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Poems by John Hewitt.

Mykonos (unversed) 2.X.66

I return now to the oldest myths of all,
older than my Oisin, than your Cuchullain,
older even than the terrible Washer by the Ford,
for we are an island people: the rocks and tides
make up the heart and that which grinds the heart-
into the rippled grit that outlasts time.

Harden the shapes and textures of this myth
then the lush sod our pacing feet recall,
and unused sinews strain - as we step back
along the dusty tracks between the walls:
yet - in new use we waken deeper strength
and strike more bravely into the black night.

4. XI. 66

What shall it be like, when what we dream
has fleshed itself and moves equipped with sense
among and over the tired surfaces
this shrinking cinder yields? The plotted justice
roiled in one gloomed canyon? Out of sight
the starveling bone-bags with deep cratered eyes
edging towards the brink and ruin of peace
in their dark thousands, grey-foot-shuffling in
to mock the sonnet and the semaphore?
Can what we care for still be nurtured with us,
the quivering response, the flickering nuance,
of rhythm and form, no shakes or sounds devised
simply for pity or fear

7. XI. 66
3

[Blank verse sonnet]

We saved our farthings for the baker's man;
a half penny was currency for shops;
a penny bought you rank among your peers;
the small white threepence every Hallowe'en
keeled bobbing apples in the round zinc tub;
its larger brother double, lodged with plums,
made magic of the pudding that same day
when streaked with dawn the lumpy stocking spilled
its round half-crown upon the counterpane—
but shillings were conscribed for slitted box.
Beyond these, trophies never pocketed:
the vast crown laid with lockets in its dust,
the neat half sovran threaded with the seal.
What disks of metal offer stakes of space
that any child now dreams of or expects?

CP

21.XI.66

Betrayal.

I had a nurse when I was very small —
God only knows how we afforded her,
teachers' salaries being what they were:
yet we lacked nothing now that I recall.

I loved her well. She always wore a hat,
and promised me out along the afternoon,
from vast adventures hurried home too soon.
My silly chatter put an end to that.

I learnt to talk apace. One fatal day
my father asked me if the Park was fun.
The simple truth was that our steady run
was to a crony's house a mile away,

where I was loosed from harness and let out
to crawl with my own cronies on the floor,
while one of our tall seniors went next door
and brought back six black bottles she called stout,



and biscuits for the children. So I told
that we had been where stout and ladies were.
My father called the nurse in, being fair,
and, though he talked a long time, did not scold.

~~later~~ She ~~had~~ combed my curls next day and went away,
and I was broken-hearted for a week.
That you should always think before you speak
was something that I learnt a later another day.

—

CP

22.XI.66

# No Second Troy.

Later, more mother's help than nurse alone,
our nurse returned, as choked affection woke,
the secret game renewed, the private joke,
each tense with eager effort to atone.

She took my hand now I had grown so much,
and walked safe places with me; never more
to knuckle on that friendly open door.
~~Yet~~ there was great comfort in that rough hand's touch

to belt, dry, button me and comb my hair,
set straight the ship's name on my ribboned cap,
to hoist me sleepy on her shiny lap
and hug me safely past the squeaking stair

One night there was a row. A shouting man
leaned on our gate and called her out by name.
He hung around for hours. When no one came,
he tossed a bottle on the green sod's span

to shame our house before the neighbourhood.
This final insult was too much to bear,
so she was told to find a job elsewhere,
and not stand on her notice, if she should.

When she was gone, my questing mother found,
beneath the thick flock mattress of her bed,
long rows of empty bottles neatly spread.
Next time the dustcart-lad a clinking sound

—

22/3·XI

Aquarium

Sonnet

A challenge to my mythopoeic mind
I coasted round the new aquarium,
reporting
assessing that, since every fish is dumb,
all Rogue of dialogue was be left behind.
Chance
I therefore took each movement as abstract
or typical of the species, natural;
for either mode's consistent with the fact
that fish no creature looks more functional

Yet as I sieged the old instinctive search
for the right epithet involved reproach
that I could find no better than striped Perch,
the pink-finned Rudd, the pallid, silver Roach
and scattered
reposed at gravel-loving Gudgeon and
slum Tench, to draw my coarse net safe to land.

—

Ariel
NO 3.70

The Honest Ulstermen
[revised version]

23/24·XI·

9

Plenty of Salt

The Search

We left the western island to live among strangers
foreign
in a strange city older by centuries
than the market town which we had come from,
where the slow river spills out among sandbanks
and gulls come to rest on the bannered poles.

It is a hard responsibility to be a stranger
to hear your speech sounding at odds with your neighbours',
holding your tongue from quick comparisons,
finding your sense mistranslated

This landscape which you now inhabit
is encumbered with time
the buildings often more ancient, the trees certainly older.
Other men came here for the island before me.
Their children are natives and neither speak nor think
in the accustomed manner as if they step thro the old dances,
it is in a formal style, without joy or energy.

After you will regret the voyage,
wakening in the dark night- to recall that other place,
or glimpsing the moon rising as recollecting
that it is also rising over named hills,
shining on known waters.

But sometimes the thought
that you have not gone forward but back,
back to this older place, this recorded country,
occurs when you accidentally perceive certain objects
or groupings of certain objects such as inscribed stones
or move through a summer landscape
with the corn ripening in large fields.

Yet- you may not rest here, having come back,
for this you know also in the deep marrow
is not your abiding place.
You will recall that in former days
the western island was uninhabited
and that you do not belong there or here or anywhere
save perhaps among the rough foothills
under the shadow of the great stone tombs.

23/4 . XI.

The deposit Alexandrian could readily find
among the adjacent summer islands with
the shattered column-drums, inscribed stones and broken
statues,
metaphors aplenty
for the declension of his world, his dynasty, his life.

Is it enough for me that I see
in the loading bay behind the tall warehouses
a deaf man with a hammer (smashing leaning over a metal box
fluorescent
sodium tubes ~~in a metal box~~
that have lasted a bare twelve months?

# The Milk Cart

It is hard to remember the changes. I recall,
for example, the milk used to come on a two-wheeled cart,
carried in metal containers like tall farm churns.

Stopped at the corner, horse-nose-bagged, the lids were wrenched off,
and a man's dripping wrist scooped up milk in a little tin,
a tin with a curved half-handle, filling in turn
quart-cans, pint-cans, half-pints that the boys
hurried to waiting doors with, both hands laden,
into flowered jugs and bowls to tilt the liquid.

I can even remember my father's word for it:
"Unhygienic", he called it, explaining that straws,
and dust and horse-droppings were thick in the atmosphere.
It is true, indeed, that the milk was sour next morning.

Now milk-floats purr in the morning before we are up;
the Pasteurised bottles stand afterwards slick by the door-step
the process reduced to repeated rattle of ~~footsteps~~ feet,



and the dance of glass upon metal jingling, a sound
as surely part of the morning as waking birdsong.

— but, even so, I miss the smell, jet flecking horses,
and the man between his erect ears like a charioteer.

—

CP

28.XI.

# Mykonos

This dun-coloured island, dry and coarse as a cinder,
with no past to speak of, let alone sing,
anchored
has floated in the pulsating shadow
of that holy place, Delos.

Humped-up out of the deep sea
with steep granite edges,
not low in the gunwale or nearly awash
with history. like its neighbour

Not a single broken column
with the fluted drums disjointed like vertebrae
or mutilated torso, boulder-big
to ballast it.

Delos may fill some with a strange sadness
at the presence of shadowy crowds
in the narrow streets, in the agora,
slithering over the ruined mosaics.

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Mykonos is a suburb of a hot moon,
the threshing floors on the slopes skeleton craters.
Man has not been here long
and may leave tomorrow.

Even that proud old woman in black,
high on her wide-leder donkey,
brown face shawled, dark eyes bright,
is only passing this way.

CP

29 XI.

## Korinth

Sweating under the intense Corinthian sun
climbing up the stabbed street between the rows of ruins
the synagogue knee-high, the shop turned church
with the crumbling fresco, like an open boil,
we suffered the harsh breath of Roman violence;
hung round the agora to hear if Paul should shriek
once more of charity against the harsh dross of the light;
avoiding the tall stripped temple pillars
insistent monument of our defeat.

But down in the coolness of the Perene fountain
we stepped carefully ~~along~~ on the tilted flagstones
and leaned for a long time over the parapet,
gazing into the low caves under the arches
listening for the lisping syllables
of an older oracle.

29. XI

CP

17

## Mycenae & Epidaurus

After the scorched stubble among the grey olives,
the thin black goats and the old woman with the distaff
inhabited a lifescape, hard and simple,
but impossible to share.

On the broken hillside with the dry stone
walls and the deep-paddocked graves
Cuchulain and Oisin came suddenly into my mind;
and I could have joined in the shouting
as the small clouds of chariot dust
exploded up the long slope -
could have joined in the loud chant
for a poem's span,
but absolute to be endured longer.

But only near the dark green grove
with the pine scent and the light airs
among the fronded ferns,
was I somehow strangely at home

receiving, open, myself;
there's far back in the pandrops theatre,
or beside the square pit
with its stock-therapy of snakes.

29.XI.66 CP

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## Delos

Delos in the bright sea light,
tufted
spiked with pillars coupled or alone;
ripples lapping gently where slaves crouched;
the ~~sheet~~ stopping row of brass crystal as melting sugar;
the Italian agora with its chattering voices
scarcely stilled yet;
the headless couple who must endure eternity / side by side,
humorously, without comment;
the frogs floating like shells in the deep cisterns;
only the small lizards flicking among the dressed stones
can change direction now.

But in the grove of Mount Cynthus,
that tremendous little hillock,
in the cleft of the propped slabs, parched
above the boundary watercourse and the ~~broad~~ grass,
stand for a moment and accept
with the Hellenistic epilogue ~~shepherds~~ / but the whole saga of your kind.

29/30. xi

# For R. P. (Reg Perry)

We had not met for six or six and a half years,
a slight fair lad then, his eyes, his mind were bright
with dreams of social justice, for revolution;
his being strapped for action, his thought single,
clean as an arrow for its sharp intention:
with none of the crippling harness of the world
to halter or hobble him. Neither girls nor cars
career or hobby, love of self or money,
bondsline of scholarship, the drug of art,
trap of domestic comfort, to divert
his frank gaze from the just streak of dawn

And I had envied him his youth, his dream,
my own dream not dissimilar, but blurred
with too much reading, thought, with weakness
of interest, of liking, of indulgence,
with what I liked to call my loyalties,
his sheer lack of self interest, his open heart.



I'd known he'd crammed the six years' interval
with strikes, with strike-committees, protest meetings,
agitation, propaganda, conference.
I'd seen his name threed through the flimsy sheet-
bandage-ups my ailing conscience with;
student, west and south, at factory gate
barracked at demonstrations, now and then
signed to an article which wrote itself
in the numb jargon of his honest sect,
I'd thought the mould was set, the brittle husk
with reflex gestures, slogan-taped and arid.

Then he arrived to ask my signature
as cheerfully as one might beg a match.
A man now, six years older, he had not lost
the brightness of the eyes, the friendly smile,
not puffed or stiffed with leggy rhetoric
nor offered party-cliché in his talk;
gentler, less brash, but not less resolute.

My envy now was spiced with admiration

still undefeated, not grown cynical,
his dream survived intact; the lowered risks
his course was mined with had gone slipping past

He knew the men he'd worked with, virtues, faults.
He hoped to stand easier six months, a year,
to jog on over his experience,
take stock, decide how best he could be used
and what he'd need to learn to meet that use.

So, for this once, he'd need a reference
to buy the time in some unvexing job
he'd fixed his mind on. So I signed the form.
Were he my son I should be satisfied.

Jessteal 1.XII.66

Sonnet 23

After reading the sonnets of Charles Tennyson Turner and Rev.
Dr T. Gordon Hake

Sonnet, beloved of doctors, clergymen,
by skill, condition, habit, not averse
to small scale essays of a leisure pen,
I too have slipped my pennies in your purse. time. light

My trade and craft engage intelligence
in private thought, in public exposition,
of feelings filtered through a single sense –
humility the primary condition.

So little room or usage this use affords
for lettered stanzas' complicated hope,
or any large design's sustained concern,
that to the sonnet's vining net of words,
as the day ebbs, instinctively I turn
for what it'd hold of reverie or hope.

—

Pink Tunics

30.XI – 1/2 XII.

CP

# Vida, Mykonos

Sonnet

Each morning in the soft prismatic light,
with blue peaked-caps, close hunkered clad to knee,
on granite steps the old men faced the sea,
as satin smooth, streaked amber, opal, white.
You'd hear the vessel Throbbing – out of sight,
then, {round the chapelled headland / after, headland coasted}, it would slide
over broad ripples, engine stilled, to slew
'gainst tiny pier, – a man and boy its crew:
boy at the tiller; man along the side
tossing a rope. Grandfather, father, son,
three necessary generations met.
Barefoot the boy would leap ashore and run
up the steep pelt, while from the tangled net
the catch was shaken, basketed, and won.

the church – {browed / topped} headland

15-XII.

25

# P. B. a portrait

I remember him as a handsome young man,
his dark hair curly, his features regular, his skin pale.
He thought carefully and seriously discussed problems of style,
talking of Chekov, Maupassant, Turgueney;
but his own prose was scarcely more than promising,
his stories a little dry and sparse of sensory detail,
reading rather like translations.

His christian name, someone told me,
had been carefully chosen by himself,
dissatisfied with those which his parents had given him.

He died very surprisingly, without warning,
that is, if you had disregarded his pale complexion,
the transparent-pallor of his skin,
and a certain sense of remoteness about him.
Other men who were handsome too, and died early
left – a less confused image,
one way or the other.

15 - XII

S. B: McC

There was that other young artist
a gangling fellow who loped rather than walked;
his paintings skilful but derivative,
his wood carvings clumsily experimental,
only his drypoints – the copperplate carried in a side pocket
and drawn upon directly with the needle –
communicated a delicate personal quality;
these, and one brief imagist poem
about a hen and a farmcart.

Because of this, he suddenly took me for his enemy, –
I had printed it without asking his permission.
He tramped in one evening without a single word,
lurched round the shelves and walls, gathering up
his canvasses and wooden figures
and stamped down the stairs for the last time.
The drypoints he could not take because I had paid for them.

Within the year he was dead



I did not hear of this for several months,
and now no more than three of us remember him.

I had learned that it was not the printing of the poem
which had annoyed him,
but where it had been printed,
a circumstance I could not comprehend.

It seemed now a long time, the print of the ponderous sow
is among the few pictures in my possession
which I always keep somewhere at hand;
but the last line of the poem
is his best epitaph:
'the hen that laid away'.

CP

28/9.XII.66

## Cape Sunion

Empty opera-stage-set on the headland
above the dark Aegean,
the actors departed, the gestures, the cries to be guessed:
a galley rowed them to another place
less obviously theatrical, more convenient.

Banal technicolour poster in 3D
beckoning tourists from uneasy climates
with sunlight on white marble, and
carefully composed and autographed ruins.

Yet these stones were once dragged down
along the contour-giving tracks
that run back to the mainland
back deep into the heart:
they were brought here for a purpose
and now in their abandonment serve
another purpose no less important.

CP

29

## Poems in 1967

### Hand over hand

For days now I have felt outside life,
floating like a padded man
on a slack cable round his capsule,
without resistance, with no gravity.

It would be tedious to continue so;
the loose limbs gesturing not signalling:
one measures things by standing near them
and reaching towards them.

This temporary freedom
threatens me with euphoria.
Hand over hand, I crawl back to uncertainty.

CP

5.II.67

## For an extinct professor

A club-footed scholar
who, in spite of his diligence,
had published very little,
when the chance came
and the young man who ran away at the wars,
was invited or proposed himself
to write one in a series
of popular handbooks.

This was his chance,
his 'scholarship boy feint':
he smiled, in the street,
and scarcely limped at all.

He read a paper soon after
to a small society,
a Claudel, or Valery,
I forget which.

A sonorous clergy-man present-
congratulating him, spoke 'at some length,'
of Eliard, misremembering
that heresiarch – and not realising
the difference.

Dead some years now,
his book in the popular series
has been superseded and replaced
by a new volume
more 'in tune with' modern ideas.

His widow remembers the book,
but I should find it difficult
to lay hands on my personal copy.

13.3.67

D.I.C.

The little District Inspector
of Police, neat in mufti
having taken me on a tour
of licensed clubs, billiard halls,
dances in hotels
with a bedroom serving as a bar
after midnight,
simply to impress me by
his familiarity with
doormen, the stewards, waiters, bellhops,
and introducing me to
a world I could not be expected
to know anything about-
at last drove me home
keeping to the wrong side,
looping now and then left
to the white line
and all the time he kept saying over and over:
My friend, tell me, what are we here for?



Where are we going?
What is it all about?
Where will it end?

And I, my overcoat-pocket bulged
with the large bottle of whiskey
that he'd bought at the last bedroom door,
kept watching for oncoming traffic
and murmuring my share in his doubt.
Fortunately, at this hour of the morning,
the city streets were practically empty.

13.3.67

J. L. L.

The elderly little artist
still limping from his recent stroke
talked volubly of works not yet accomplished;
vast Assyrian friezes among them
for the inner vaults of his projected Temple.

I suggested quietly
that a man should be content
to do the best that he could:
a street scene in chalks, maybe,
an etched self-portrait
a small modelled head
knowing that with a bit of luck
he might be able
to manage any of these,
or something on a similar scale,
with his one sound hand.

But he turned angrily



and thumping his ashplant on the pavement,
yelled in his high shrill voice
'If I can't rank with the greatest,
I don't want to rank at all'.

13.3.67

# E. K. The Guest

The Honest Watchmaker
June 68

When he clambered down from the bus
with his parcel under his arm
I brought him to the cottage.
Then my wife showed him his room;
and when tea was ready
he came down at my call,
his shirt open at the neck,
his feet in blanco'd tennis shoes

But before taking his seat at a table
he drew himself solemnly up to
his full five foot two and blurted
"One thing we must get straight.
When do you want me to go home?"

16.3.67



Stripped for shaven I catechise
my aging flesh objectively
remark the softer muscle
the lines' deepening, cheek by jowl

Descriptive eye reports
not in self-love, not discontent,
this friendly garment gives good wear,
given care will last my day.

12/14·3·67

One of the lucky
neither by temperament or profession
had he been compelled
to lie greatly nor often.

Anything that he had ever done
that he repented at the time
repents now, or blushes at the memory of,
was his own doing entirely.

Therefore he had no excuse
and could claim no virtue
in 'speaking out', or
'standing up to be counted';

these were automatic:
nevertheless he enjoyed increasingly
the sense of challenge,
the satisfactions of the stiff neck.

17·IV·67

CP

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## To Piraeus

He must have come aboard at Piraeus
when it was growing dusk
for at Mykonos he was neither
on the gangway or the quayside
or on the ladder from the bobbing boats:
a strong small barrel-built man
with a grey cannonball head
and a farmer's mustache.

He seemed not to know anybody
in the drifting throng of passengers
who most knew many.

Sitting opposite us below deck
he set a paper bag on the fixit table
and opening it, displayed
thick cuts of bread, two brown eggs and an apple
with some salt in a twist of tissue paper

Munching slowly, he picked the shells off, flick by flick:

and after the salted eggs were eaten and the bread,
he began to peel the apple
with a broad-bladed penknife
in a deliberate/[illegible] blunt fingers and square thumb.

He turned and offered a slice of apple
to the foreign lady who had brought no provender
which, thanking him, she declined.

When the long coil of peel was dropped,
and the crumbs and eggshells
tidily swept with the heel of his hand
into the paper bag,
he crushed it - and put it into his pocket,
taking out almost with the same gesture
his tasselled string of yellow beads,
amber-cubes with rounded corners,
and began playing with them
in the customary manner.

Great Trying Lord, I could not imagine



aboard
which ships in Homer's boat catalogue
he might have served aboard.
Yet
But I would feel safe
Travelling to the moon with him

1. VII. 67

# Morecame

I have so far failed in my responsibility
which was to have achieved a synthesis
between Auschwitz and Morecame
acceptable to my reason and my senses.

Morecame with its swags of bulbs,
the long wires sagged with plastic Red Indians
each standard a totem pole of clown's masks,
the ranges arcades of one-armed bandits
and automatic razorblades where you can buy
thirty seconds' sustenance for a penny
and the pervasive odour of fish and chips.

Auschwitz with its once-electrified fence
and the metal-lettered motto over the gate
the little museum with the long glass case
filled with that tidal wave of human hair.

The trees tall now, and, in June, green and leafy



between the barrack-blocks of untreated brick.

There are no green trees along the Morecame promenade.

[written in bed in a boarding house]

9.VIII.67

My grandmother and my mother sat
in the Promenade shelter
till the shower passed.
Too active to sit, at eight years old,
I spun round and round the central pillar.

Another little boy was spinning round
in the opposite direction, missing me.
Suddenly he said unexpectedly,
"Hide your big black tail."
Thus I realised that I had an appearance
as well as an identity
for the first time.

7.VIII.67

45

Never beaten, twice only sent to bed,
once for watching from school that dismal day,
the other time for shouting at my mother in a rage,
when we were all living under strain
living in my grandmother's house;
I remember with the deepest flushing shame
that both days - it was a winter evening -
when my father remarked quietly
that I was too big to strike
after I had insulted my grandfather, his father,
and he led beside me leave the room.

Erice 2/4. XII. 67

Walled hilltop set above the turning road,
pine-scented; under the heraldic arch,
past the three bell-Towers; the shanked porch:
close streets cobbled in pattern, houses blank,
their high fronts shuttered, I look, furtive,
for flicked cloak, lifted forearm, expect to hear
the dagger clatter, patter of feet, retreating,
hearken for late-serenade; instead
offered only simple chirp,
the cage high, chin-high beside the door ajar.
What kind of bird? you ask. The fat woman
calls it uccello uccello, repeatedly,
smiling, yet firm with our stupidity.

Guessing by corners, alleyways, inclinations,
steps into the crammed bowl, Centro,
where there should be stall-awnings, coloured stuffs,
or cowled procession with candles, chanting,
to find three dozen Fiats, my count, jammed close,



like hoops in pen and stout men lighting cigarettes
outside the Banco di Sicilia.
What business is here to transact?
What merchandise? What ducats pass?

Just Press

4. XII. 67

## Montelepre

On Hare Mountain, Giuliano's lair,
where steep road cuts abruptly round
pierced steels fringed with iron balustrades,
past the pottery cooks' which wears,
blotched and weathered, the partners' names,
left by sudden bend to the new café,
at the town's frayed end we dismount.

We land on Evie to the bandits' sister
who rings the register deft with coins.
The mother, tiny, white hair knot-dragged,
in old women's black, silk bird-black eyes,
suddenly reproves the tourists' boys.
Although I knew the café was built and paid for
with magazine articles, newspaper interviews,
that film, I salute Respide.

Outside, between petrol pumps, I gaze
down the abrupt slope cutting the bend



to squalid back, side of pastry cooks',
notice electric-flex like swung bunch from café,
sagging six feet over filthy scree
of plastic containers, cartons, spoiled sawdust,
and wonder idly how the current is charged.

12.XII.67

# Passport Control

Having been more recently,
indeed for quite a number of years now
a visitor only to countries
where visas are required,
when I offered my passport at Palermo Air Terminal
(—not by any means an impressive institution,
a small ticket-counter at one end
of a narrow hall, with loaded forms
set at right angles — awkward for luggage —
and a little shop of tourist souvenirs
and ice-cream at the other —)
the squat fellow in creased uniform
merely turned over the pages,
looked casually at my photograph
and pushed it back without looking at me
or banging it with his rubber-stamp.

This seemed something of an affront
to my identity.



If I could be allowed — in without query or comment
or mark of approval, how could I (be said to) exist?

When I remarked on the circumstance
with surprise to a fellow traveller —
(that is not, forgive me, a happy expression
— still carries overtones. Yet
it would be no improvement to say
a member of the party, for that too,
is open to misinterpretation. So
I am forced to some such circumlocution as
'another person who had come from Gatwick on the same plane'.
This is very clumsy; Gatwick implies aeroplanes.)
I learned that this practice is general now
on the continent — with a puzzled look at me
as if I should have known or had not travelled much —
with my continent. There, before being allowed
to pass the control point
a man must have his credentials not examined
and established.

12.XII.67

Letter to an Editor

[ "Dr Edmund Leach considers 55 should be the limit. In one gigantic swipe ... he would sack all the highly trained men of the legal profession, the captains of industry, the skilled scientists and the experienced politicians"
leader in Coventry Evening Telegraph 11.XII.67 ]

This prospect does not alarm me in the least.
Fortunately I have had little to do with lawyers,
have paid their charges for several transactions
which seemed out of proportion to the service given,
have found them no help at all when I was caught
in the close mesh of the small print of guarantees.

A socialist from childhood from my father's example,
now just sixty and having seen
no better plan for society
or encountered any better men than he,
I could let all the ~~captains~~ industrial captains go without ~~caring~~ breaking my heart

The skilled scientists gave us the bomb,



but cannot cure the common cold.
They organise soft landings on the moon,
while black kids riot out of poverty and boredom,
while people lie down on the sidewalks and die
of starvation in Bengal.

The experienced politicians? I, for my part,
have experienced politicians.

—

12.XII.67

## Rendezvous

For a week almost, every morning
just before nine o'clock
five or six slobby men gathered at the end bench
under the canopy of the Art Gallery.

Then having made their computations they sent
a couple to buy back the brown bottles of cider
from the wine ~~store~~ grocer's across the road
which opens at nine precisely.

When they returned, the cider was laced
with meths dug out from deep pockets,
and passed round with mostly hands
splashing sometimes, cursing the waste.

When all was gone, they dropped the flagons
into the metal waste paper basket,
and singly or in couples shuffled off
a janitor came out with a mop.

57

other on telephone telephoned
When after 4 days we phoned
~~Enquiring from~~ the police, we learned
that ~~they~~ these tramps had been warned off Swanswell,
the little park with the pond near the city centre
because mothers complained to the children's sake.

So, although it was clearly no solution,
we had to have them moved on, too:
they made such a mess with their dribble and spittle
and we had to open ~~on Sundays~~ each morning at ten o'clock for art-lovers.

55

12. XII. 67

Playing in the street the small boy
saw his mother approach
He slobbered and pressed his back against the wall
and wide-eyed watched her pass in silence.

Later that evening at home
he said to her, just before bed-time:
"You would be beautiful, if only you
were not much taller", raising his hand.

14. XII. 67

57

## The Invaders.

On that first march to Aldermaston
the man beside me was elderly;
he wore a cap, an oilskin coat and leggings
reminding me of one of those very clean old working men
I used to know in my youth:
a craftsman likely, an anarchist possibly,
well read in Kropotkin ~~and Bakunin~~ John Stuart Mill, Tolstoi,
a type not common now we are all educated.

Someone came down the line handing out leaflets
about the Martians' keen interest in what we were doing.
I chuckled and passed mine over to the old man,
remarking: This says the Martians are on our side.
He answered very softly: Yes, they ~~have~~ told have this morning

21. XII. 67

## Vers libre

No verse is free that has been sweated for.
Simply, the rules are different
the referee's whistle blows unexpectedly
the ball bounces higher,
but the nets' in the same place,
there, at the other end.

21. XII

59

## I. M. J. B.

Gifted greatly, with a nimble mind and a quick wit,
he set out on a lifetime of good talk
a disappointment to his professor
a success with the dramatic society
Some years of schoolmastering, his mind not on the class
but popular with the boys;
at his best in company
deft at dealing out ideas aptly
from his very wide reading and capacious memory
radio-actor of commendable versatility, save for
his unchanging remarkable voice
ringed in all octaves

Post-jolly, he achieved his apogee
as a television-interviewer
his easy cordiality as his fund of information
ensuring success,
having dropped two short stories, a handful of verses,
and the first paragraphs of a novel, in transit.

He had his thrombosis in a public-house lavatory,
his death regretted by any, and they were many,
who had listened to him in bars, with admiration.

He went as he would have wished, they say,
as a man said to me, yesterday,
in the studios of another region.



Was it last winter or this,
James Boyce, my contemporary, died?
No matter. It was his,
the first step in the landslide.

Certainly, in June or May,
James Mackinlay, once my close friend,
though not for many a day,
came to a tangled end.

And last month George MacCann –
in the spring I saw him last
clearly a dying man –
joined the changing past.

Each in or about his prime,
with, still, possibility
of decent work in time,
felled, like an outstanding tree.

And what leaves the deepest wound
is not simply that they are gone,
but that while above-ground,
James Boyce and George MacCann,

and James Mackinlay too
gave all they had to give
in talk that I and you
will remember while we live

yet will be forgotten quite
when none is left to recall
the humour and the great wit
that each had at his call

28.XII

63

These people chose Barrabas - Salvatore,
for he had what it takes, good looks, daring, vanity.
and what is in the stars for such heroes,
lead-close
long pursuit, betrayal, violent death

He had been one of theirs, lived next door,
walked in the market among the laaited carts,
~~became often to market in our village~~
-a dream, a challenge, a substitute for protest,
new words to an old ballad, maybe a new song.

The extortions, maimings, planned murders,
random killings; these are irrelevant,
for once he held the attention of the world,
the lad who climbed the steps to the church door.

His Judas was his cousin. They are both lying
in marble tombs a few doors from each other
up the steep hill, in the little town of the dead
where every family has its own, its other house

Poems in 1968 Just Jones R.E.

## The Long Bridge 4/5. I. 68

This must have been before, say, 1840,
before the Long Bridge was taken down
or collapsed with its twenty one cracked arches,
and the new one, with four, called after the young queen,
was set in its place.

A man came ~~along~~ to the ~~road~~ bridge
from the weavers' village in to the town,
carrying his old father on his back.
[slower now, crossing the bridge.]

The old man said: Set me down here,
down here on the ~~town~~ well, and rest yourself;
~~for~~ the Workhouse is still a long way off,
and uphill at the finish.

The man stopped and eased down his load
[and leaning on the parapet, asked his father:
Why did you tell me to stop here
and not at the far end of the bridge?]
And the old man said: It was here,
I put my father down on this very same journey.

I heard this story from the son of the man,
the grandson of the old man, then aged himself.
It was clearly part of his reality;
he believed every word of it.

Yet, as he was telling me, I realised
it was no more than a variant of the old folktale
of the peasant dragging his old father
through the orchard, by his beard, or beating him,
(I am acquainted with it both details)
and the old man crying -: Far enough.

It was here, by the third tree,
that I stopped punishing my father.
Perhaps it sounds more dramatic
in the Serbo-Croat.

6.I.68

It was arranged, the day, the time.
We told her that she'd have a good rest.
That we certainly would bring her back
in a week, maybe, or a fortnight, very soon.

I recall very little about that journey
other than that she sat in the front beside me,
and my wife tried to hold her interest, talking:
we both felt that she sensed something amiss.

Passing a new church she had never seen before
she remarked 'That's a well-behaved building.'
I remember thinking as still think that was hardly
the observation of a woman about to be put away.

7.1.68

67

## From the Tibetan [See Revised version 4.8.68 on]

When I was young, where I came from
politicians, at all levels, were assumed to be crooks,
accepted as such; not qualitatively different
from the rest of men, but in the circumstances
they had chosen & given more scope to the exercise

They were not expected to have policies
policies imply some intelligence and forethought
ideals were as inconceivable as books
in the box of tricks they carried. All they were asked
was to make certain familiar noises
mostly on set occasions of the calendar
repeating phrases of ritual significance

For the rest of the year it was assumed
that they would look at pottering their nests,
repotising generously. After that
a few jobs for the boys and bags of promises
which everybody knew could not be kept; but over all

a sense of affability, to be indicated by
hand shakes and nods and perfectual preference
for complicated manoeuvres. But to maintain
this system in good order it was essential to have
a vocal opposition numerically inferior
but accepting precisely the same set of rules
and just as expert within their restricted field,
although, on occasion, some overlapping was approved.

Now I am older and in a neighbouring country
I find that the politicians are very much the same
except that vote-gathering comes in lower down
subordinated to the desire to exercise power
which forces them to acquire a more sophisticated vocabulary
and, in point of fact, some of them have written books.

The Indians had their epics and their sculpture
their love-manuals and druth-books of meditation
and now there are so many Indians they starve
when the rice does not rain or when it rains too much,
or stand here in their thin suits and grey faces
along the wall of the Labour Exchange.

Last summer an Indian friend from Trinidad
who cannot tell what part of the sub-continent
his people came from or how long ago,
spoke to me suddenly
of his folk's attitude to the earth,
earth, clay, sand, dirt, dung, excrement:
and for an instant I realised
that life has another dimension.

The Honest Statesman No 1
may 168

# From the Tibetan: Revised

In my native province when I was young
the lamas were presumed to be dishonest
not because they were more wicked than the rest
but their calling gave them more scope.

They were not expected to be philosophers
or poets, for they were not educated persons;
theories were as inconceivable as books
in their satchels. All they were asked
was to provide certain familiar words
on fixed occasions of the calendar
spinning the wheels with ritual fervour
and chanting of The Emperor's Tunic
and The Great Wall of China.

For the rest of their time it was anticipated
that they should work hard rewarding their families
promoting their nephews replenishing their stores
and accepting presents from contractors.



Traditionally all this was to be done with a show
of conviviality, with hand-clasps, salutes,
conspicuous finger-signals and audible passwords:
the effect which it was desired to produce
being that of reluctant necessity
for complicated manoeuvre.

Now I am older and live in the suburbs of the capital
I find that the lamas here are very much the same
save that the rewarding promoting replenishing is
done on their behalf by a permanent secretariat
leaving them more time to devote to the musical
& expressive power: this forces them to acquire
a more sophisticated vocabulary; indeed
one or two of them have written books.
In my native province this
would have been looked upon with disfavour,
for we are a simple people.

23.V.68

Suburban Spring I.T. 2. VIII 69

first then the prunus and the Japanese cherry
fragile but assertive before the ~~flaring~~ year warms up
appropriate to this suburb, these houses
and these people, not native here,
but having snuck across, short-lasting,
out of a thin top-soil.

Rather I wait for the tall chestnut candles ~~thrusting~~ flowering
and the dripping laburnum blossoms,
[for, although I do not know their botanical history,
they lead me always back
through ~~neo~~ layers of living.]

for the chestnut later with yield
its spiky fruit with the waxy kernel,
(the baked stones and the knotted strips] and for small boys
the knuckled challenges [in the playground]

and the pale gilt laburnum recalls
that small tree which hung beside the fence



between us and the Anglians:
its Gods I was warned against ~~incomprehensibly~~ repeatedly.
I was seven then:
it was my grandmother's garden
in another country

Poem in May 23.V.68

On each side of the road
a surf of cow parsley
and far away
a cuckoo calling ...
I step back to that other life.

25.V.68

Over the humph-backed bridge
with the rusty metal plaque
stating weights and authority,
the smooth green canal to the left
of fifty yards is stopped
in a clutter of lock-gates;
the splay of tilted beams
reminds me at once
of the levers inside a signalbox.

Rath

to



23-V-68

The tennis court is overgrown
with sheds and wisps, here and there, of last year's scythe.

Inside the grey house
the ladies and the dealers
gather to the auction
Laff edges to a room
turning plates over,
pulling out drawers
opening and shutting wardrobe doors
marking their catalogues.
I keep my hands in my pockets.

25/6 . V. 68

## The Blue Lias Inn.

Black beams and brass like any English country pub;
I asked the woman behind the bar
what age the house was.

A hundred and sixty years the oldest part;
a farmhouse originally, with out-buildings.
Rath
Yet for its age it's not very convenient;
only three bedrooms, and it has a ghost,
a farm labourer, they say, for ~~we only have him only~~ he's around
from March until October, never in winter.

I thought this odd. In my country
farmlands were lives in November or May.
There is something here to investigate.
I must find out when the hiring fairs,
mop-fairs they called them,
were held in Warwickshire.
Otherwise this woman behind the bar
and her husband who, she says, has seen the ghost
have been misled by somebody.

26 . V-68 77

## The Sale.

I asked the woman behind the bar,
who it was had lived in the big house up the hill
where the sale was being held:
a large grey house with white glazing-bars,
solid, rectangular, but without any piece
of fan-light or Georgian detail,
but with running water in eight or ten bedrooms.

She named the family and the family business:
it had had to do with engines and Coventry.
bombed out in the war.

There were six daughters;
they used to come in here often with their friends.
It's sad when a family scatters, when all's sold-up.

I thought of the seascapes with the heavy frames,
that I had looked at; the furniture,
the bevelled wardrobes, the ormulu clock,
the gessoed Victorian portraits stacked in the shed.

and reclosed the bed linen in the bed rooms,
the pink-tiled bathroom ~~and~~ the ~~low-flush closets~~ built-in bath,
and a few novels in the single bookcase
were the only evidence of recent occupation.
Fires quenched, camps struck, the wandering resumed.

Rash

to



# Longevity : a dream

I dreamed last night of my parents, aged both;
my father over ninety, my mother eighty-six.
Nonsense, in spite of the precision: both are dead.
The passage of time in dreams plays remarkable tricks.

Met so they appeared to be in excellent health;
happy, active, alert. I made a vow I should call
more often upon them out of duty and love
-and a consciousness of deep gratitude for all

that they had bestowed, affection, security,
freedom to go my own way, but greater than these,
that their longevity gave promise of my own,
the revelation soothed my heart with instant ease.

In fact I had visited them alive too seldom;
my father at seventy fighting his death for two years,
my widowed mother wandering among her dreams,
projecting her accumulated terrors and fears.

I remember us walking at dusk under the trees
and how the crack in her wits first opened wide
and we led to coax her back to the gothic cottage
and I was my father, her husband, when safely inside.

She and I lay sat beside his hospital bed
until with the dawn he succumbed. When her turn came,
I was living in England, learned by telephone,
and put on a mask of relief to cover the shame.

But this is the first dream in which she has returned,
though present now and again in my waking thought.
She has survived to eighty. Over sixty now,
perhaps my desired longevity may be too dearly bought.

—



They always get on the bus two stops after me,
two men, two women together, never alone
in the city dismounting at the same stops as I,
walking behind them I know them best from the back.
Tallest, over forty, his bald crown fringed with grey,
his hair, about the same age, her
short legs swelled with veins
close together they stride, linking, or holding hands.

I have thought of Suttie's "Taboo on Tenderness"
that once gave birth to the world of my prime,
to the barrack-blocks of Auschwitz, the show-case of hair:
plaits, ringlets, curls, tufts; blonde, brown, black, grey, white;
to this I have seen for myself. Not the gas-chamber,
they'd blown that up before they fled to the west.

And I have thought it is over; we have survived:
that spell is broken. It is with that they hold hands.
Yet somehow aware of a touch of embarrassment,
of affection exposed. Just as I turn my glance

when boy and girl clinch at a bus stop in May, 44.
Then I realise
that I too was guilty of the security, am not yet free.
If violence come again I must share the blame.

## Martyr

31.V.06

There was a man and I never met him
I read about him every day for a week

They closed in on him: only his torso,
then his head, was visible in the crush.

Finally he went down. The press crowd roared
with pleasure at a man's end:

and I was sad at the rumour of the spectacle,
at the cheering triumphant voices — for a week

Was I scarcely remember anything about him;
only that his name was Stephen.

1.VI.68



## Novotny

In every classroom, hotel lobby,
tourist office, his photograph
glazed from the wall, clear as emblem
of authority absolute.

Dismissed from office, expelled from
the party he trudges away
over the hill, into history
that will not be rewritten this time.

But there are many remembered only
by relatives, who lie in the ground
because of his signature, his nod,
their names will be published.

I recall the man released who
took us up to the hillside-café
rehabilitated, compensated,
talking of what ransom or rape.

His one quiet complaint was only
that no one had apologised
for the last years of ridicule
that they had ever been wrong.

1/2.VI.68

85

## Legend

Ware-hero legend in his own life-time.
[Freebooter with armoured cars in the Eastern Desert
with daring forays round behind the enemy lines,
just missed nobbing Rommel at his supper:
with other barrelled adventures in despatches
rumour of these made him into the sega-
Hero[k] front row forward, six times capped for Ireland,
not with the small-bored Cuchullin, more like Ajax,
[a bulky looming fellow, ox-shoed, fearless.]

No rôle in peace for such a restless captain,
as he was not over-bright, a[n] small income:
chief instrument of expression that fast car,
Reckless he flogged daily from and to
his bungalow out in the country.

I saw him once in a club, bigger than any
the place full of strangers after the match:
one, brother of the scrum-half, with flushed face

lurched round, needing trouble.

Setting his cornered glass on a wet table
the hero stood a moment in the posture
of a stage-drinker (Hanks), stepped over to him,
grabbed the bag-tie in his left hand, hauled it tight,
and, measuring carefully with head tilted back,
smashed rest right fist against the hoisted jaw.
The struck man crashed where he stood.
The-legend-in-his-own-life time raised the window
and shouted down to the street for an ambulance.

Such pressure. Such violence.

In the village he roared through every lane
there is a blind corner, a right-hand gable.
The villagers said, each time the great tyres screeched,
that someday the hero would smash himself up

One night the fast car crashed into the gable
the two streets nearest woke in the darkside.



out - nobody went out to see what had happened.
They knew well enough he had killed himself,
and nobody liked him, the hero.
He was certainly dead in the first light
when the policemen lassoing prised him from the wreck.

War hero, decorated, still remembered
where customers meet, a-legend-in-his-own-life-time,
someone was written a paperback about him,
with little shame for more than his own exploits.
which were, in fact, remarkable.

lurched round, needing hobble.

Setting his coloured glass on a wet table
the hero stood a moment in the posture
of a stage-thinker (thanks), stepped over to him,
grabbed the boy tie in his left hand, hauled it tight,
and, measuring carefully with head tilted back,
smashed vast right fist against the hoisted jaw.
The struck man drobbled where he stood.
The legend in his own life time raised the window
and shouted down to the street for an ambulance.

Such pressure. Such violence.

In the village he roared through some lone
there is a blind corner, a right-hand gable.
The village [illegible] said, each time the great tyres screeched,
that some day the hero would smash himself up some day

One night the fast car crashed into the gable
the two streets nearest woke in the middle.



but nobody went out to see what had happened.
They knew well enough he had killed himself,




light.
the wreck.

his own-life-time,
about him,
her exploits.

lurched round, reeling horrible.

Setting his coloured glass on a wet table
the hero stood a moment in the posture
of a stage-thinker (thinks), stepped over to him,
grabbed the boy by the back of his left hand, hauled at it hard,
and, measuring carefully with head tilted back,
smashed vast right fist against the hoisted jaw.
The struck man drooped where he stood.
The legendary-in-his-own-lifetime raised the window
and shouted down to the street for an ambulance.

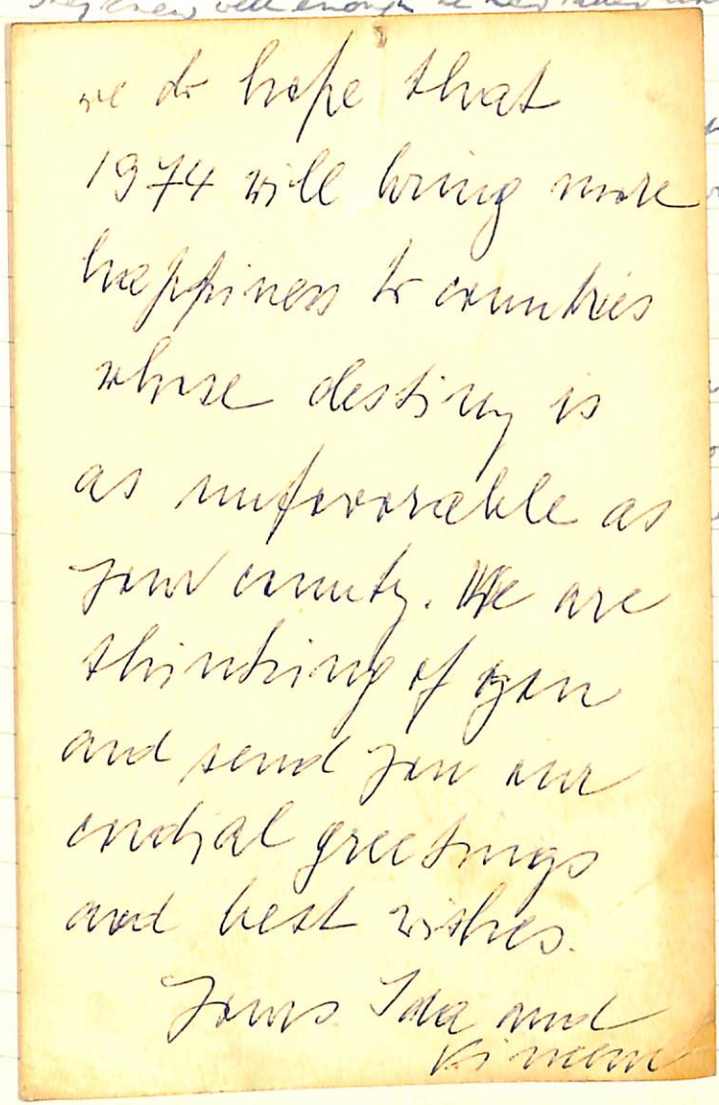
Such pressure. Such violence.

2 The village he roared through & out of some
there is a blind corner, a right-hand gable.
The village [illegible] sang, each time the great tyres screeched
that the hero owned smack himself up somewhere

One night the fast car crashed into the gable
the two streets nearest were

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out - nobody went out to see what had happened.
They knew well enough he had killed himself,




reck.

n-life-time,

out-lives,

exploits.

4.VI.68

# The Sad Bear

There are hundreds of bears said the six-year old boy
running back breathless. So we followed him.
There were, in point of fact, six, in the high-vaulted semicircle.

Plumb in the middle, a dead, diagrammatic tree,
like the tree in Waiting for Godot:
right at the top of it a bear draped
like a fur rug hung out to dry.

The concrete platform ends at, cliffs over
a deep moat half full of water;
this edge, stage-without-footlights,
was all the action provided:
two lean light-brown bears rhythmically
loped, turned, and loped from sidewall to wall
incessant, hypnotic, possessed.
It was this rapidly repeated movement
which likely had given the illusion of numbers.



Of the two Russian bears, one sulked in a far corner;
the other, near the tree, reared himself
and tottered a few steps like a wrestler showing off.
But the mate of the tree-hung creature,
silly-looking, with turned-in toes,
crowded on the extreme left of the promenade,
and when each of the marching bears turned to stride back,
it rose in an effort to follow.
But before it had got going,
the other marcher had faced across to turn briskly,
and the non-starter cowered back at the swinging ramp.

There was something very comical and rather sad
in the abortive effort to get going,
to be baffled constantly.

Finally, in disgust, it gave up
and squatting on its backside made water
and snuffled over the slowly-spreading pool.
It was at least doing something on its own.
That no one else could interrupt

finished 4. VI. 68

# The Slide

Permitted to stay late because the frost
was hard, the snow firm, the lack of traffic
made the cobbled road safe for sliding
we indulged ourselves with abandon.

Then abruptly, as at the snapping of fingers, in
the thaw came. The thick snow on the roofs
flopped down with a swish and a thump
on the front steps, into the small gardens

and as the warm air enveloped us, strange in the darkness,
the shining track we slid, suddenly
grew wet and dull and useless.
Most of us went home, but a few stayed still hopeful.
hung-round

Irish Times 8.3.69

9/10.VI.68

91

# Compton Wynyates.

The alabaster gentry hacked and battered
and, after, pitched into the moat;
five Tudor Comptons, one more than the four
who had spurred down the steep slope of Edgehill

The church, where they had lain, beside the great house,
was wrecked. altar, font smashed. Not the tower;
a tower will stand against what force spills a well,
though you may climb to tip the coping off.

Dredged up when the moat was filled, the effigies,
in twenty years, came home, when the church was rebuilt.
Last summer I noted all, the seventeen hatchments,
the classical tablet, the box-pews. This time

I chose rather to loiter in the June sun,
musing on the significant stones of labouring folk,
humble endurance among clover, buttercups,
the seeding grasses, the rain-bleached grass

10.VI.68

## Praise Famous Men

In my boyhood, through my manhood,
there were names that flickered,
older far than I, then younger,
champion-fighters, famous all.

Where is Pat Macalister?
Where is Jimmy Warnock?
Where is Rinty Monaghan?
Where is Dave Magill?

I saw Pat Macalister
on a winter morning
over thirty years ago,
standing in the Kelvin Hall

Gone to fat, slow-footed, flabby,
stripped to the waist and shivering,
fussing now and then to sell
bottles of embrocation.



I heard of Jimmy Warnock
in a city hospital,
lurching round the corridors,
lop-sided, battered, deaf.

Macalister by now is dead;
Jimmy Warnock must be, too.
But where is Rinty Monaghan?
Where is Dave Magill?

20-4-13

VI. 68

## Urban Rubbish

A tatter of tarred felt, a rusty yard
of corrugated iron, jagged tins, a threadbare tyre
are not to be compared with camel dung
for nourishing a nomad's fire.

[21-411]

14.X.68

15

In a moment of darkness over the nations.

The black cloud
to dwellers in the dry lands
waiting for the monsoon
is a happy portent.

"You there,
"Take up your dusty prayer-wheel".
As for me, I shall stand up
and begin the Rain-Dance.

14.X.68

## Hardboard

A small boy carries
a rectangle of clean hardboard
just taller than himself, its width
the length of his arm with fingers extended

Awkward, he hoists it, whipping,
on to his little shoulder, then lowers it
and bears it before him
in both hands like a narrow shield.

But no posture lasts long.
Traditionally a coffin
requires four broad shoulders,
and this is lighter than any coffin-lid.

14.X.68



## Rotterdam, or Monopoly Capitalism

Out of the grey wet sand
the bright concourse of tall buildings
neon-garlanded, with lit fountains ~~round the flowerbeds~~
thrusts away the dark sky

The well-dressed shop-windows
are full of expensive commodities.
A bastion of metal cargo-containers
is piled neatly along the dockside.

And in the moat outside
the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum
a skeltish breeze wafts a blue plastic bucket
and a large red ball into a corner.

10-XI-68

The old volcano rumbles:
here and there the fissures leak
in wisps to the darkening sky;
and once in a while
a jet of steam hisses white.
I feel a far down heave
under my troubled heel.
But we are fortunate;
there is still room among the dead

18/19-XI-68

## Gloss

See later reversed version 99

Across Laig Loch
the yellow-billed blackbird
whistles from the blossomed whin

Not, as you might expect,
a Chinese poem: or Japanese haiku,
Ninth century Irish, in fact,
the first written reference
to my native place.

In forty years of verse
I have not inched much further:
I may have matched the images,
the neat word-play of the original
~~is beyond me~~.
is beyond my grasp

Et tu in Arcadia vixisti 1/2 · XII

Irish Times

~~Et in Arcadia Ego~~. Choice 1973

You woke me, rising – this in Paris once –
I watched you stepping – thirty years ago –
to the long window – many such we've since
unshuttered back from narrow street below,
but on no more than stir of wheel or foot –
as, finger-signalled, following, I stood
beside you, hearing, drifting up, a flute-
-like music, blown through the clear hollow wood,
as, leaning, a dark lad, against the well,
played to the splay of goats about his knees,
strayed, so it seemed, from some classic pastoral,
an instant's magic, never ours in Greece,
when, later, older – or in Sicily –
we stood, at dawn, beside the tideless sea.

Irish Writing
Irish Press 15·3·69

Revised & extended
Poetry Ireland

2 · XII ·

101

## Gloss, Or the Difficulties of Translation.

Across Loch Laig
the yellow-billed blackbird
whistles from the blossomed whin.

Not, as you might expect,
from the Japanese, although
it has the seventeen
syllables of a haiku;
Ninth Century Irish, in fact,
from a handbook on metrics,
the first written reference
to my native place.

In forty years of verse
I have not inched much further.
I may have matched the images;
but the intricate word-play
of the original – assonance,
rime, alliteration –

is beyond my grasp.

To begin with, I should
have to substitute
golden for yellow
and gorse for whin,
which is the word we use
on both sides of Belfast Lough.

—

Revised 11.I.69 16/17-XII.



## Monastery at Towriani, Mykonos [Sept. 1966]

(Anomera)

To the dry island's dead centre,
the old
~~boote~~ bus shuddered, jolted, swerved
abrupt at corners, missing rocks.
No green thing in that parched brown land:
white the square dove-cote of each farm
~~Jonah-house keeps of doves~~;
white the toy chapels for the saved
seafarers, tacked on its own hill,
~~sailors on saints' day visited~~.
on saints' day briefly visited
Maybe in cleft, ~~dank~~ grey bushes crowd,
treeless else bar tundra spreads.
~~but tundra wide for open miles~~,
dun-brown, burnt-brown cinder of time.
Then at last hills' tilt slope to cup—
not cup, shallow saucer, crazed with stone-
fences in the quick closing dusk:
~~no sea glimpse, space ends at sky-rim~~.

~~Outside café, chef of~~ houses
~~shouldered together~~, half a dozen
~~across the flat dust, its veranda~~
squatted with four brown men waiting.

Across the flat dust, Anomera,
backdrop of houses, one white row
where bus slews-in, drowsy streets
the groups of human statuary
women blackhooded, dark faced men

Dismounting for the half-hour stop,
turn slow on bell
~~bell tolled~~ to the sought place;
high white wall with palms, ~~the sound~~ top above,
of pitching dome, bell-tower, cypress, the sound
of dripping water; ~~behind domes cluster~~ We face the black door,
~~first ring, steps into sheltered yard~~
~~Latch thumbed, flagstones stepped, a second~~
door is closed now. Its black womb
ensconced
candles wavered blue ~~with one comma~~.
we notice
Breathing ~~a moment~~, lost
smudged which when prayed, held
illfronted leaflet, ~~match and held~~
near
close to the wick, the facts declared.
as reading slow
~~to narrow eyes~~, the slight young priest
black as deep shadow, skull cap, beard,
slippered to elbow, beckoned. The
screen thick with bible-stories, steel,
~~arched~~
~~narrow doors, we gasped and named~~.
we black
~~Tracking~~ the ghost-shadow to
closet of holy lumber, icons,
sheepskin folios, a wooden disk
disk clattered with coin-tinted coins.
~~chanted, a gesture~~, metal discs.

We followed the quick soles, found steps,

stood on whitewashed parapet near
the round stone tent, as the last light
dribbled to the dead cinders rim.
How silence, resignation, peace
like nothing else on earth, a bleak
~~nowhere~~,
but empty as the moon till now,
empty of hope, belief, fear, ~~lost~~ poised
at the dead centre of the heart.

gawk at the ledged bell-tower, carved
with stocky saints in low relief
well-fountain also; then a second

S/

22–28. XII. 68

Why should it stir me, when, each face intent,
the Christmas children sing my childhood back
clustered with memories, once more innocent,
that I discarded on my lonely track?

The walk in frost and darkness to the church,
doubling my steps to match my father's stride,
the greetings and the handshakes in the porch –
he held that faith till just before he died.

That faith, that story, half the stuff of art,
the myth, the magic of the Holy Child –
why should such sadness gather round my heart
when all my wits observe it unfulfilled,
its terms decayed, its trappings obsolete
as easel-painting or the string quartet?

22.25.28. XII. 68

107

When that old Europe broke up with the grinding war
not unexpectedly provoked, assaulted
nature sent out her plague,
this time, Spanish 'flu.
It killed Apollinaire,
killed too my uncle John, the Whitworth Scholar:
they had never heard of each other,
a circumstance they shared with millions of others.

I remember my uncle's end, the end of a house,
a house that represented a family's ambition;
the father also untimely dead, it provided
a court for the ruling mother, a focus
for only a score of years before disaster:
the battle-wing falls waiting for other small boys
who too were to be warned of the poisonous boys;
my grandmother set out to trouble her daughters.
I remember my grief, remember the friendly dog
moaning on the mat at the back door.

By then I was eleven. I too had never heard
of Apollinaire. Nor did for a dozen years.

Now I know both died from the same fever
and so both inhabit a crevice in my mind
fixed in the same cleft, a firm mark in time.
Set out with that other date, the year
my grandfather – grandfather on my father's side –
and Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, were born,
that other point I can take my bearings from,
placing my own dates with assurance

Poems in 1969

27/8.1.69



## Dolchi

In the rough corner of Sicily
with the sharp rocks, the green lemon groves, the small vineyards,
in Partenico, up the alley-way
the hen-coops in the courtyard, the children playing
on the stained cobbles,
higher, to the left, out of the sun,
the old house with the cracked steps, the peeling plaster.

Inside the swept clean bare apartments
offices with typewriters and desks stuck with papers:
one small room with an unglazed Greek jar,
and the head-board of a cart
painted with Caesar's invasion of Britain
in the peasant style –
Maybe some men from Partenico
were among the legionaries –
two comfortable chairs, a small round table
and a shelf of books, a few titles
several languages

2 the large conference room
blow-up
pinned to the wall, poster-size,
part of an article from a right-wing newspaper
the sickening rhetoric of the corrupt senator
profit-owned
declaring that all would be well
if it were not
except for troublemakers:

a talisman for keeping one's sense of proportion,
for a sense of humour, for spiritual health.

Che Guevara is brought in his place; poster
but I carry Danilo Dolci's address
in my pocket-book.

I want that kind of testimonial

listener  Irish Times 15.2.69  3/4 2.69  5.1

111

## W. R. Rodgers  d. California 1.2.69

So we shall never hear him anymore,
the slow low voice that wandered on and on,
slipping or looping from outrageous pun
to some split atom of semantic lore,
where sparking opposites would generate
a flash of wit or wisdom, to restore
the faith on which affection bade you wait
for glimpses of the poet loved before

Within that kind exasperating man,
derious and gentle, there were grappled fast-
the same tense opposites. He was my friend
and through his talk, for thirty years there ran
a theme, The Hare, which seemed to have no end:
now that wild creature is run down at last.

13/5/7.2.69

## The Launch (Terrassini, N.W. Sicily)

They pushed the new boat down the beach,
Domenecho its in fresh white paint,
bank-rafted over the grey sand
with concerted thrust and heave.

The boy who hauled the grooved bank out
and dragged it round to take
the prow keel's curve, was there by right,
one of the bare-foot Team.

This tideless bay had waited
for Greek, for Roman, Arab,
who, with like ritual, had set
these timbers towards the dropping sun

27.1/7.2.69

113

## The Threatened Place:
Winter on midlands suburb.

Walking through my suburb past the brick
houses, in front each wide-slabbed path afloat-
with shuttered caravan and shrouded boat-
hedged with cotoneaster berried thick,
all seemed so new, unmossed, immediate,
no lichen's tarnish on the Cotswold stone,
Though those once crammed here now are urchins grown,
and all has stood nine years at least, or eight.

No sea 'twixt here and Wales; a green canal
offers the nearest water, but roads fan
their quick retreat all round; by these they plan
escape when danger gives the warning call.

When stars are out, the only light you'll see
is at the bell-push by each battened door,
-alert till dawn to give the start before
the first cracked lane declares
the first cracked lane foreboding catastrophe.

Each morning when I look the streets ablaze
as though in brisk rehearsal for the flight:
upstairs and down each window is alight;
at every gate reluctant engines race

—

07.2.69

Looking down below towards Trapani
soon misted over, and the black islands,
as the sun drops quickly
and the urgent little boats become
bobbing points of light
as they slant across the streaked water
a great sadness comes upon me:
poignantly
especially deepening when the last boat
rounds the farthest headland.

I remember that sad reckless campaign
which meant the ruin of Athens:
although this is an ordinary autumn evening
and, besides, the final catastrophe
took place at Syracuse,



on the other shore of this rough island

It may just be
that this place I look from, Eric,
is in itself inexorably sad,
the life ebbed out of it,
the shrine that once beckoned all travellers
empty

S2

Ernest Westerman
mercy/June 1970

4.3.69

To the Memory of Itzik Manger

recalling a conversation in Edinburgh

He looked more like an Arab than a Jew
~~We only briefly met this hungry lad~~
threadbare and thin } in
~~in his then suit~~ } ~~at~~ that bland conference;
who nominated him we never knew:
~~but unabashed, though his large eyes were sad,~~ [delegates]
his friendly smile { an absolute } defence.
{ was a complete }

"The Yiddish poet" someone ~~called~~ said, "the best
they'd ~~have~~ had to ages, Rich and lyrical."
We climbed together to the castle's crest,
and talk between us turned to Marc Chagall.

Lefkovich (Joseph)

"To understand his paintings you should know
the ghetto tales and proverbs they translate,
those fiddlers upsidedown in clouds of snow
where lovers, roses, cows proliferate ..."
and as he webbed his words, I longed to go
to that strange country. Now it is too late.

Edinburgh 3.3.69

28.2 — 4.3.69

S3

117

An Hour with E. M. F.

I sat with Morgan Forster for a while,
rug round his knees, long narrow hands on laps,
head tilted bird-like, quick to frown or smile
as I reported whimsical mishaps
or light encounter in my day's routine:
then edged to tell — I gauged his interest —
how Kenneth Clark, last night when the screen,
described the ancient values, driven west
over the rough
cliff-ledged like gannets, kept above the sea —
Then Morgan murmured "But Byzantium?"
Had Clark forgotten?"
~~As~~ Clark's reasons. I remembered assembled three
recounted
good reasons
~~and named them~~ why that culture stayed at home;
marvelling
~~I marvelled~~ greatly that we still could find
an edge of sharpness in that gentle mind.

54/ Russians in next notebook 5-3-69, June 1970

Peter Peri – Sculptor & Communist
(1899 – 1967)

Roundshouldered, limping, dirt-grained on his hands,
black beret on bare skull, a rabbi's face,
though short, conspicuous in any place
save ghetto or bazaar, he still commands
now dead forever, notice, for he stands
a stubborn symbol of our awkward race.
Bed, stove and table took but little space
in the stacked workshop of his hope's demands.

In Budapest was born, fled to Berlin,
fled thence to London, always to his trail
a persecuted variety was tied;
recruited on a cause that could not win,
an artist with ambitions doomed to fail,
he dreamed and quarreled, worked and raged and died.

10·3·69

119

If I say that I enjoy
peeling an apple in one unbroken spiral
and that sometimes I put it
in my zipped pouch

to moisten the plug of tobacco
which is frequently dry and hard,
but not because of Schiller
and that drawer in his desk,

that tells you something about me;
it also indicates
that Schiller and rotten apples are
in some corner of my mind.

10/12 · 3

## For Joseph Spears M.D. and his wife Peggy

Humbly I write my name at your behest
on this green page, with mingled pride and shame—
How often, for my sake, you've set your name
to coded notes, specifically expressed
to countermand and check my blood's unrest
since I, a stranger, to your city came:
your skills surpassing all my art dare claim;
of healers' hands you touch the kindliest.

So in humility, and yet with pride,
for I and mine now count you as a friend.
Paintings it was, then books, established us
as kin in spirit, you and, at your side,
an equal helpmeet, eager to extend
your hearth's ungrudging welcome generous

12 · 3



121

## Another Sonnet to Joe Spears

Caught in this near-Sahara of the arts,
one learns to lean in friendship on the few
whose minds are open to the brave and new
and have an ear for when the true song starts,
whose interest ~~[illegible] thought~~ to follow crosses unfamiliar parts
of life's close maze, and finds clear ~~Lethway~~ passage through
to joy and wisdom: not as those that queue
for king-size packets in the supermarts.

In this mechanics' desert few can spare
much passion for our values. Of them all,
enthusiast, whose hurry is to share,
you stand the closest to our hope and thought—;
they were your choice, these paintings on the wall
and these your books, {deliberately with deliberation}, sought

# The Better Estate

Beside each house its caravan
close-shuttered 'gainst the rain and snow:
it's odd you seldom notice one
installed beside a bungalow.

In every drive is parked a car,
indeed quite often, there are two;
the shapes and makes familiar,
one worse for wear, one rather new.

And here as there a bandaged boat,
each side supported by a tyre;
while one man in his overcoat
heaps dead leaves on his garden fire.

And in the doors the leaded glass
shows flying gull or galleon;
the larger semis spell their class
in little walls of Cotswold stone.



There's money here and comfort sure,
attentive care and proper pride;
this moment's future looks secure —
and Christ has never lived or died.

But just to prove my judgment wrong,
in windows posters lettered clear
announce the time for Evensong,
next Sunday when the Bishop's here.

## And a Third — for Both this Time

I turned two sonnets to compose my thought
but feeling myself more than they contain;
for all my care how little they make plain,
two dozen lines and four, to pattern wrought?
Some sense of obligation may be caught,
some strokes evocative, not quite in vain,
but in these nets of words there must remain
great gaps in nuance of the gifts you brought.

There's Peggy hardly hinted at, the boys,
each positive and individual,
and that sweet girl. How rich a company!
My mind turns to your bookplate which employs
the happy symbol of a family tree
and on your book the ground and root of all.





Poor woman with the red long red nose,
in dowdy coat with shuffling feet,
picking her lonely way through those
who queued for buses in the street;

I glimpsed you but a second's space,
and pity struck me like a wave.
you cannot help your funny face.
like me you have a soul to save.

13.3.69

Our hearts are never large enough
to hold the whole world in our care.
By age, by clan, by class we love,
beyond that we have none to share.

So fed and warm, in middle age,
secure we need, my wife and I,
and as we live from page to page
the children in Biafra die.

13–18 III.69



## The Miniskirt: a digression

It seems absurd I should avert
my ageing but admiring eyes
when shrinking hem of miniskirt
makes much of nicely modelled thighs,
to
and simulate a shocked surprise / pretending to be a —

Think sex in this? well, there
This may be sex; and, if it is,
in paintings I've enjoyed the same,
nor taken my response amiss
summoned-up
which ~~gave my cheek~~ no blush of shame telegraphed
at sight of pink rococo dame. Boucher's

Though most girls now are snug in tights,
your pleasure scarcely need be less;
so clad, artfort their armour, knights
disdayed their strong limbs' shapeliness.
next frocked in such
Their Ladies (liked this comely) dress

But some think any clothing cheats,

you cover flesh and insulate
from sense what lust might have embraced —
yet most of us would demonstrate,
if gated in tights, our dismal state.

For years unclothed, the human form,
by preference female, young and slim
was long revered as beauty's norm,
till narrowed by romantic whim
to garden nymph with missing limb

Those naked marbles that the Greeks
flogged to the Romans by the score
later accepted as antiques, so long
though just as naked as before,
are stowed away and raised no more

And in the modern galleries
for nudity as artists' theme
the golden nudes no longer glow —
elsewhere young strippers throng to please
as readers of the Press all know



Godiva stared the Motor Show.

On hoardings posted everywhere
a cleavage sells a cigarette,
a navel, beach- or underwear,
the more alluring when it's wet
like raindrops on a violet.

so the anxious admen prays
whose skills must serve what most persuades
convinced that titillation pays,
raw flesh permissiveness invades,
defoliates his fantasy glades.

II

Of galleries I've done my stint ..
Palermo, Graz, Prague, Otterlo .....
I may be bollocked with print
but when the great sensations flow
I lean against my vertigo. I feel much quicker than I know

[ So Saenredam, Correggio,
Kokoschka, Chardin, Yeats, Vermeer,
bless ye the place that I must go
when I'm no longer vexed here;
[ Life out of Death, Joy out of fear.

If every nerve and coded cell
programmed so neatly in my head, —
if I have done my looking well, —
must surely be deposited
more dust of gold than dross of lead.

It was in Dresden first I saw
Correggio's climbing child
and wondered how dare Titian draw
so much on this: each detail filed
supremely rendered, Titian-styled;

from this beginning with the priest
from steps to crowd, I borrowed these,
and their reality increased,
Nymph cameo

even that old woman at the ease,
his his
& theft became & masterpiece.

I found the moral laws of men
subsumed by art's morality,
as Shakespeare's Ovid unblotting pen
on some old playwrights' carpentry,
erected Lear's high tapestry. piled Lear's on Hamlet's

For me the valued works of art greatest
are those that make for more intense most
render
the leaping of my beating heart,
those quickenings of mortal sense
I hope to hold for reference.

Take, say, a landscape by some man,
observed, composed with keenest care,
if the next rural scene I scan
gives back a recollected air;
shall I not claim enhancement there?

So if many Letopkin in reverse,
before a painted movie scene,
recall 3 actual watercourse
may validate this blue, and this green,
explain what that brown smudge must mean.

A jar, a bowl, a rose, a pear,
on canvas seem designed to please,
but I have learned to be aware,
when met outside the frame, of these
still once, now
as objects and as presences.

Daily for several years I passed
a small greengrocer's mounded stall,
yet only saw it true
clear, at best,
when sickent-canvas on some wall
showing
revealed the colours of it all.

And once, before a picture crammed
with country crafts and colours gay
on sketch landscape diagrammed,



across the sky a shepherd lay,
his long pipe lifted up to play:

I guessed my the class of children there
with pointing finger, playing jaw;
they read each object back again,
but none among them could declare
what reason set that shepherd there.

Then, after silence infinite,
I asked again: a grubby boy
cried: "Sir, he plays the tune of it!"
No better phrase could I employ
to summarise art's instant joy.

Though time should let my pictures fade
as I grew feeble dull and blind
I must remember undismayed
each cleft and
~~that boy~~ crevice of my mind
is crammed with forms shapes of every kind
good fortune all the crew
with colours, shapes

My only fear I may forget,
the nerves and cells no longer play,
the plugs burn out, and leave a debt
to life I never can repay,
within, without, one a neutral grey.

## III

So far the argument has run,
some questions begged and some evaded
Wilenski, Fry & Berenson — Pointnet
insisting on companion
I never plumbed the oceans they did,
of ~~life with art with life~~, as they did,
but simply well as fans or media
gentry
X ~~will Rustem earth and safely shaded~~.

Art now is metal painted bright,
girders
or tractor components, parts as like as not,
a flashing disc, a whistling light,
squiggle
a ~~doodle~~ by a Tesla Fot,
a square of ~~white~~ with one blue spot.
white next

So cautious critics now define
a work of art as something said
just length
to be that - say, a ball of twine,
~~a length of rope~~.
a board with nails, a rusty bed,
soup tins or
a tray of plastic gingerbread;

so long as someone nominates
object, assemblage, accident .....
I'm not the only
There's surely more than one who waits
exposure
the twilight of this non-event
and notes it goes where Dada went.
recalling when ocr

Though, honestly I must admit
may replay twice
these often earn my scrutiny,
Enrich with-bred metaphors to fit
the side-effects which qualify modify
our affluent economy.

To
So even these extend the sense,
propose new patterns to the mind,
if you've enough intelligence
when you've admitted them, to find

some means to keep them disciplined.

IV

There! I am back where I began:
reality yields no escape;
man in society is man;
without it, in both scope and shape,
he'd still be artless as something of an ape.

Accepting my conditioned wits
which structured all I've thought or felt,
and that sensorium which fits
within this body purpose-built,
I'll lightly lump my load of guilt,

and revel in my simple joys
despite injunctions chill and curt
that old convention still deploys,
and certainly shall not avert
my glance from any miniskirt.



29-3-69

137

On glancing through Wallace Stevens' Collected Poems
after many years

Lay on the shelf the phrase-bound wordy fellows' poets
Ladded with pedants' resonance, ballooned
with bouncing echoes of their paladins.

Give me instead the crisp neat-witted fellows,
sharp and laconic, making one word do:
the trim complet, the snipsig counted syllables pointed
the blade-shaped sentence, the exact image.

58/

29/30.3.69

## Rome, June 1960

The lifted faces brimmed the waiting square;
the Holy Father breasted his high sill,
as sudden roars of Papa stormed shook the air,
and whirled the pigeons round each pinnacle.
The Holy Father spoke, all else was still,
secure within the comfort of his care;
while I, conditioned not to bend my will
to others' dogma, felt that grace was there.

We'd stood an hour, midmost the massing crowd
on a plinth's vantage, protestant, withdrawn
from jumbled banners and rosaries.
Yet for that instants' mercy we are proud,
and count among the moments of our peace
we shared the blessing of the good Pope John.

3.8.69

B9

## In the air over Europe

Driving through wisps of cloud,
through a grey luminous light, grey world,
I asked the air-steward where we were.
He looked at his watch and said casually
"In about five minutes
we'll be over Frankfort"

This is a skill
which poetry will have to learn.

11.8.69

## Budapest by Night

At half past ten the cafés close
and comrades catch the final bus —
for this the angry people rose
and Marx and Engels made a fuss

8.8.69

## Balatonfured

The beach was an eel-basket of brown bodies
the air an insect hum of transistors
our instinct was to rush for safety
away from the pressures of noise and crowd.

But we can no longer cease ourselves
out of our time and its abundance
with silence and Scandinavian books and quiet galleries
or we shall end by dodging the future,
death by emotional bumper-strike.

59/ Poems for Ireland 1972 I.T. 3.1.1970 25/6.8.69

141

## In This Year of Grace

The night sky red, crackle and roar of flame
as timbers crash along the gutted street-
the thump of stones, the shots, the running feet:
as mob greets mob with claim and counterclaim,
each blames the other, none accepts the blame,
for arrogance will not allow retreat
when creed and creed inhospitably meet,
and each child's fate foreshadowed in its name.

So fare these cities in this year of grace,
sick with old poisons seeped sucked from history:
frustration on one side, the other fear
harden with guilt. To their embattled place
the stubborn masters cling, while, year by year,
from this infection no man's blood runs free

S10/ 26.8.

## The Iron Circle

This island's crust. A man who holds our dream
as in a chalice lifted, is struck down,
yet when the dust blows by, it still must seem
that in his end he finds his true renown.

And many a one marked has said his say,
constrained by grim conjunction of event,
and found his angry words, to his dismay,
enforce his adversary's argument.

A man who studied Lares when the ground
and tracked what had been acted everywhere,
gave as a law the Hare still loves the Hound
as surely as the Hound must love the Hare.

An Irishman, a poet, and my friend,
I know now what his parables portend.

—

S11/ T. 31.1.70 27.8

143

## Advice to the Moderates

Speak peace, conciliation. Moderate
your prejudice ~~turn of phrase~~. In everything avoid
what might provoke. Force will must be employed
in seeking to regain a balanced state.
To long-held views give due and proper weight,
one brief rash word and all might be destroyed.
Suspect the man who shouts from Marx or Freud
~~With cautious tolerance, by all enjoyed,~~
~~Here tide will ebb~~
~~will cut the end of violence and hate~~
We knew the sources of this strife and hate

This is your duty as a citizen;
hold firmly to it, deaf to cynic sneers:
few will recall the burnt-out homes, the dead.
With luck this fire will die away for years;
the men in power will be the steady solid men,
and, like them too, you will have kept your head.

S12/

26/8.8

An Ulsterman abroad argues with himself

Admit the fact. You might have stood your ground
and kept one corner clean for decency,
making no claims but, like a pindaly tree,
offering shade to those who'd gather round.
You should have spoken when that evil man
first raised his rancorous shout; to all who lied
given the lie direct; That little clan
who later marched for justice, joined with pride.

Now from safe distance, you assert your right
to public rage. Yet if it is, after all,
where I was born and lived for fifty years.
I know its crooked masters well by sight,
endured its venom and survived its sneers —
I trace these slogans on its flame-scorched wall.

Tribune 28/31.8

145

Inheritance

Here at a distance, racked by colics and fears
with each convulsion of that fevered state,
the chafing thoughts attract, in sudden spate,
neglected
forgotten shadows from my boyhood years:

the Crossley tenders caged and roofed with wire,
the crouching Black and Tans, the Lewis gun,
the dead lies in the entry; one by one,
the Catholic public houses set on fire:

the anxious curfew of the summer night,
the thoroughfares deserted, at one door
three figures standing, until the tender's roar,
approaching closer, drives them out of sight:

and on the broad roof of the County Gaol
the singing prisoners brief freedom take
to keep an angry neighbourhood awake
with rattled plate and bolt and metal hail;

below
and, from my bedroom window, bullet-stark
along the kerb, the beat of rapid feet
of the lone gunman clopping up the street,
soon lost, the gas-lamps shattered, in the dark:

and on the levelled edge of our cinder-field,
intent, till dusk, upon the game, I ran
against a quickly-striding, Tall youngman,
and glimpsed the rifle that he thought well concealed:

[there was that other, threshing in arrest,
the form who carried, swung and rammed his head
against a handy corner, and the red
blood dribbled down his chin across his chest .....]

at Auschwitz, Dallas,
felt
~~Can you tell me~~ I showed no surprise 1.9.69.
when violence across the world's wide screen
eye, extended
declared our times collateral. ~~I read~~ / I had seen
the future in that gunman's frightened eyes.

513/ 1.9.69

147

## Fables for Stormont.

In Mary Shelley's story, Frankenstein
made his own monster-master. Change the name
from that of man to party, and the shame
needs no crude pen to mark or underline.
For generations, sign and countersign
preserved the winnings of their wicked game:
raw brawling creatures whom they dare not blame,
bred in black covens, blast the neat design.

That other fable may be more exact:
when the magician left for Camelot,
he laid aside his book. The foolish boy,
though he had often watched his master's act,
misread
mistook the 2 proper 1 gestures to employ,
when he had only meant to fill the pot.

S 14/

2.9.69

Among
Born of a people maimed by history
and bred to faction, by my father taught
I learned the habit of unfettered thought
and dreamed my fellows stoned in time be free.
My logic bade me challenge, on one side,
that church which holds its old dominion
over the questing mind. Yet I denied
allegiance to the stake by rebels won
from a torn nation, nipped to guard their gain,
though they claim, also, love of liberty.
So, in the gap between I found my place,
caught in the crossfires of that long campaign,
pledged to full kinship with the human race,
~~and of injustice only, enemy~~
of what I thought injustice enemy.

Inburst 2.9

149

An Ulster
Landowner's Song

Of course you know me I'm Major Jocelyn Thistle-Batt,
~~I'm Captain This~~, I'm Major That,
M.C and D.S.O.;
this Orange lily in my hat
Here
is only meant to show,

so long as I can walk my dogs
around the old estate,
and keep the Fenians in their bogs,
the peasants at the gate.

I meet my Tenants, decent men,
at Market or Assize;
but trouble seems a-brewing when
Lodge Members scorn
~~the Lodges stand~~ to rise.

There was
~~They made~~ a most unwelcome noise
to set one's nerves on edge
~~that shook my privilege~~,
That day they beat those girls and boys
across Burntollet Bridge,

journalists and cameras
with ~~cameras and reporters~~ there
sent in their
to ~~make their~~ long reports —

The world no longer seems to care
country
for healthy ~~present~~ sports.

—

No verse till October '66.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| October | 1 | 12 | |
| November | 13 | 280 | |
| December | 5 | 90 | 19 – 382 for year |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | 1 | 12 :: 1967 | |
| February | 1 | 28 | |
| March | 5 | 87 | |
| April | 1 | 38 | |
| July | 1 | 18 | |
| August | 2 | 23 | |

—

Dec 11 - 204 22 – 410 for year.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1968 January | 3 | 66 | 1968 | Jan 1 · 28 : 1969 |
| February | 2 | 47 | | Feb. 4 · 67 |
| May | 9 | 145 | | March. 13 : 322 |
| June | 7 | 153 | | August. 8 – 109 |
| October | 3 | 32 | | Sept [illegible] 3 · 48 |
| November | 2 | 22 | | Jan 15 2nd Sept |
| December | 5 | 126 | 31 – 596 | 29 – 574 |