and slow it broke upon his mind
 charity —
 that grace was something more than light.
 gazed at — perfect
 Let looking through the enchanted glass,
 this shining scene was bright as false
 the stir and tumult of the scene
 was dead, the horses, and the trees,
 stood for that moment motionless
 mere hallowed lines on painted tiles
 as thought devised of coloured stone,

fixed his mind on
 that while he sees the shining truth
 time as the world was seen as now
 there'd be no stir or gesture here,

and if he'd have them more open
 if he longed once more to join
 and longing for the world of men
 and air that went in noisy
 the noisy stream of living breath

he'd have to thrust the lenses by
 and turn once more upon the street
 his old decaying mortal eye,
 desiring it, ^{desiring} despising it.

31. VII

99

Lilibalero.

An old song wanders round
 on some gay errand sent,
 till great occasion's found
 its melody is lent
 to innocent event
 that once in high debate
 had lashed a government
 and overturned the state.

15/16 VIII - 54

Anxious for verse to come with its release
 for tangled motions of a restless mind,
 for the dejected heart to be at peace
 in self esteem restored,
 subsumed when sudden word
 makes crystal of a feeling ill-defined,

I looked about the hills for seven days,
 strode over stubble, marked the seaward wing,
 combed through the bull in bird song for a phrase,
 brave challenge, brave retort,
 familiar, of a sort
 that struck the rock and bade the first jet spring.

When I was here before the symbols stood
 ready for naming, prompting the rash tongue
 to shape the sounds that later understood
 gave courage to the heart

n, richer groan, seemed part
 of the world's wisdom when the world was young.

I tell them over, but no answers come
 from treetop cuckoo or from braiding corn;
 no owl calls now; no heather blect will drum:
 for bird and leaf and flower
 have served the natural hour
 and berries thicken on the brightening bough.

October born, with autumn I am gay
 as any summer professed with bees,
 and may again be so another day,
 but in this trough of time
 when the deserted lime
 lies no more hosting than the rest of trees,

I have not learned to wait, or fix my thought
 on emblems well-devised to represent -
 like veering twip in tumbling water caught -

The endless drift and flow
our baffled senses know
only when crested in some still event.



The farmer with a busy pick
had levelled out the rocky yard
and spread flat stones before the byre.
The children brought the cows to milk
down from the high field, down the lane;
but in the yard they veered and turned,
though thumped and shouted at, refused
to cross the new strange-smelling floor,
until one, overcome by noise
riked by the blows, with lowered head
lunched slowly to the friendly gloom
the others jostling after her.



Name & Number

14. VIII. 54

When Adam named the crowding beasts
that had no names before
it was so window that he made,
it was an open door.

13. VIII. 54

But Noah numbered them in pairs
to stow them in the Ark;
when all were numbered all were in
and all inside was dark.



17. VIII. 54

Birdsong begins again with warbling
along the hedgerows, robins, finches, wrens -
but you would scarcely care to claim they sing
so reticent, diminutive, like men's

brisk chitter at their work the sounds they make,
you feel they are involved in much concern
~~not yet the full song for the full heart's sake~~
not yet the full song for the full heart's sake,
the song that lifts and in its lifting turns
into a sheer improbable delight,
telling of life to life, and not the small
reiterate assertion of a right -
that by its scale is clearly personal.

Convention now has found a duller task
and maps the territory by the song:
once having heard - a singing thrush at dusk?
I still must be convinced that I am wrong.

The Municipal Gallery Revisited

Brisk from the autumn of the sunlit square,
to overbrim a day already full,
because an exhibition drew me there -
the jangly essays of the latest school -
imagination suddenly aware
I paused a moment in the vestibule
among the crowding presences again
feeling discerned the bronze and marble men:

O'Leary brooding in his long bronze beard,
out of the sage now, - a king remote;
and the faun, Shaw, by Rodin's marble spared
the pitiful declension of his thought;
James Stephens, memory of a voice once heard
bellowed on after, solemnly - afloat,
a small grimacing creature, unchain'd lost,
too various to chill into a ghost;

George Russell hein, my fellowcountry man,
a lad here - as of seventy years ago;
you could not tell from the slight beardless one
that it was he who on the sunset glow
saw timeless spirits in their traffic run,
for there's no printed label here to show

what scale of men the striping promised us;
no label either for the sculptor, Hugles.
The modelling hand, too, is anonymous:

Hugles

and this, the bold-jawed orator in bronze,
torch of rebellion, jarred by roaring crowds —
Clutching my father's hand I saw him once
when Heaven seemed hardly higher than the clouds,
muster his dispossessed battalions —
who gathered his bright flame in smoky fends:
but there's no name here either; you must guess
what fusions forged these features with what stress:

Another, named at least, a woman's face,
scorched to the skull and endow'd of a saint,

a legend she, of time - surmounting grace;
verse holds her still beyond all scathe or taint,
silent
and she's safe there; though in this lonely place
^{saturation}
the false satins of the flicking paint,
indifferent as weather, has defaced
what should long since have been in metal cast.

And as I moved among those images,
named or unnamed, still emblems of the power
that wrought a nation out of bitterness
and gave it one triumphant little hour,
my heart, dejected, wondered which of these
holds out a meaning that will long endure
for see, before me threatening, immense,
the creeping hair-cracks of indifference.

Yeats in 1937 wrote a poem of the same title & in this form:
seeing the sculpture, visitor labels & deteriorating, in a
visit on 21.X.54, this poem was conceived. H.

16/17 XII 54

108

Mary's Lullaby (To an old Irish Air)

I rock Thee to sleep now, my King and my Baby,
I and no other, Thy Mother, a maiden:

I'll lay Thee to rest in the warmth of the manger,
On shaw hats as soft as the feathers of angels,

To and fro, la la lo,

To and fro, my Darling

To and fro, la la lo,

Marvel of all Marvels.

Ride, my Love, ride on the tide of Thy Shunber,
While through shepherds, bewildered with wonder,
Enter to gaze on Thee, pray to Thee, seeking
The blessing and Peace which Thou hast in Thy keeping;

To and fro, la la lo,

To and fro, my Darling,

To and fro, la la lo,

Marvel of all Marvels.

109

Sleep, my Heart, sleeps, for there's comfort in sleeping,
While round Thy Cradle the four Kings are kneeling;
Thou art their Master, of Monarchs Most Holy,
Yet I, a poor maiden, have mothered thy Glory,

To and fro, la la lo,
To and fro, my Darling,
To and fro, la la lo,
Marvel of all Marvels.

South Africa

2/3 XII. 74

110

111

T

I have seen camels at the outer gate
and muttering shepherds here, running by,
^{come} as urged in ~~the~~ stride by thoughts of being late.

already drawn flares up the lower sky
and with small ones the roof-bricks congregate,
ruffle as stir-as though about to fly.

The yawning servant pokes the ashy grate;
I pass the window with a wary eye,
for all my terms carefully sedate.

I would have so one turn suspiciously
to track me through the years. Affairs of state
demand a certain slow solemnity;

and last that door again our futures wait,
unseen as yet—but signalled by a cry,

exactly as the ancient scrolls relate.

But what or who I hope to meet, and why,
is still the subject of an old debate:
—with twisting heart I enter silently

"

It may be after all the stories lie
as here within our judgment and our fate
to bring all down in ruin with a sigh:
The walls above this little town of late
have weathered down but one is strong as high
and every man away as seems to wait,
with empty words and gestures, anxiously,
some and to all, some avalanche or slate

of crowding waters out of prophecy
to tumble fast and leave all desolate.
I twist my heart between that infant's cry
and the tall camels at the outer gate.

7.XII

On a Flowerpiece painted by Andrew Fayer, Donhill.

To place such flowers as these in such a jar
and paint them so with innocence and care
results in this which hangs upon my wall,
a unique object, never in all creation
appearing before or again; a singular moment.
Implied is also the man as the accident
that led him by stages or abruptly to paint,
an old man in a small house under a cliff
on a harsh coast where stories are bafers' tales,
a bishop who was a lord who built a temple
and left his name in many a coaching inn,
and an old cleric that was Norman when it came
in one man's trap of horse to eat and hold
a swallé between two princes bickering
across an eel-dredged river. Note by note,
you keep a history up, explaining nothing.

Begin again. The flowers are primroses

and all the squander of a bush sprig
is brimmed with leaves and birdsong. Take the jar,
if orient, then poetic, brushed with ink,
lose drifting by a waterfall¹¹ that drops
to a lean marshy exile oversea,
to shouting thousands with bright paper flags
saluting justice. If the jar's a jake,
then Britain's history to explain the rose,
the willow-pattern plate, the blue Dutch tile,
the long barge breasting up the Princen gracht.

So, since all other ways the footstep prints fail
or cancel out across the trodden snow,
insist the picture stays within its frame.

I was asked by Sam Hanna Bell for a shorter substitute for Christmas Eve for broadcasting on Christmas morning. The four following items were written towards that end; the 1st & 2nd to clear my mind for a proper approach to the theme. H.

114

You make the season beautiful
with paper stars and cotton-wool
with twirled legs and Santa Claus
and turkeys born with greasy paws
with carols from the radio
and cardboard robins in the snow
with rays of Holly, batchered bee .

You celebrate nativity
with these devoting an immense
Lanonna of resilience .

It was not thus that Mercy came
but with a sword, but with a flame
that striking like a jetting star
announced for man a state of war
between the simple way as right,
between the darkness as the light.

22.XII

For a photograph in The Bush Press of 5 Nursery Centre
children singing cards.

22.XII

115

See how each small angel stands,
lifted eyes and praying hands;
cardboard halo at a tilt,
elastic bound and round and flat;
dressed in white, cross belted wings,
each intent on what he sings .

Yet this Lucifer's no pretence,
for their solemn conscience
rings across the glaciers
of our old Land-progenitors,
lest the peaks of pride and the
spurs of sensuality,
bidding each of us return
to the grace we did not earn .

22/23.XII

The silence of the world's despair
 hung round poor Caesar's empty day,
 and though with drum and trumpet blaze
 he sought to drive the fear away,
 the silence flooded back again
 into the stricken hearts of men.

The legions marched; the circuses roared,
 but with a shudder at the heart;
 the festers stamped upon the board
 but that despair would not depart;
 the silence of the world's despair
 lay like an ocean every where.

And most men moved as puppets move,
 though here as there one seemed to wait
 some sign or spectacle to prove
 a core of justice in their fate;

yet not by
 but rather by
 yet skill in science or the art
 any man empty
 could hardly mask the hollow heart.

But on a winter midnight, far
 from Caesar's tossed and troubled bed,
 a shining choir, a singing star,
 a messenger, light-garmented,
 came not to kings, but simple men
 with skull to fill their s
 bidding them take up heart again

For, in a village stable near,
 the Child was born whose grace should bring
 an end to man's despair and fear,
 a maiden's son, and Heaven's King,
 for God Himself had taken on
 man's tribulations in His Son.

And so the Point when Time began,
 flows back or forward from, is there,
 where, noted as the bravest man,

God faces the ultimate despair;
no other means could He employ
to prove the heart of life is Joy.

—

Broadcast in Programme
25. XII God Rest You Merry
10.30 - 11.30 am 23.XII.54

A Rhyme for Christmas Morning

Today our thoughts, flower, leaf and stem,
are rooted firm in Bethlehem,
in that triumphant Christmas morn
when Mary's little Son was born

Here in the corner, hushed and dim,
the manger where she cradles Him,
and with ^{old} Joseph leans to see
the wonder of the Mystery:

The ox, the ass, that happy pair;
the huddled figures kneeling there —
among the crowding angels' wings
we sort the shepherds from the kings;
for we know how the scene should look
from Christmas card and picture book,
as some have learnt it on their knees,
as some in foreign galleries.

But though that scene returns again
To comfort weary-hearted men,
we somehow wrap it up with things
that blur our sharp imaginings;
with silver strings on packages
electric bulbs on spangled trees,
with holly leaves and mistletoe
and heaps of artificial snow.

But there's no harm in these, you say:
it's good to pluck a single day
out of these world's grimy rooms,
and make it an enchanted ground.

Then to your presents, toys and games,
the paper hats, the paddling planes,
but spare a thought, before when all is done,
for Mother Mary's little son.
Remember how the story tells
that He began His miracles

by turning water into wine;
and take this as a certain sign
that He liked company and friends.

But yet, before the story ends,
remember how He had to die,
a lonely man on Calvary,
to be the Proof, the Positive
assertion that by love men live

or To be the Proof just Proof Positive
that by love only men shall live.

1st st. 26.X.
2-3 23.XII

As here among these images I stand
who gave a nation life by their brief breath
my groping thoughts this land understand
the law and logic of a dying faith:
these were the spring and promise of this land,
in autumn now we wait the winter-deaths,
and when spring stars span our sorrows meet find
new masks and emblems for the nation's mind.

What shall these be? The land is leaderless;
old dusky puppets mouth by rule and name;
the very land which should be raised to bless
makes not one gesture to evet a crime,
and young men, stiffened into bitterness,
use futile action out of place and time
as bravely spend their lives to bring again
the arbitrament of violence to men.

Enough of peace; enough of violence.

'Great hate in little room', the poet wrote:

and here is scarce a man save Sheffington's
own son who dare adventure in his thought
in untied ways which, traversed, might advance
the malice-hidden folk beyond their hate,
as for the rest they nurse their windy dreams
resounding as do hollow as our drums.

-

[24-697 to date]

Identification

I went to claim the man who died
as nearest kin unwept with grief:
The rolling snow around denied
all hint of comfort or relief.

The January wind was raw;
The chill sky hung its sombre hue,
and every step I felt or saw
accorded well with what I knew.

A miserable man was dead
who never once in all his days
a memorable sentence made
or quickened anyone with praise.

His thought was fixt on grabbing theft,
He never spared himself in this,
as gave to greed, his only gift,

whatever loyalty was his.

He lied and boasted, lusty and
yet lacked the heart to face expense,
so never gambled, drank or whored,
but hugged his moral excellence.

His only skill was with the earth,
with growing plants to rear as well,
The only sign I saw of mirth
was when a bayan answered well.

A peasant from the neighbouring
^{nether}
chance drew his steps within the town;
^{still}
~~now~~ after fifty years, a clo~~d~~
that Leppin spades has him won down.

The mortuary stands by itself,
a slated hut with dull grey walls.
The dead are boxed there, shelf by shelf,

until the undertaker calls.

I named my man and looked about
to find which box they'd stowed him in :
He stuck a handkerchief drew him out,
a twisted book beneath his chin.

A Sequence of Sonnets

How have I served you? I have let you waste
the substance of your summer on my mood -
the image of the woman is defaced,
and some mere chattel - thing of cloth and wood
performs the household rites, while I content,
with the fine words to let the turning thought
or else the hours out, gravely diligent
to drag to night that which when it is brought
is seldom worth the labour, while you wait,
the little loving gestures held at bay,
each mocking moment inappropriate,
for purpose duty never ^{stocks} learns to play,
yet sometimes at a pause I recognise
the lonely party in your lifted eyes.

If I had given you that love and care
 I long have envied with harsh loyalty
 on some blunted concept span of earth and air
 and real only in a bird or tree
 Then you had lived in every pulse and tone
 and found the meaning in the wine and bread
 who have been forced to walk these ways alone
 my dry thoughts drooping always on ahead.
 Then you had lived as other women live
 warmed by a touch, responsive to a glance,
 glad to endure so that endurance gave
 the right to share each changing circumstance
 and yet for all my treason you were true
 to me as I was something less than you.

And by that act of giving my slow hand,
 conditioned to the habit, might in time
 have earned a better captain in command
 and turned to better purpose many a time
 saving my thought for you that has been bound
 to wing and feather or to figured stone
 and from that happy discipline have found
 a subtler texture and a warmer tone
 for the bare verses which my plodding thought
 must always shape of each reporting sense
 and at some even moment of my day
 I might at least have known emotion brought
 to some established lyric eloquence
 for the heart's hurry - as the heart's delay.

It cannot be that I alone am cast
of all the rhyming men who strive to reach
beyond the highest posture of our speech
to the sheer song that matches Edens first
Carol of praise and loss and thankfully
achieve the simple magic of a song
which fallen man remembers with a sigh
and for that instant stands erect and strong.

It is the will which cannot bethink its course
defeats my striving, for such mercies come
not when the heart obeys, the pounding drum
of popular event, the mottled face
of man's opinion veerings with the clock -
the living water's stream from ^{out} the rock.

What then is love? I've known a woman tied
to a dull peasant - newly off the day,
who wrung profit from each tedious day
broke the gay spirit of his merry bride
and through long years of stiff persistency, thied,
beyond her tribe, no single stroke astay,
a host of hasty tricks, till flesh gave way
and uttering every ache the miser died.

And she surviving into widowhood
with comfort come to hand, the starved years past,
sat moaning over her cold - dismal grate
his every act remembered worse and good
his worth and virtue recognised too late
and how she'd hope to join him at the last.

Poems in 1955

18.I.

If I am human, if my heart
 pumps round the poison of my kind
 and slinking into every part
 deflects each gesture from the start
 and offers visions to the blind,

and not from heart infects the brain
 and bars the forward darting act
 through long complexities of pain
 never to be withdrawn again
 the malice of the artefact

examine every evidence
 and muster all you have of proof
 the indifferent universe immense
 beyond my eyes' experience
 can lie within my love arms in love.

—

Set where you are and the world will come round,
aware of the leaf in the bough - and the bird
out of the season shaping the sound
that sums up the moment and gives you its word.

They have gone past you with slogans and drums
into the masses and out in the drums
to place that they marched through still littered with stumps
and more than the markets afflicted with stumps.

Others ran rolling the loops of their thought
entangled with ivy or bound with old rope
they loosened the beautiful parcels they brought
and out strung the bones of a dead old trope.

And those that are passing the stone where you sit
and noisy with symbol and dizzy with myth
the roses and leis they skillfully knit

but snarl the string they'll be all strangled with.

The world is still moving; the caravans pass
large-lettered with Danger, Explosives. Beware;
but those that are left will limp back through the grass
to the stone where you sit with the twigs in your hair.

Poetry Ireland
Sept 1962

New words obtrude in our bush dialect,
bright as horse-brasses in the doctor's hall.
We ban our fears by being too correct
in what we lose in proper protocol.

The hand that shook the Minister's is clean
and safely pocketed to stow our fears:
with casual eye we leaf the magazine
that shows our white ties glistening on the stairs:

but even in our transports still unsure
among the chattering candles - and the wine
across our words like some old signature
there sprawl the hoof prints of ancestral swine

The Habit of Mercy

Only that lone man in the stone tower by the rough
western Ocean consistently holds to the tragic view.
We others have our soaps and varieties of anodyne:
despair at three in the morning is followed by sleep;
the serious mobilising bulletin is shunted off the air
by the pun chat of the scholar, or the broad face of the clown;
the draggy swing of the band is the quietest exit of all
for a sentimental sadness is like a warm small rain.

Even the most thoughtful and sensitive find their comfort
in the ultimate assured triumph of the suffering God,
writting on his cross, pegged firm by nails and moaning,
later to be accorded victorious trumpets.

Surely by analogy, we assert, our positive pains -
scalds, burns, disappointments, frustrations, griefs -
will earn us, properly scaled to our relative stature,
accolade, garland or medal or clasp of the hand.

Suppose, for argument's sake, that Calvary was a defeat:

God took on the evil he'd unleashed and found it too much,
not nearly too much for man, too much for God himself -
man's honesty kept the forsaken cry on the record -

and there's no hope save in enduring and trying by small
gestures of love and pity to publish the habit
of mercy from man to man. For the great world beyond us
has terror and horror enough to be faced and accepted.

I have thought that the parasites gorged on the creatures' tears
are sufficient challenge to any with easy answers

The libraries are barged and ballasted
with poems of which only the pages & the binding has lasted:
they stand in thin rows, the formidable jete
of the grey mouse gnawing towards his doctorate.

It is wiser to attempt a simple song
with an easy tune that does not last too long,
for, paradoxically, simplicity survives,
and short songs seem often to have the longest lives.

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The Lettered Snow

We spend our swift years learning how to read
 new languages our eager senses need
 first sentences, then clusters of syllables,
 then with assurance the brief sign that tells
 a family's, a people's history
 in tilt of slate or silhouette of tree.

But this day walking in the sunlit snow
 we traced a page as yet we hardly know:
 the pace of boot and shoe, the clean tyres tread
 were easily identified - and read;
 the joggling bullock's splay, the deep-ploughed tracks
 of the gruff dog that leapt and bounded back,
 then with more study - and close scholarship
 we scrutinised the blarney boar's plodding gait,
 and argued round the little slitterd lane
 from hedge to stack which looped as came again,
 and postulated field rats - as the cause

confirmed by crisp cast of the small-toed paws;
 but what the bird we have no skill to guess
 that crossed this sword, this brittle wilderness,
 as where it flew to, where it roosted warm
 whilst night's bitter east of driving storm,
 though the whole story's down in cuneiform

21. II.

The Roaring Stove.

All the long evening at the roaring stove
 secure and warm against a world of snow
 contained by the only one I have
 I read and smoke my pipe and meditate
 on the good fortune of my prince's estate
 for the time's threats seem far and long ago.

But once or twice I leave the glowing room,
 unstack the latch and step into the night
 to judge how hard the bitter posts become
 by buckets' full or earspoon of ice
 assured then by the glistering galaxies
 I greet our nearest neighbour's distant light

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Two nights of snow and three hard days of frost
 with scarce a hint of thaw at noon beyond
 the flick of falling ice from stiffened branch.
 Under its thick white cover earth is withdrawn;
 no green thing shows. Black cattle move and stand
 looking for shouldered fodder at the gate.
 The red cow's home now, waiting her wet calf;
 and chicks around the lamb beside the hearth
 are safely noisy; but the mountain sheets,
 save for a score or half below the road,
 nibble at whins and rushes spiking through.
 These are the worny; they'll have little strength
 to carry lambs and when they come, to feed them.
 April's our lambing month, in seven weeks.
 We herded them off Moslin down to Clophill
 where there's more shelter and a lack of whins;
 but we will have to fodder them with hay
 if this spell lasts much longer.

22. II

Myscomatosis

This year there's risk of foxes, now
 there's no rabbit on the hills
 most years we lose a lamb or two
 but whether fox or dog that kills
 we're never sure without the tracks.
 but out this morning on the snow
 the fox-tracks seemed to run in packs
 before the mark is out will know.

22. II

145

Adversity

stand on

while cattle stalk across the ~~snow~~ snow
 towards someone bearing fodder. Let the know
 and busy rats wear long and sheltered tracks
 from holes in ledges to the butts of stacks
 and black-faced mountain sheep lift snowy faces
 to crackling beed of anyone who passes,
 the little birds unfriendly scout around
 for any hoof print that uncovers ground
 or clump a twigs whose berries long are gone,
 unseeing if contaminated or alone:
 you may see finches, robins and a thrush
 frisk from the shelter of a single bush.

// See later version in
next notebook which supersedes this

23/24. II

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Affirmation

There is no splendour in the images
that hold my thoughts above the flux of time.
A gannet's plunge — all creatures' secessions
respected in the courtesy of time:

a craftsman's gesture with familiar tool;
the yellow lamp-light on the open book;
black horn in blossom; rice upon a pool;
the tufted thistle on the tiered stool.

All these are clean, spare, simple, native 15
the small republic I have charted out
as the sure acre where my sense is true,
beyond its fences lie the fields of doubt.

My lamp lights up the kettle on the stove
and throws a shadow on the white-washed wall
like some Assyrian profile with, above,

147
a snake, or bird-faced helmet-crested tall;

but this remains a shadow: when I raise
the lamp or shift the kettle it is gone.
I glimpse my faith through crystal images
perpetual and various as dawn.

24. II

After the hard frost the ^{frost} small snow
covering nuts and footprints,
not obscuring them
but allowing them to recede —
experience becoming memory
on its way to oblivion.

Judgement

I know the sentence now
 the close captivity
 the trouble graven brow
 that mars the mask I see
 the temples growing grey
 the dulling of the eyes
 surrender of each day
 - a useless sacrifice

I've watched one prisoner
 whose sentence was too long
 lose use of eye as ear
 the heart remaining strong.

Now Judge, beyond our sense,
 say what the verdict was.
 Admit intelligence
 and offer us the cause.

Show me a man who's suddenly at peace
 with a game, a gadget, merely listening
 to others talking, to the band in the park;
 he is himself, no more nor less than that.

Yet see the same man talking, at the bar,
 or walking where his brown, he's another person.
 Watch how the eyes behind his eyes behave:
 a crouched observer spying out the land.

He's stranger, friend, a wit, professional,
 butler and artist, any but himself;
 each mask's a trick his hardly conscious of,
 or only sometimes where it's often used.

But old men sitting may not be at peace;
 they are already absent from themselves:
 when their eyes moisten it is the east wind
 or a speck of dust that snatches a small boy's eye.

Battles long Ago.

We fought our battle out on mossy Orra
 and killed the chief and scattered them in flight,
 winning by the trick of dropping hurdles
 and sudden onset in the failing light

We stripped the dead of all that we could carry,
 cut off MacQuillan's head, and moved across -
 for that was no fit place for celebration -
 low where bold Trostan overtops the moss,

- and there for four days feasting, we were merry,
 with fires they ran from Glenish to Knocklayde:
 above the boathie where we feasted Sorley
 we hung our standard and MacQuillan's head.

And to the place that's bare of whin and heather,
 where frost and wind will let no green thing grow,
 we carried up a stone for each dead kinmen

and raised a cairn. Four hundred years ago.

So if you're crossing Trostan in the summer
 you'll feel a stillness there, - a sense of fear;
 but in winter, by Glencairn or Sallyeman,
 it's an carnival in the wind you'll hear

3. 116. 55°

When I think how much is lost
 in the wear and tear of breath
 till the shrivelled naked ghost-
 tiptoe over out of death;

loss of feeling, loss of strength-
 loss of quickness in each sense
 till the mind is left, at length,
 stripp'd below intelligence

sweing slowly in a drift
 of the dry and rotten leaves
 scratching at them as they shift
 out of shadows into sheaves

then I longed for biffled eyes
 so to bare me bone and vein
 till the heart with grief and rage

have the strength to break again.

1963 50 - 922
1964 28 - 781
1965 16 - 248 (3.III.58)

} 94 - 1951

