

11.

Book XXIX September 1969 - May 1971

Poems by John Hewitt

Revised  
- 11.XII.69

and map reported bomb or barricade.  
This was my childhood's precinct, and I know  
how such streets look  
of brick, of paintwork  
what church or school nearby one might attend  
if there's a chance to glimpse familiar hill  
between the chimneys where the grey slates end.

But I speak <sup>only</sup> ~~now~~ <sup>of</sup> appearances  
a stage unpeeled <sup>crowded</sup> ~~only~~, not <sup>the</sup> play.  
Though actual faces of known families  
flash back across the gap of fifty years  
are <sup>their children</sup> not these the sullen strangers that today,  
rape in the ~~apparent~~ <sup>father's</sup> bondage of their fears?

W. Reckoning

### Street Names

I hear the street names on the radio  
and point precise each bomb and barricade;  
this was my native city, and I know  
how such streets look, down to the very shade  
of brick, <sup>the</sup> paintwork on each door and sill;  
which church its folk are likely  
and therefore to which church its folk attend;  
if there's a chance to glimpse familiar  
and whether you may chance to glimpse a hill  
in the perspective where the grey slates end.

I speak <sup>now merely</sup> of surface, of material, surface, appearance, <sup>not of</sup> essences,  
~~of history and its corollaries,~~ and the associations they recall,  
such as <sup>one</sup> with the painted slogans on the wall,  
the bullet-pitted bricks. Behind all these  
I cannot <sup>reach through to</sup> ~~penetrate~~ the personal,  
or touch this body's wound, that mind's unease.  
Yet here scant understanding may be found:  
unfelt the personal realities,  
this heart's disgust or that body's wound

Revised  
- 11.XII.69

and map reported bombs or barricade.  
This was my childhood's precinct, and I know  
how such streets look  
of brick, of paintwork  
what church or school nearby one might attend  
if there's a chance to glimpse familiar hill  
between the chimneys where the grey slates end.

But I speak <sup>only</sup> now ~~now~~ <sup>only</sup> of appearances  
a stage unpeeled <sup>crowd's</sup> ~~only~~, <sup>the</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>play</sup>.  
Though actual faces of known families  
flash back across the gap of fifty years  
are <sup>the children</sup> ~~not~~ these the sullen strangers that today,  
rape in the ~~parent~~ <sup>father's</sup> ~~bondage~~ <sup>of their</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>fears?</sup>

S 15/

W Redmond

8/9.XI.69 2.

## Street Names

I hear the street names on the radio  
and point precise each bomb and barricade;  
this was my native city, and I know  
how such streets look, down to the very shade  
of brick, <sup>the</sup> paintwork on each door and sill;  
which church its folk are likely  
and therefore to which church its folk attend;  
if there's a chance to glimpse familiar  
and whether you may chance to glimpse a hill  
in the perspective where the grey slates end.

I speak <sup>now</sup> ~~now~~ <sup>merely</sup> of surface, of material,  
surface, appearance, ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> of essences,  
of history and its corollaries,  
as <sup>one</sup> with the painted slogans on the wall,  
the bullet-pelted brick. Behind all these  
I cannot <sup>reach through to</sup> ~~penetrate~~ the personal,  
or touch this body's wound, that mind's disease.  
Yet here scent understanding may be found:  
unfelt the personal realities,  
this heart's disquiet or that body's wound

9. IX. 69

Idyl: John Anderson ARCA 1835-1919  
[Based on a letter in the Coventry Herald 8.1.1920  
from T. J. Dalgleish]

A bright scene; a summer morning,  
dew on the deep grass. The bearded man  
in <sup>rust-colored coat</sup> ~~rust-colored coat~~, stands before his easel,  
and, as he paints, he sings.

At <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ bend of a Warwickshire stream  
heavy with foliage and reflections  
green, its surface still, except  
for dips of swallow, broken wing.

At intervals <sup>down</sup> ~~down~~ he lays his brushes down  
beside the palette on the stool,  
and steps across to one or other of  
the young men at their canvasses.

The various warts of nature, the bush-stroke <sup>demonstrated</sup> ~~shown~~ :

The difficult passage resolved;  
The encouraging nod: he leads  
back to his own adventure

beer and bread <sup>cool</sup> ~~great~~ oak  
Then lunch together under a tree,  
pipes are lit and the smoke drifts  
among the hanging leaves, as they talk  
Ruskin and talk to nature  
of pictures and painting;

And the high sun moves over,  
puts the shadows on the other side  
making ready for the subjects  
for the long afternoon . . . . .

12-~~7~~8

A while we may regret  
that crisis of event-  
which hints our world is set-  
for cosmic accident.

but with a deeper grief  
we face the later dawn,  
the twilight hours more brief,  
another summer gone.

12.7.69

6

Today

a yellow leaf  
drifted and caught  
in my coat button,  
another  
summer gone.

Wool Press 1-XI-69

A. Rackomip 13. IX.

### The Well intentioned Consul

Eased into the succession  
by the ailing aged consul,  
because of his house  
respected among the patricians,  
the realities of his office  
slowly possessed his mind:  
how to make lasting peace with Thebes  
and admit  
those Thebans who lived within the city  
into free citizenship  
in spite of their loyalty to Thebes  
and their false gods.

2 Thus he was foolhardy  
for the patricians  
had so used the threat of Thebes  
to keep the people in subjection  
that the people believed them  
and disliked all Thebans

and the patricians, some of them,  
swore by their own fears

So he spoke in the senate of goodwill  
and forbearance and peace  
within the city and beyond its borders,  
and of forgetting old chronicles

But when it became known  
that he had sent and received emissaries  
the people shouted that he had betrayed the city  
and the patricians, angry since he was one of them,  
that he had betrayed the senate also.  
So the consul's office was stripped from him  
and given to his kinsman.

And those merchants and traders who had applauded his promise  
stood silent.

While a mob rusted out with torches  
and set fire to the Theban houses  
the little houses in the western quarter

## The Tribunes

After the tumult and conflagration in the city  
 Three Tribunes were ordered by the senate  
 to discover the roots of the unrest.

When their report was read,  
 the Tribunes, being fair minded men,  
 blame was laid on the mob with torches,  
 and the zealots named who had roused it,  
 and on the Thelians within the city,  
 adding, for they were fair minded, that  
<sup>the</sup> Thelians were denied citizenship,  
 but especially accusing the young men  
 who had resisted the burning of the houses.

They declared also  
 that the praetorian guards  
 had, once or twice, used  
 excessive force

Exile

Altho it is my native place  
 and dear to me for many associations,  
 How can I return to that city  
 from my exile among strangers?  
 I now live <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>among</sup> ~~among~~!  
 These people are docile and at peace,  
 and I, grown old,  
 do not wish to tramp shuffle  
 thro' the  
<sup>into</sup> rubble of my dreams  
 and lie down in <sup>ashes</sup> <sup>ashes</sup>;

The Phoenix is a fabulous bird.



## Tool Box

The old man went to the shed  
 opened the padlock  
 and crouching in the gloom  
 drew from under a laden bench  
 a <sup>well-used</sup> ~~grey~~ <sup>wooden</sup> box of caulking <sup>tools</sup>

But before taking them out of the box  
 he reached round to show us  
 the edge with the curved shaft  
 and demonstrated

the sharpness of its edge  
 taking off a shaving like a razor:  
 the mallet he half-apologised for,  
<sup>having been</sup>  
 as ~~being~~ scarcely used.

He had cleaned the caulking tools,  
 of span-long, bright steel,  
 the <sup>butt</sup> ~~end~~ shred, and split

in some, with the longer hammering  
 of generations of <sup>other</sup> mallets  
 the working edge of each shaped  
 to its particular task  
 He looks for clearing between the planks  
 the bladed tools  
 single but not sharp, for beginning, <sup>ramming-in</sup>  
 the broader, with a grooved edge, for finishing;  
 and with familiar fingers  
 he folded a rag and pressed it in  
 a crack in the bench boards  
 to show how the job was done.

When you lifted them (lifted)  
 you knew at once  
 that they had been made for the hand  
 size weight the feel of them and the shape  
 beautifully adjusted to the palm and fingers  
 but remote as a flint axe  
 from any of your purposes;  
 something lost, faded,  
 a deprivation, a lameness

April NO. 5. 70

U Reckoning

15-IX

Practiced  
the cases

Parallels never meet

Events in my native province now

Thrust my heart, threatening

any future I had planned

To find focus for my tent feelings

I thrust all back into a remote setting

Dressing the circumstances

in the properties of antiquity

allegorising the actions and the actors

~~I could have summoned~~ <sup>summoning</sup> the arrogant priest,  
summoning the arrogant priest,

the bully, the ambitious knave,

the time-server, the sly, the buffoon,

the cynic, the cunning, the just men

But they trip and flounder in their topos,  
the classical names are inappropriate,

deflecting by their associations and resonance,

Reality } The scene collapses, absurd

lath canvas  
plywood and plaster.

Reality is of a coarser texture,

But the least crack remains

The violence and the hate are palpable,

The flames are real,

and the wounds weep real blood,

and the future is not to be foretold

Threshold

No 23

RBC  
23.V.71

U. Reekoning

15. IX

"Alliance" formed 1972

## The Coasters

You coasted along, remember,  
to large houses, more gadgets, more machines,  
to seaside golf and weekend bungalows  
caravans when the children were small  
and the Mediterranean later, with the wife.  
You did not go to church often,  
weddings, of course, were special;  
but you kept your name on the books  
and the Lanson called, on the curate.

You showed a sense of responsibility  
with carefully considered subscriptions for worthwhile causes  
and service on voluntary committees  
and, anyhow, this did the business no harm,  
no harm at all.

Relations were improving

It was a good useful life.

You coasted along.

You ever had a friend or two of the other sort  
who played ~~some~~ golf and had weekend places  
Their children and yours seldom met, though,  
being at different schools.

Sometimes you met <sup>visited</sup> one of the other sort  
at your committee, they were always decent men:  
you might even chance to be introduced  
to one of their clergy,  
and then you smiled in the looking glass,  
admiring, a little touched by, your broad mindedness.  
Your father would never have known one of <sup>them</sup> their clergy.  
Come to think of it, when you were young,  
your own home was never visited by one of the other sort.

Relations were improving. The drums and banners  
of the annual processions began to seem like  
folk-festivals in <sup>Spain</sup> other places, but the tunes  
had a rather different wip, a teeny bit harsh.

When that noisy preacher started,  
He seemed rather old-fashioned, a survival of those  
who led the sporadic revivals of your boyhood  
Later you remarked and deprecated his vehemence,  
on the rough side.

But you said, admit it, you said that day  
in the club to some business acquaintance, not of the other sort,  
"You know. There's something in what he says."

And you who seldom had time to read a book,  
what with <sup>annual reports</sup> committee minutes and the ~~blatant~~ supplements  
denounced censorship:

and you who never had an adventurous thought  
were positive that the church of the other sort / retroes thought;  
and you who simply <sup>put up with</sup> endorsed marriage,  
for the children's sake and what the neighbours might say,  
deplored the attitude of the other sort / to divorce;  
besides, most of them were dirty and too prolific.  
You coasted along.

170  
You likely knew a Minister by his first-name  
were invited every year to the garden party  
~~because of your voluntary committees, taking the wife,~~  
~~though, since she too had her clutch of committees~~  
~~she might be invited on her own right.~~

You might even stop in the tent, for a chat with  
two or three of the other sort. You'd meet your surprise;  
there'd be up to half a dozen of them present;  
relations were improving.

And all the time, tho' you never noticed,  
the old lies festered;  
the ignorant became more strongly infected;  
There were gains, of course; you never saw any go barefoot.

The government permanent,  
continually sustained by the regularly  
organised <sup>plebiscites</sup> demonstrations of loyalty.

You always voted but never / put a sticker on the car  
a card in the window / would not have been seen from the street.

Faces changed on the posters, names too, often,  
but the same ~~faces~~ families, the same class of people.  
You coasted along, as the waves substituted and stirred

Now the fever is high and raging;  
The ignorant-sick thrash about in delirium,  
and fear set the seats with dirty paper seats;  
The cloud of infection now hanging over the city,  
a quick change of wind  
might spill it over the ~~golf~~ suburbs.  
You coasted too long.

And yet there were thousands of you.

## September Sunset

When recently the padded men  
francesed slowly on the moon  
I signally joused to share  
the general acclaim;  
that was not one of the things  
on aye most needed,  
not one of the places  
anybody had to reach.

This evening

I saw the low sun through mist,  
red and round and as sharply defined  
as a full moon, a harvest moon,  
and I enjoyed thinking  
that there was one place they'd never land  
and I felt, somehow, gratified.

18/19 . IX

"The Lass of Richmond Hill"

I remember that Garden Party  
on a far away June day.

The steps down from the Parliament House  
were roped-off, but we milled on the lawns,  
and a military band played all afternoon  
on the gravelled platform at the top.

The Queen appeared at the top of the steps,  
the professional Queen, she is Queen-Mother now -  
[her husband not with her then, - he was unwell -  
and the sulky slip of a girl, her second daughter,  
pouted after her, taking his place ]  
and ~~as~~ she stepped and turned her head, smiling,  
- and gently moved her right hand  
as she stepped  
on high heels down  
That long stone cascade

22

I remember admiring that woman's pose  
never a foot wrong  
self-possessed, with the exact gestures  
she seemed to greet each of us in person  
as we crowded-in and gaped across the ropes

At this moment the band played  
"The Lass of Richmond Hill"  
a - gay ditty, and appropriate:  
it was a pleasant occasion.

But I <sup>can recall</sup> remember wondering  
how many others remembered  
that when the United Men marched on Antoin Four  
That sad June day so long ago,  
Their doctrinaire leaders, the young men in green coats,  
- tried to sing "The Marseillaise"  
the proper <sup>on them</sup> marching song for revolutionaries,  
and more of the pike men - peasants knew it,  
and only a few of the artisans.

But Jimmy Hope the weaver, the one among them  
who struck no attitudes, rallied all  
by striking up "The Lass" which most of them knew anyway.  
So <sup>in step</sup> together they <sup>swung</sup> <sup>into</sup> marched down the long Antoin street.

The irony of it is that this song was written  
by Leonard Mac Nally, the ugly little lawyer,  
defender in the courts of the United Men,  
proved by the <sup>State</sup> Castle papers long afterwards  
to have been a <sup>Castle</sup> King's informer.

How many at the party remembered this?  
and reversed the complex ambiguity of it?  
Yet there must have been, among them, some  
with-ancestors in the rabble  
that ran from Antoin Fawn after the skirmish

S16/

BBC  
booklet / U. Reckow  
Pace

23-5-1X-  
Introduction 12.X.

24

Birth Right An Ulsterman

This is my country. Though my people came  
here out of England centuries ago,  
the last <sup>clear</sup> ~~marked~~ trace of this is in my name;  
Armagh's Kilmore is the <sup>one</sup> sole place I know  
that marks the first sod of our baying.  
Born in Belfast, which drew the handless in,  
That river-straddling, hill-rimmed Fawn, I cling  
to the inflections of my origin.

Though crew-sick  
Despite coarse zealots and the ignorant crowd  
long fostered, still unclashed, in ways of left,  
whose tongue ~~and gesture~~ <sup>ripe in</sup> ~~flared to violence~~,  
have made this land a by-word of offence,  
this is my country, never disavowed:  
my best words ~~are enough to keep me proud~~  
when it is fouled, shall I not remonstrate?  
as Donald - and as Fenron obstinate.

My heritage is not their violence.

S17/ Habermas  
10 Oct  
U-Reckoning  
Prime Minister  
From Northern Provinces  
26. IX  
Major James Dawson Chester - Clark

We've seen that worried face upon the box  
and heard the hesitations of his mind;  
a decent man, he seems; no crafty fox  
like some who went before, or lurk behind.  
Yet breeding has supplied a flinty core  
to his opinions; they were always right  
since his old Jacobean ancestor  
burnt-out the clans in many a bloody fight.

So, Captain or Colonel or Knight in arms,  
his class has always held the power they took  
Now he admits the overdue reforms,  
accepts them blandly for the statute-book  
One last-step sticks. Dare he repudiate  
The bigot-rabble <sup>lodged</sup> schooled in party hate?

S18  
Habermas  
10 Oct.  
U-Reckoning  
Demagogue  
26/8. IX  
26  
Rev Ian Paisley

Compelling preacher, large, and loud of voice  
in octaves of abuse, invective, hate;  
- a Samson self-ordered, his strength destroys  
whatever justified our century state,  
since his chief stall is to articulate  
the smouldering terrors - and the prejudice  
<sup>that</sup> which make our heritage a dubious freight  
which, now exposed, is shown for what it is.

No long time since we dreamed that on our glens  
our little fields, our artless shabby towns  
might break some generous light of common sense,  
and men of will were eager to renounce  
our sed best - and its sick corollary,  
He breaks this hope across his broadcloth knee.



S 19

Hibernia  
10. Oct  
u. Reckoning

Agitator

26/7. 18

u. Bernadette Devlin

She may be rash, may flounder now and then,  
driven by rage and pity to excess;  
but in a country where the best of men  
no more than find a path at distress  
yet lack the will to alter anything  
save at an unkind pace, by compromise  
this goal is never prudent, she will rise  
to any challenge circumstance may bring.

Her qualities are youth's. But just youth,  
though round the earth her generation stirs—  
once, cutting through to reach the simple truth,  
she spoke for 'people of no property'.  
So Tone addressed her once; now it is hers,  
that phrase, the warrant of her ancestry.

S 20

Hibernia  
10. Oct  
u. Reckoning

Minister

28. 18

26

u. Brian Faulkner

Not one of your tall captains bred to rule,  
a knight confirmed by school and army list,  
he went to school, but not the proper school.  
His family tree will offer little grist  
to any eager genealogist;  
his father's money grew from making shirts.  
But with ambition clenched in his tight fist  
and careful to discount the glencap hark  
he climbed to office, studiously intent  
and reached the door he planned to enter, twice  
is here it slammed by the establishment—  
a plight that well might sympathy command  
Red we not watched that staff of prejudice  
Red used to wit-skull, turn serpent in his hand.

27. IX

For Roberta

With quivering snout a hedgehog  
snuffled <sup>across the lawn</sup> through the grass  
<sup>over</sup> <sup>long</sup> under the shadows of  
<sup>garden</sup> the tilted hollyhocks;  
<sup>leaning</sup>

an unexpected presence  
its purposes <sup>un guessed</sup> unshared,  
bearing a tiny life,  
hunger, heartbeat, warmth,

slack spines dragged against  
the close, cool grass-blades and  
the prospering clover,  
unresting, out of reach.

Its secret fuggers set  
it seemed a symbol  
for all timid strangeness

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<sup>shy</sup>  
all wildness, ~~but~~ alert

to defend itself by  
withdrawal, purely.  
It has its counterpart  
written upon heart and mind

---

## Ulsterman's Dilemma

Born of a people maimed by history  
 and dogma-bound, I, tutored in dissent,  
 dreamed that my fellows should, in time, be free;  
 all idols overturned and impotent.

Though logic steered me past the weather side  
 of that old church which holds dominion  
 over the stirring spirit, I denied  
 full credence to the state by rebels won  
 from a torn nation, who ~~had~~ dread of Rome,  
 stand in unyielding postures of defence,  
 asserting thus their love of liberty.

So, since this ruptured country is my home,  
 I have to answer for its violence  
 and take as mine its bitter tragedy.

## Fend

The fend in our village is  
 is older than any memory  
 recalled most readily by  
 people in the little streets.  
 Some say that it goes back to  
 the enclosure of the commons -  
 For us who live in the larger houses,  
 there is, of course no fend.

We managed to live with it  
 troubled only on fair days  
 when a drunk man might show something  
 and tempers rise to blows.  
 But recently with rumours  
 of disturbances abroad,  
 even at games in the city,  
 anger seemed expected.

Stone Throwing a ruse in the  
older parts of the village:  
The feud has become our  
daily conversation, our dread:  
we argue among ourselves  
deciding who is to blame —  
it is surely the young men  
who went away and come back.

## Death of a Neighbour

An ordinary man, 49,  
factory-worker on the track  
under average height, medium build, dark.

About 10 years ago he came back  
the Australian adventure ending in hostels.  
So he started again,  
wife, two children, <sup>strayled</sup> a boy and <sup>stout</sup> a girl.

Among the fruit in a good estate  
he planted standard roses, <sup>turfed</sup> ~~planted~~ its front.  
His wife had a mania for cleaning windows:  
his affection for his daughter  
made her jealous.

On summer Saturdays he carried  
his son's cricket-bag to the park  
On <sup>alternate</sup> winter Saturdays they went

together to support the City  
Five mornings a week he left early  
for work, and after breakfast  
his wife cleaned the windows

He broke away again, with friends as partners  
in a small engineering firm. It failed  
so he went back to the tractor, a good worker.  
On summer evenings he walked (he never owned a car)  
with his wife to the local. Ill now and then:  
Hard to know what was wrong; heart? kidneys?  
Then back to work; never happy idle.

Brought home one afternoon <sup>friend's</sup> in a car  
he was invited for a while. Recovered they took  
a Mediterranean cruise to celebrate  
their Silver Wedding. Malta was too hot,  
full of old churches; but the deck games  
were great fun: he looked better  
A couple of months after, he died

sent home from the Hospital. The doctor said  
a transplant in time might have saved him.

Out of My Mind

The day of the funeral we noticed  
that the wreaths and sprays, ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> been removed,  
were set out on the front grass in a neat pattern  
as we drove past the house.

With a word that the clergyman said  
at the service in the crematorium  
showed any personal knowledge

of the man or of death:  
There are buttons behind the lectern  
for organ music and closing the curtains.

About a week later <sup>a letter was handed round,</sup>  
~~we got a letter,~~  
stamped with capitals, from the widow,  
Thanking the neighbours for their floral tribute.

X

I hardly ever spoke to him, except  
over the fence among his standard roses,  
of his health, of the City's chances

and once when I gave him a lift  
to a union meeting in town, that was  
just before he joined his friends in the firm;  
a factory-worker, 49, father of two.

S 15 21

13. 8. 69

38

## "The Bloody Brae"

I wrote it more than thirty years ago,  
laid it aside until the ink turned pale;  
later ~~heard~~ <sup>they spoke</sup> it on the radio,  
a verse-play cobbled from a country tale.  
But when some players offered it a stage,  
This planned for darkness and an empty scene,  
I was not there. Now, silent, <sup>written</sup> page to page,  
it lies ~~unstudied~~ <sup>together</sup> in a magazine.

It tells how an old man had sought the ghost  
of a girl he murdered in a massacre,  
knowing his darkened soul forever lost  
unless her mercy rise as arbiter,  
for she was Papist, he a Protestant;  
~~after three decades, it's still relevant.~~  
Three decades on, it's far more relevant.

S. 22/ 1.2.5 <sup>Hibernia</sup>  
<sup>Plankin 2 Gail</sup>  
<sup>U. Richmond</sup>

21.8.69

August at Balaton

In a <sup>hill side</sup> cottage garden at Lake Balaton,  
the lamp above the table veiled with flies,  
strangers, we sat to watch the full moon rise,  
our host, a writer, friendly, <sup>had</sup> ~~only~~ known  
for essays in a foreign magazine,  
his ready English made us feel at home.  
Yet <sup>fresh blacked</sup> ~~best~~ of peaches, jar of Cuban rum  
confirmed the <sup>alien</sup> ~~exotic~~ nature of the scene.

The eager talk ran on from book to play,  
to language, politics. Then suddenly  
the writer asked: "You heard the bulletin?"  
and added, with no pause for my reply,  
"Riots in Northern Ireland yesterday:  
and they have sent the British Army in"

S 23/

22.8.69

40

Explaining the Ulster Question.

Our friends at Balaton, <sup>and</sup> on Budapest,  
days later also puzzled,  
puzzled by ~~news and pictures~~ <sup>news and pictures</sup> queried why,  
when the times vibrant with technology  
~~was at the obsequy of this century,~~  
such violence should <sup>still</sup> be ~~more~~ manifest  
between two factions in religion's name.  
It is three hundred years since, they declared,  
divergent sects put claim and counterclaim  
to arbitration of the <sup>pithe</sup> ~~club~~ or sword.

We tried to answer, spoke of Arab, Jew,  
of Turk and Greek in Cyprus, Pakistan  
and India; but no sense flickered through  
that offered reason to a modern man,  
why <sup>Europeans, Christian,</sup> such ~~battalions~~ of the working-class  
should thrust and struggle in that old morass.

So failing there, we turned to history:

the savage complications of our past;  
our luckless country where old wrongs  
~~the wrongs and counter wrongs which~~ <sup>staid</sup> outlast,

in raging viruses of bigotry,  
then post-<sup>enmity</sup> infections <sup>centuri</sup>

the wounds by them beget; ~~and~~ <sup>as by the future had</sup> tragedy

close-keeled on triumph, ~~desolation, waste,~~  
slight in the air, and famine's

repression, ~~famine,~~ and the after taste  
this man's guide ~~on that man's~~

of science's malice, ~~statements perfectly~~  
frustration, guilt at the end enmity.

From here, guilt and frustration never free.

But our friends countered with ironic jest:  
~~you're not on up your sad account of years.~~

Your sea-sunged field, the English overran:  
<sup>with us</sup>

our broad plain, <sup>It's long, ostent</sup> ~~Turk and Austrian,~~

Rewets and wars uncounted. Budapest

shows scarce one wall that's stood two hundred years.

We build to fill the centuries' arrears.

The son of a Protestant father

The head of a National School,

my early addiction to reading

confirmed my fate as a fool

Bewitched by the Irish poets,

bemused by the Abbey plays,

in search of articulate peasants

I roamed in a Keltic haze.

I nosed thro' the glens after heroes,

and combed thro' the gold and the green,

to catch one glimpse 'mid the bracken

of the great white horse of Ushken.

So the country I brought into exile,

its braes and its burns and its grass,

was partly the poems remembered



and partly the fields round Cloughglass.

One day returning from England

I shall step back into my dream

and over that bridge at Burnt Mill

Toss pebbles into the stream.

S 25/

22/3. X. 69

44

I have no liking for the Catholic Church,  
as institution, not as source of art:

Angelico, in Florence, eased my heart;

and Giotto in that chapel; and the porch

I saw in Poland once, The Pisan Christ;

Vliet Stoss's screen at Cracow; Stephansdom

with Pilgrim's pulpit; several things in Rome:

but these, I sometimes judge, too dearly priced.

For, here and there, I sniff the burning wood,

remember those that sang among the flames ...

Then all the <sup>draperies</sup> ~~and then all vestments~~ seem but fripperies,

Those miming gestures and the muttered names ...

I'd be lost now had <sup>not</sup> some not first withstood

the thrusting torches and the taunting cries

I early took a Protestant to be  
 a man who knew and dared to speak his mind;  
 if proud to challenge, in the end, resigned  
 to leave all free as he himself is free,  
 yet in assertion of identity  
 still to a stone of arrogance inclined.  
 a mobile mollusc of a special kind  
 that finds and holds his rock in any sea.

So I have kept my metaphoric shell  
 and edged along the indifferent cliffs with care,  
 the senses sorting out directions well,  
 not taking orders I mistrusted from  
 a lecturing voice which bade me head for Rome,  
 Hanoi, Peking, Moscow, or anywhere.

## Administrator

An urgent bustling fellow who devotes  
 his waking life to brief peremptory notes  
 Your observations re. Consult. Discuss.  
 Pray, do not think these slips ridiculous.  
 Our Age's credo is: he who dictates  
 most memoranda, most administrative,  
<sup>chouk eck a ihr mat } kashie</sup>  
 So file each neatly in its lettered slot:  
 these are the heart-beats of the bureaucrat.  
<sup>leaves</sup>  
<sup>artworks</sup>

27. X. 69

Young facts now have me at a disadvantage;  
my old ear long conditioned to regularity  
looks for a metrical pattern on the page  
a shape that both ear can hear as eye can see;  
for, while the tapping finger obeys the metronome,  
the mind is clear to concern itself with thought,  
but worrying where the accents should or should not come  
inhibits any attention to a logical state:

I prefer always the straight to the crooked bet,  
and dislike watching any catch being fumbled at.

27. XI.

see later  
revised

48

## My Other Grandmother

<sup>no matter</sup>  
I was <sup>three</sup> years old  
when my grandmother died,  
so what I remember of her  
must hardly be from photographs -  
pale face, straight hair middle-parted,  
the shock-marks I must have heard of,  
so common enough for her generation  
and from later days, too, that she was  
blunt, direct in her speech, unaccommodating  
even in her instant generousities  
- my parents' <sup>in those days,</sup> ~~at that time~~ were often hard-ups  
but her help was quick and frequent  
a straight-question <sup>settling</sup> ~~settling~~ the <sup>matter</sup> ~~question~~.

Rising early to see her men off to work  
with a good breakfast  
if my mother called by ten o'clock  
the house was tidy, the dishes washed,  
the range shining, the fire bright

and the old woman dozing beside it, dressed,  
or, awake, her hands busy at her quilting frame

A hospitable woman; there was a reference  
my father once mentioned, in a book of travels  
by an American evangelist  
which noted that house for welcome and friendliness.

She had borne eleven children  
and had seen four die in infancy,  
had sheltered and scrubbed a squad of their cousins  
that the handsome John, her brother, had left in her care  
when he took the first of his many trips  
across the Atlantic, to make his fortune;  
he was always mislaying his wits;  
my grandfather was laying for all.

I certainly remember the white furry coat  
she bought me; <sup>but I recollect only</sup> ~~she~~ outlasted her.  
a single word "Windmills" which referred to  
little crosses of sticking-plaster on my face.

## The Literary Mind.

Pushing through slush on the flagged path-  
last the Council Office,

I came on a knot of pigeons  
jinking and pecking, and remembered  
the green sheen of their necks.

I thought then of some lines by Ben Jonson  
about iridescent feathers

and almost immediately recalled

Edmund Burke's rhetorical flourish,  
of the dead bird,  
though these birds were, in fact,  
crisp-jull  
cracked with life.

This tells you little of pigeons.

Feb.

1970

This morning unexpectedly  
I heard a bell ringing  
and surmised that it must be  
the Catholic bell of St. Thomas More

I thrust aside my load of prejudice  
against dogma and authority,  
and took it as it was,  
an old roaring sound,  
and found joy in it.

23.2.70

52

In every art today  
the medium is the message:  
no longer now the soft clay  
that yields to the model's pressure  
Cetera when cast in bronze  
holds smile forever frozen.  
We have watched too many dawns  
slip over the horizon  
each one itself, untwinned,  
to fix one metaphor  
with certainty defined  
to  
the day's first signature.

Out of My Mind

24.2.70

### First Funeral

Once when <sup>was</sup> only eight or nine  
and could not yet recall any  
death as personal, my dead  
were then a long way distant,  
buried in the green foothills, a far  
journey, once a year, for short legs  
I went with my mother 'to have  
a look at her father's grave!

With firm steady tread she paced  
the paths between the granite kerbs  
and the twists of wrought-iron till we came  
to the gilt letters in the marble.  
While she was busy and I waited  
a dark bare-leaved dog on gathens  
and four laid a bright coffin on clay,  
two columns away, beside  
a pillar with a half-draped urn.

A small whitebearded man stepped forward,  
and in the wind, the fresh west wind from  
the green hills, his beautiful voice  
came gusting towards us,  
terrible and sad and Scots.

My mother standing still, whispered  
"It's John P. Moore of St. Enock's.

I'd love him to bury me  
when my time comes"

I was only eight or nine  
yet I remember the scene  
and the words, and my thinking  
that what my mother said was strange,  
for she would never die.

16.2.70

Three in twelve months live had a state of nerve  
one at sudden shock of a friend's death  
utterly gapped by world's curve, absolute  
spurred a sound sequence on others dead  
or celebrated gentleness remembered

Then is Hungary test August to hear for home  
of the barricades and bitterness  
in coarse type, rough-grained photographs  
my old frustrations broke  
and found release in words  
of anger and despair

Can it be only grief and rage  
should ever bring mind and hand together again  
creatively, with draining of the heart?

Shall I pray gravely no other such

56  
follow harsh event. Too much to expect  
even again the by me, the meditations  
on the places that have lost all innocence?

Must I make treaty with diminished things?

Gmtg My Turn

Aquarius 4

5.3.70

## The Turban

After swift blizzard, savage frost:  
light skies wipe thaw. Redemption narrows,  
gutters ooze slush. The shovelled tracks  
cross-jumped Precinct, recent now  
with shop's half day, where sparse black trees  
crotched with <sup>white</sup> snows and tufts shake down,  
wind-fingered, sprays of crystal mist.

An aged Sikh job's broken crusts  
from narrow paper-bag, and steps  
back as he scatters; a grey stream,  
the bustling pigeons mudge his boots:  
with straight streaked beard, his turban  
pale violet, more subtle shade  
than any other colour there.

8.3.70

56

## At My Father's Graveside

Friends, cousins, strangers saluted,  
we edged to the ready place  
the proper masks of occasion  
adjusted to each stiff face.

The minister's voice was steady  
his simple words were sincere  
but recalling the morning my father died  
I knew there was nothing here.

With webbing slipped under it, lowered  
out of sight, down into the ground,  
the coffin answered the crumpled cloud  
with that hollow-and final sound.

The gravedigger slowly stepped forward  
and whispered "You're next-g-ter?"  
At my nod, with the spade that he gave me



I tumbled the first earth in

12. 3.

Hung in thin chill mist, the sun  
a pallid disk, the morning  
fall of shouting birds whose noise  
gives scale to space.

29. III.

60

Walking beside the Lagen water  
one summer Sunday afternoon  
as the Towpath turned  
with a bend in the river  
its surface still, shattered  
by high limestone ledges and tall trees  
suddenly a foot above the dark surface  
a kingfisher fleeted, blue, downstream,  
the first we had ~~ever~~ seen then,  
till now no second:  
Kingfisher - moment to last forever.

29/30 - III

## The Riders

Driving to Long Buckby <sup>down</sup> by the bye-roads,  
the ploughed fields brown in the March sun,  
the tall trees not yet in leaf,  
black faced sheep in a paddock  
with small negro-lambo,  
we passed a field on the right  
full of guls and ponies,  
the guls with peaked caps  
and large numbers on their backs;  
the horse-boxes in a corner near the gate  
like a huddle of watchmen's huts;  
the mounts and their riders were  
crossing and recrossing the field  
in a medley of legs, fidgeting,  
the trials not yet begun

And I marvelled how far the supported ponies  
had carried us

62

from the heart of Asia - across  
a continent to the off-shore islands  
and the time at Fook,  
to end here in a nest  
of jodpurs and bundles

## The Dark Wood

In June dusk in Warwickshire

we drove to a country pub,

~~Bill, Connie, my wife and I.~~  
staying

We ~~stayed~~ <sup>stayed</sup> our drinks till closing time,

and then walked slowly up the road

along <sup>to</sup> a green lane <sup>near</sup> the dark wood.

We stopped at a barred gate <sup>on foot</sup> and waited

with dew, and waited

looking across the field, where mist

hung knee-high <sup>above</sup> along the grass, <sup>towards</sup>

towards the dark enclosing wood.

We waited, whispered, waited,

the <sup>wide</sup> night-silence <sup>marked</sup> broken only by

by few car-noises, faint, explosive.

Then a scatter of bird-notes

<sup>random.</sup> low <sup>at first</sup>, unformulated,

<sup>at last</sup> till the full song emerges; <sup>ascends</sup>.

listen! our first nightingale  
singing somewhere in the dark wood

What could be more truly English  
than a nightingale at Bubbler Hall?

Prologue for an Evening at White Friars

We bid you welcome to this ancient house,  
and pray you stay awhile, to share with us  
well-spoken verse, fine prose, rare melodies  
from June-books and anthologies  
whose words and music echo these brick walls.  
But first, I ask you leave to tell  
brief snatches of what here befall,  
as from a dream, bright fragments, one recalls.

A D 1342

The Benedictines, by the Swanswell Pool  
had held, two hundred years, unquestioned rule  
over the Prior's Hall of this thriving town,  
and brought it high renown,  
if not for sanctity, at least for wealth,  
through charters joyed by abbot's guide.  
Franciscans, too, in humbler style  
Christ's Kingdom, later sought to bring by stealth.

Then a third order, Carmelite by name,  
as mendicant as their brown brethren, came  
to wait beside the town for clarity  
and elms against their perary;  
here, for their use, John Poultrney built this house,  
the White Friars Church, and, for a shrine  
the Lady Tower, where, by that sign,  
pilgrims and merchants should prove generous.

Strict and austere - and sparing in their praise  
of all save worship and Our Lady's Grace,  
their dormitory windows splayed to catch  
dawn's heat, that they might keep to match  
the hours of light with measured discipline;  
when no bell called to church,  
each would, the cloister facing, search  
his secret heart for seed of joy within.

A D 1538

Start by Pope Clement's unresponsive words

to his demands, and urged by potent lords,  
Henry decreed the Roman Church be stripped  
of crozier, chalice, manuscript.

The heavy doors were locked, the strong-box taken;  
the dozen left, of its old team,  
shocked out of their monastic dream,  
expelled unpensured, men-and-God-forsaken

John Stales arrives, that complicated man,  
lean-hungry scholar, limping Puritan;  
he cruised these counties in his master's lay,  
To let no profit drift astray:  
saw Whitefriars, liked it, bought it for his own;  
against its chill domestic death,  
installed a hospitable heart,  
and cut new windows in the weathered stone.

A.D. 1552

His fortunes faltered in young Edward's reign,  
Before the old faith shuffled back again

68  
he slipped abroad and did not leave to mark  
the martyrs' progress to the Park,  
by Mary ordered, Spain's admiring Fool.  
I side plotting, on his death,  
returned to serve Elizabeth,  
regained this lease, reorganised his school.

17th and 18th August A.D. 1565

The Queen rode into Coventry with grace  
to rest with Stales her host, two busy days  
of repenting and homage. He was proud  
to see her greet the shouting crowd  
from his own easement, his most regal guest.  
The Council, his sworn enemies,  
most not embarrassed confessions,  
longwinded John Throgmorton, as the rest.

19th August A.D. 1642

From Whitley, Charles bade Coventry submit,  
within the New Gate none would hear of it,

but mustered men and women, staves and stores.  
The King announced attack at once;  
The muzzles volleyed and the missiles sped,  
With clumsy aim, through near-by wall,  
A random bounding cannon-bell  
struck Lady Hales and one old woman dead.

A. D. 1717

The last Hales here, Tony Sir Christopher  
died mid his debts; the place was sold to clear  
the burden, passing on from name to name,  
till, tenantless, lean squatters came,  
set up their looms, to wrestle from their trade  
a scant existence, for love, free  
from title or comfort equally,  
of every unfamiliar step afraid.

A. D. 1804

The French were dragged. Debrussen seeped the town:  
The poor's distress brought floods to beat them down.

Appointed for their care, Directors sought  
a hostel where they might be taught  
obedience, diligence, humility.  
The distant owner wished to sell  
this cold oil-spiced stall  
to be the keepers' House of Industry.

And so, plain food, hard beds and baths were sought  
to school the able-bodied, brace the sick,  
but, lost in hampered idleness they'd stray,  
a work contract filled the day  
with grimed testaments for their ready fingers.  
These left no ghosts. Beds, baths are gone.  
No sign or trace on tile or stone  
of Mr Bumble or carbolic linens.

Our grateful thanks to those who gave the word  
that these worn stones be dressed, these beams restored,  
to those whose <sup>care and</sup> craftsmanship made sure  
these walls a longer while endure

and Jim's decay he stayed. For to this place  
all Coventry henceforth may come,  
where many races find a home,  
to glimpse the story of the English race.

12. IV. 70

72

Third son of the charwomen, James,  
a student home for Easter  
glad of a few pounds to help out his rent  
undertook some decorating for us  
for two days, before Good Friday  
he painted the front bedroom  
Then after the holiday week he came back  
to paint the hall and the kitchen.

A quiet, unassertive lad  
slow but steady, not scamping his work  
he liked the small transistor  
pounding away on a lawn strip  
He left off every afternoon  
to go back to his books:  
he hoped for a job in a school,  
South-east London, in the autumn.

05. VI. 21

Revised first stanza of  
"As Evening at White Plains"



## Coda 1970

Friendly, eager to help, no intellectual  
not even well-read; -  
he had never heard of E. M. Forster -  
but it does not matter; he was killed  
in a car-crash yesterday

This white coat he left here in the kitchen  
and the green paint on the window ledge  
of the landing is still tacky.

The Tony squires, reluctantly revising  
the rules which made them masters of the game,  
have no intention of apologising  
for anything that brought this state of shame;  
and, with no thought that they too share the blame,  
the Catholic bishops, elsewhere deeply shaken,  
doge, dogma-cushioned, and will never waken.

The coming seasons promise no solution:  
the foolish in their folly still persist,  
the hulkier preacher drums his constitution,  
and the new Lord O'Neill's not even missed;  
while postures stiffen and opinions harden,  
and no man dares be stoned in need of pardon.

Revision of poem 26.8.69

30/5/70

W. Redmond

## The Iron Circle

Here often a man provoked has said his say,  
stung by opinion or unjust event,  
and found his angry words, to his dismay,  
<sup>drop us</sup> enforce his adversary's argument,  
for bitterness is not allowed to die,  
is fanned and fuelled, in this crazy land:  
the pointed gun ensures a gun's reply;  
hate feeds hate, on crest the Bloody Hand.

My friend, who followed coursing on the ground  
and sought its love and logic everywhere,  
suggested once, the Hare must need the Hound  
as surely as the Hound must love the Hare.  
In my mood now, I feel that he was right:  
the chase continues, with no end in sight.

Discovered the substance & outline of this  
dated 24.7.69 among my papers. Finished

29.5.70

76

## Moon

Now, from our village, we regard the moon,  
prime satellite and some day visited,  
a place like Venice but more surely dead,  
with less to offer at its fullest noon  
than thirty seconds here in any June,  
its sole surprise the black sky overhead;  
this, after all the peering poets said,  
may mean no more than buoy or bollard soon,

That fabulous tub of myth and metaphor,  
now stripped of mischief when its glimbed thro' glass;  
to all <sup>who</sup> that sleep beneath its borrowed light  
a neutral disc henceforth. Yet while the shore  
still traffics with the tides, its power shall pass  
thro' the live heart with undiminished might.

Sestet rewritten 12.7.74

S14 Earle states 2-9-69  
29-9-69

W. Reckow

31-5-70

### Dilemma

Born in this island, maimed by history  
and creed-infected, by my father taught  
the stubborn habit of unfettered thought,  
I dreamed, like him, all peoples should be free.  
So, while my logic stered me well outside  
that ailing church which claims dominion  
over the questing spirit, I denied  
all evidence to this state by rebels won  
from a torn nation, urged to guard their gain,  
to this asset  
assenting their fierce love of liberty  
which  
their craft has narrowed to a fear of Rome.  
So, since this captured country is my home,  
it long has been my bitter luck to be  
caught in the cross-fires of that false campaign.

Revision of  
S 4 - 1969

80

Peter Peri Sculptor, Quaker, Socialist 1899-1967

Alive, his bed and hearth claimed little space,  
<sup>shelved</sup>  
walled-round by debris of his art's demands;  
round-shouldered, slouching, acid-gummy heads,  
black beret on bare skull, a rabbit's face;  
though short, conspicuous in any place  
save ghetto or bazaar, he still <sup>commands</sup> demands,  
now dead, forever hereafter notice, for he stands  
a stubborn symbol of an awkward race.

A boy in Pesth, to Paris, to Berlin,  
in endless flight, to London, to his tail  
a vulnerable vanity was tied,  
sworn hierophant of peace that few may win,  
of peoples' sculpture fashion doomed to fail,  
for dreams he laboured, channelled, raged and died.

13. VIII

### Miss Murdoch

In the small classroom  
next to the girls' yard  
our teacher kept the front bench free  
to rest her bad leg on.

So I think of her seated  
statuesque, in profile;  
her left arm rests on the bench back  
her right hand keeps time

To our multiplication  
tables and repetitions  
or gives the nimble fist-signs  
for Fours, solfa.

13. VIII

End of my Time 82

### Middle Infant

I sat on the long form  
and did sums on my slate  
while the terrible Miss McCleary  
wagged her cane in front

The smell of jerseys, crumbs, etc.,  
the sound of screeching chalk,  
and the firmly shut windows  
established her kingdom.

A Middle Infant now,  
released from the high tiers,  
I was edging my way  
out into life.

The years would give me height,  
weight, words, problems;  
she, with her black tight corset,  
would stay there forever  
~~could only watch.~~

24. VIII

A small red-bearded Scot  
with a purple knitted vest,  
he wore a straw boater  
and shuffled in gym shoes.

Eccentric, you might say,  
and never guess the rest -

He was a Jacobite,  
and a French Royalist, and

just for good measure, a  
Muslim. He lived alone  
in Paris where we met  
forty years ago

Among the things he said  
"Bussed shouts are back  
again in the market:

a sure sign of autumn".

Sunday  
1972

25. VIII

Out 9 m Time  
44

St. Rosalie : Monte Pellegrino

High up the steep dark mountain  
the warm cave with the enormous candles,  
an unimpressive baroque church  
leaning against its glowing mouth,

The candles you bought in  
the gay stalls where the cars turned  
and carried up the long steps  
like ivory wands

to socket and melt with wagging flames,  
each in a handle of hot wax  
That glistened like the wet streaks  
down the smeared walls, flange-patches.

Beyond the first, lower room with the  
spiney of candles, the congregation  
crammed, seated with beads strung fingers  
or shouldered, resting,

Abside, round the glass-box  
holding the mantle sleeping girl  
afloat in a <sup>hook</sup> ~~mass~~ of rips,  
brooches and medallions.

As the priest, mess-vestments,  
shoke of sanctity, ~~and~~ marriage,  
~~and~~ religion, ~~and~~ the family -  
That much I caught among his words -  
- suited,  
a dark, bull-necked young man  
and a yellow girl in brides' white  
elbowed towards the glass box to lay  
her wilting bouquet upon it.

Sunday  
1912

25. VIII  
July 21<sup>st</sup> 86

Driving along the unfenced road  
in August dusk, the sun gone from  
an empty ~~great~~ sky, we overtook  
a man walking his dog on the turf.

The harked car we passed later,  
its side-lights on, a woman,  
shadow in the dark interior,  
silent, motionless

And fifty yards further, a runner  
in shorts passed, facing the side;  
and I thought of the distances  
of loneliness.

Abside, round the glass-box  
holding the marble sleeping girl  
afloat in a <sup>hark</sup> ~~sea~~ of ripples,  
brooches and medallions.

As the priest, mass-vestments,  
shoke of sanctity, ~~and~~ marriage,  
~~and~~ religion, ~~and~~ the family -  
That much I caught among his words -  
a <sup>- suited,</sup> ~~dent~~-bullnecked young man  
and a yellow girl in Indian white  
elbowed towards the glass box to lay  
her wilting bouquet upon it.

Sound up  
1972

25. VIII  
Gulf M 7  
86

Driving along the unfenced road  
in August dusk, the sun gone from  
an empty ~~great~~ sky, we overtook  
a man walking his dog on the turf.

The harked car we passed later,  
its side-lights on, a woman,  
shaded in the dark interior,  
silent, motionless

And fifty yards further, a runner  
in shorts passed, pacing steadily;  
and I thought of the distances  
of loneliness.

## A Foreign Visitor

Broadshouldered, with a fine black beard,  
 swarthy, over thirty, confident  
 open shirt with loose knotted bright scarf  
 a heavy gold chain, a delicate gold bracelet,  
 a ring with a stone flat as a grape  
 coat buttons set with gold, scalloped edges,  
 a Turkish painter, he introduced himself,  
 his car, a Jaguar 2, had broken down;  
 while it was being repaired  
 he had found his way to the gallery.

He displayed his album, photographs -  
 Lorkait, Sitka, Lainta neatly stamped:  
 Kenyetta, King Idris, Bourmedienne,  
 Queen Juliana, Prince Philip, Alec Stone,  
 the Presidents of Turkey, of Sudan,  
 assorted Arab princes, and Kaunda  
 looking further and all at ease

The funeral of John P. Kennedy,  
 with nineteen heads of state in the front row  
 the flapped gun carriage unbentured . . .

Unaccustomed to such company  
 I looked for a profile of Nassar  
 or the ~~dark~~ monolithic Makaris  
 clearly <sup>at</sup> ~~surely~~ a painted figure.

Distance would surely have excluded  
 Fidel Castro and Kim Il Sung;  
~~and the~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~was~~ Greek Colonel in the back,  
 this would be a matter of politics.  
~~At~~ <sup>Not</sup> apart from these, I could not discover  
 any principle (in the selection)  
 for exclusion.



28. VIII

We grope and fumble, testote,  
wade all challenge, charting each detour  
with staked precision  
but the blurring boys  
howl when we drone, induce  
and hug us friendly sweet  
upon the shards of silence.  
Where's the Trumpeter whose song  
will van the headlong marching, clear  
among the brightest quiddities,  
pelt - gay each mood yet cool  
as flower that roots, lifts, survives?

31. VIII. 70

90

### My Catholic Friend

I wonder what became of him,  
my small dark Catholic friend,  
light-footed, anticlerical,  
well used in incredulity,  
his home a country public house?

Lost in the drift of students  
briefly we came together,  
shared our novels' philosophies,  
defied our attitudes, agreed,  
and mocked our ignorant fellows.

With his with aid, I strode beyond  
the established limits I had urged  
against since boyhood. If I am free  
of all submission save what I ~~get~~ yield  
by willed consent, I owe him that.

A Firm our circles touched; the axes  
sparked heat and light, then spun short,  
the purple served. He won or lost  
from that charged instead anything?  
I wonder what became of him?

### An old Song re-sung

1.1X

I had thought that the hate  
of this old debate  
would wither and fade away,  
but the murdering men  
of Crossmaglen  
put poison in our lay.

1.1X.70

12

### Grain of My Timber

Since news from home <sup>makes much</sup> is ~~the~~ report  
of ~~anger~~, <sup>not</sup>, <sup>crisis</sup>, ~~hate~~, drum and bomb,  
if I went back, what should <sup>I find</sup> ~~surround~~  
secure, untroubled? Dipping gulls,  
dawn or green stores, genties spidered  
above red hulls, with, morning, night,  
strong tide of men across the bridge;  
ship's siren, <sup>howling</sup> <sup>hair</sup> clock <sup>tower</sup> ~~done~~;  
at street's end, hill; a <sup>hush-shod</sup> ~~tumbling~~ cart;  
black <sup>chimneys</sup> the factory <sup>smokestacks</sup>; mill dem swans;  
~~the~~ <sup>white</sup> ~~horsemen~~ <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>well</sup>;  
colours of house-brick; <sup>evening</sup> <sup>askew</sup> <sup>from</sup> <sup>safe</sup> <sup>to</sup>  
of chestnuts <sup>loose</sup> <sup>lost</sup> <sup>fallen</sup> gate;  
in crowds, the accents caught and placed;  
remembered faces older, scene;  
Reed's tilt in greeting; idiom Foo,  
of gesture: name a well-rubbed brass,  
or even slop-front altered...

The changing <sup>us</sup> ~~forms~~ <sup>old known</sup> streets  
changes to all cities' streets, glass tall;  
new new estates humped up the slopes;  
black gutted quarters, banniced  
of grimy metal, khaki men  
at corners yawning. armoured truck  
breasting the wire.

If, instead,  
I limped the roads beyond, and clawed  
the storied landscape for support,  
hills would be hills, trees trees, the ways  
for out <sup>in</sup> ~~under~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~under~~ - saw where the roads  
of bustling traffic cut corners,  
broadened, dulled; - but country places,  
spire among trees, crossroads market,  
deep in glen - cleft, or <sup>bring stream</sup> ~~up~~ ~~down~~;  
at rutted lanes end lost, or perched  
on small round hills, where sharp peaks mark  
the world's dark limits; ruins prop  
<sup>gable</sup>  
one tower against the creeping bog:

94  
my country places would remain,  
each webbed with summer, youth,  
threaded with legend, history, myth,  
grain of my timber, how I grew;  
my syntax, cadence, rhetoric,  
the grammar of my dialect.

But from nason, my loard of names  
rings here and there with cracked wry soans.  
Burntollet beats with <sup>ancient</sup> ~~trost~~ <sup>trods</sup> ~~trost~~ <sup>trods</sup> ~~trost~~ <sup>trods</sup> ~~trost~~  
not bedded safely underground  
with holocauste, with arrowholes.

With that jared heart dare I repeat  
the old folkrim of Crossmaglen?

So memory's construct, wrought with love,  
woven of words I lived for, proves  
on pulse, and taken as truth itself,  
falls all asunder.

Was it a lie

The hope I harboured, nurtured,  
its folk my kin, its heart my heart,  
its comely lands and waters mine  
To share in <sup>humble</sup> brotherhood?

Exile's always exile from a dream.

1971

96

17-1-71

With the running out of time  
the keeping-up of years  
the steady beat of time  
affronts my chested years

Thought leaks, the slack words trail,  
form rhythms no longer stride  
and with this muffled ~~scale~~ scale  
I must be satisfied.

17. 1. 71

## First Ride

Uncle Dick gave me  
 my first ride in a <sup>motor</sup> car  
 I can recall the excitement  
 of the bright morning  
 the high machine at the gate  
 and my uncle cranking the handle,  
 his floppy cap, his goggles above the peak,  
 his cowboy's gauntlets,  
 and Aunt Bertha and my mother  
 with coloured scarves tying down their hats  
 and veils, tho' veils were not unusual to this occasion  
 (my grandmother's black bonnet  
 was always securely anchored -)  
 and the climbing up to the seats  
 and the hood juddered down at the back  
 like a lovely-<sup>smiled</sup> reefed sail  
 and the doors banged tight with a cab-door sound  
 and everybody talking

as ledge-high we floeked  
 between the blossoming Pasture wells  
 of that June morning  
 and my uncle's <sup>mastily</sup> superlative stall in negotiating  
 thro' a drift of straggling cattle  
 and men with horses drawing to one side  
 and children at gates waving

<sup>kind of a cab</sup>  
 But of myself, I have no recollection  
 what I <sup>looked like</sup> was wearing, when I sat;  
 it seems not that I observed this event  
 but somehow contained it.

9 Pass

18/19.1 June  
C. G. M. J. M.

### The Scar

There's not the slightest chance I might recover  
 one syllable of all that sick men said,  
 beating when my great-grandmother's slattern,  
 and begging, I was told, a piece of bread,  
 for on his tainted breath that hung infection  
 reek from the cabins of the stricken west,  
 the shores of black potato-stalks, the spittle  
 mottled with poison in his rattling chest;  
 and she who, by her nature, quickly answered,  
 accepted in return the famine-<sup>comprolation</sup> piece;  
 and that chance meeting, that brief <sup>comprolation</sup> ~~concession~~  
 consented me of the landing tower.

Tho' much I cherish his outside than vision,  
 and much they prize I have no right to share,  
 yet in that woman's end I found my nation;  
 the old wound aches and stews (its tell-tale) near  
 (the fellow)

20.1.71

100

### The Man from Bangalore

Spiced by the British Council  
 to study modern techniques  
 the gentle little Hindu (<sup>curator</sup> 32, married, 2 children)  
 from a museum in Bengal)  
 traced the public galleries,  
 inspected the picture store, the print room, the <sup>4</sup> loading bay,  
 the work room, the <sup>5</sup> lift,  
 and returned to my office  
 where I waited his questions

One problem he raised with some seriousness:

"You have Indian workers employed here?"

Were there no Englishmen waiting?"

I explained that after interviewing <sup>the best</sup> all applicants  
 we appointed the most suitable for our purpose,

(irrespective of colour or race.)

He nodded mild approval, but inquired

"Did you not give them a taste?"

## Executives Third Jan

The day after the seminar

I ~~re-encountered~~ <sup>encountered</sup> a colleague whom I had caught  
somewhere in that maze of programme - budgeting  
issue analysis  
and cost effectiveness.

So, knowing my man, I stopped to ask

"How is your infrastructure this old morning?"

"Nearly frozen-off". "And the monitoring?"

"I'm trying my best to give it up."

And the two elderly luddites

strode off in their separate ways,

smiling, <sup>each</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~own~~ ~~part~~ } caressing

~~caressing the spanner~~ } the spanner in his pocket.

A split-second permitted me to guess  
that he pronounced the word test with a <sup>diphthong</sup> ~~diphthong~~.

Then he continued:

"In these things there is often backdoorism.

A man may have a letter (in his hand) from the Minister:  
if you make him a test it is an advantage ..."

Being lost, and a tribal society myself,

I approached the difficulty, as I needed

the seeming backdoorists I had known

(in my native city, both expert and clumsy, )

as I thought that if the <sup>latter</sup> little men had some Eileen

modern techniques, he certainly knew the old ones.

24/25-1.71

## Six o'clock News

Numbly we wait; the news comes on,  
familiar music, brightening screen,  
our fears confined to letters spelled,  
against the flare of drifting flames,  
crackle of make-up, running men  
helmet-anonymous with shields.

We press towards the rioters,  
the distances, the retreating slopes,  
faceless till one is grabbed and dragged  
across the lens a forgotten lad,  
whose brick, or neighbour's brick, has smacked  
a policeman's jaw, whose fan-clenched foot  
has fired a house or flung a bomb

As we expect on city leads  
the world once more.

Post Office strike.

104

more scenes lost, the African  
invaders' trial, war as costs,  
the Premier with that plastic gun  
come back from Stubborn compromise,  
that queue for our attention, thrust  
to fix their places on the 'agenda  
of pity, anxiety, despair

## II

We smother <sup>feeling</sup> our comfort from the thought  
this latest riot's protestant,  
the watching world can judge the fault  
runs down the cliff-face, all is poised  
for sheer collapse, then fissured state,  
in our hearts we know the end  
must be complete and terrible.



26.1.71

## Song's motivation.

In the dark an hour before dawn  
a thrush perched on our TV aerial  
was sounding - forth, loud, clear,  
and abundantly confident.

What motivated that great song?  
Challenge to potential rivals  
showing-off to prospective mate,  
or simply job-satisfaction?

Helen & Wlostermen

27/9 - 1.71

106

## Strangers and Neighbours

The Jews of my childhood were  
resident ~~neighbours~~ strangers and neighbours  
not like the flesh gypsies  
once a year with clothes-<sup>lace</sup> pegs, and laces,  
or the occasional organ-grinders  
with ear-rings and beautiful parrots;  
They lived among us, ~~two~~ doors away,  
they shuffled along our street.  
You recognised their features as foreign  
and exaggerated their accent,  
holding your nose to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~side~~ <sup>side</sup> with ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~finger~~ <sup>finger</sup>  
knew their names, Rosenfield, Weimer, Eben,  
surprised at ~~the~~ <sup>some with off-</sup> ~~names~~ <sup>of-</sup> names, like Gordon or Ross.  
Though you played readily enough  
with their youngsters after school  
you did not, as with your true friends,  
run in and out of their houses.  
which, anyway smelt of hot olive-oil.  
They were often handsome when young

but usually ran to fat,

quickly losing their looks.

They seldom had comfortable feet:

I thought that they walked there

because of <sup>the</sup> Wandering Jew. <sup>walks the long & weary way</sup> <sup>lets</sup>

They followed no handicrafts

except that of baking bread,

unleavened bread, then parchment

dry biscuit. For the rest,

they lent out money to poor people,

sold articles on instalments.

They kept their Sunday a Saturday,

had a Persian feast called the Persian

and a silly New Year, at what <sup>is</sup> New Year,

called their flat-foot minister

Rebbit; he wore a long beard.

Their coffins were cheaply constructed

of onion-boxes <sup>thin</sup> and black cloth.

I had never been to Palestine,

Israel, where they are retired,

so I do not know if <sup>Lebanon</sup> handwork

has made them more like us,

or like the leatherly peasants

I have seen in other countries:

but I remember that the dark,

flourid wrists of the more prosperous

were demure and low in shape

and very conspicuous.

I cannot imagine what

a nation of these would be like.

Nevertheless, I have been to Auschwitz

once, when a delegate,

had passed through the prison gate

with the metal Russian motto

walked along the straight paths round

the barracks of undressed bricks,

and I have felt my heart turn,

and my eyes burn dry beyond tears

at the swells and billows of human hair

in the long museum showcase:  
inextricably tangled like a  
rusty scribe sand-churning wheel,  
guzzled tufts, plants, ringlets,  
blonde, brown, black, lank, curling;  
the cropped heads of that harvest  
long gone into the furnace.

And, once in Kafka's Prague, I  
went to the ancient synagogue,  
an architectural obscurity,  
a <sup>tiny</sup> Gothic Jewish church,  
and, nearby, stepped where I could  
among the close-stacked headstones  
where the long centuries huddle under the  
bulging turf in the miniature graveyard;  
<sup>so many dead are housed into it:</sup>  
and so I had some pity and much respect  
for a patient, enduring people.

When we <sup>found</sup> went to the Portuguese

synagogue in Amsterdam shut,  
it was opened for us by the caretaker's  
daughter that winter <sup>morning</sup> day,  
and inside the cold shell I saw  
the woodwork and metal neglected,  
as if no one cared now, and it  
was no longer a holy place.  
So I was surprised when my friend,  
who is not an orthodox Jew,  
fumbled round the shelves and benches  
until, in a corner, he found  
a dusty skull cap and carefully  
put it on his bare head.

30.I.71

When I met the artist from Berlin  
after some years, I remarked  
that she hadn't changed a bit.  
So she said there was a story  
told about Brecht, that when someone  
said he hadn't changed, he turned pale.

22/5 .II. 71

112

I bought this watercolour years ago;  
the three crisp notes enriched our Threadbare friend,  
a careful artist, resolute and slow,  
his skill directed to enduring end.  
Not fugitive its tints, nor cheaply wrought,  
on paper of the finest quality,  
sealed by the rigour of his earnest thought,  
its proper care devolved by right on me.

This honest look observed, safe under glass  
and never hung against a sunlit wall,  
I spare a humbling glance each time I pass  
its mute remonstrance daily in the hall;  
of all this singular transaction - cost  
how much survives, how much may have been lost

27/8-11 71

Coming out of the memorial service  
for a great man in this English town  
I encountered the catholic priest, a friendly man  
from my own country - once in his native village  
I found my self caught in the stir of a cattle-fair -  
After our salutations, knowing that he shared  
the same load of troubled anxiety I said  
The news is still bad from home, as he replied  
God help us.  
Yes, ~~and~~. When will it ever end?  
And I said: Did you hear,  
two policemen shot in Andryne last night?  
And he I didn't know; and covered his eyes  
with his hand, and stood a moment, silent.  
A kindly man, and a just man. I had seen him  
marching among the forces of protest  
for social justice and human dignity.

27. 11. 71

114

Lorentz

In this room here, this very room,  
one evening when we had friends in to meet him,  
the Polish museum curator told us how  
when he had been sentenced to be shot -  
and was being marched out with the others  
in a long line to the yard for execution  
there was a door to the left open, in the wall:  
the others plodded on, eyes down, unseeing;  
when he came to the door he turned left  
and marched through and none followed him  
or shouted for him to stop.

And so after Twenty five years  
he sat here in this corner beside the fire,  
very likely in the actual chair,  
telling us about it.

## Sunset and Evening Star

we please be upon place by 10.45 am.

When he had finished his address,  
alluding to the public virtues of the deceased,  
and bringing in a few references to life after death,  
truth, unconquering, exactly geared  
to the understanding <sup>dent</sup> of his audience,  
the bishop <sup>lets</sup> ~~slides~~ <sup>trips</sup> quickly down from the pulpit

And after the prayers and the benediction,  
tall in front of the long altar,  
he leads the slow procession to the West Door.  
There he <sup>stands at one side,</sup> ~~stands~~ <sup>edges</sup> and shakes hands with the mourners  
the widow, the married daughters, the sons in law,  
the lady Mayors and the Lord Mayor,  
as the representatives of / neighboring municipalities  
distinguished by their claims of office,  
remembering a great many faces and some names -  
finally, when all have been greeted warmly,

he retires to disengage from his jewelry  
and the vest,  
and drives home for lunch with his large sister,  
having duly played his part in the musical service  
for a shrewd and very able priest  
who knew whom to <sup>salute, acknowledge, refer to</sup> please, <sup>manipulate,</sup>  
and whom to ignore  
<sup>studying along</sup>  
~~Letting~~ in the Town Hall corridor.

17.4.71

The woodworker talked of his craft at length,  
his tools, gouge, chisel, the nature of wood,  
communion-table with angels, bishop's stall,  
and the sculptures he made between paying jobs,  
figurative, because the heart of art is man -  
not that he's against abstract work,  
in any medium. A man does what he can:  
if abstract, that too is his happiness -  
as this wood-craft is mine.

17.4.71

118

## 2 a Lurgan Bar

by chance  
Three men in an Irish pub together:  
The old prize-fighter with a raddled face,  
forever sprawling, descending with light steps;  
between steps, rocking, nodding, wanting a treat.  
Along the bar - and smiling on his stool  
the hand-tattooist next, lost with that stall,  
his incredible masterpiece a crucifixion  
needled across and down a young priest's back;  
and third, amused, not making, the tall poet,  
his thought and utterance haunted by a stammer,  
and found the studied wealth, the shortened line  
To make some sense of both to share with us.  
his chosen companions.

17/18-V-71

## Dungannon Cattle Market

2 The concrete shed among the calves  
 drowsing, shaky, red eyes to the wall  
 he <sup>desired them</sup> ~~was named~~, by colour, guessed at Charolais,  
 grey, fawn, white, confirmed in this  
 by fresh-faced dealer <sup>fluent</sup> ready with their merit  
 fast growers, fair for beef. The Terence  
 have been enquiring ... With good hoteners  
 he seized his chance and asked us if we'd take  
 with diffidence  
 a bit of paper from him, a tract apiece,  
 out of his inside pocket  
 then launched into his theme, Row Tom Peard  
 the atheist (untrue) died in despair  
 (apocalyptic), and how another man  
 who had two sons 'Jergone in wickedness'  
 called them to his bed before he went -  
 that talk was all of death and how to die  
 to be assured of everlasting life ...  
 Yet, as he spoke, his rough hand strokes the flanks  
 of a grey calf whose purpose was its death  
 and all round roared the beasts that were to die -  
 In many other families they had their god.

27.V-71

120

Nothing lifts my heart  
 like the singing of larks:  
 after a snatched breakfast  
 I step out into the morning,  
 a prose-day before me  
 of letters and telephones,  
 and at the turn of the road  
 where the green fields spread  
 the sky above is <sup>braced</sup> skinned with bird song  
 and I stride to the bus stop, Terminus  
 a younger man.



27/5.V.71

## Disaster.

At this moment lava travels  
-down the long Sicilian slope;  
in Turkish rubble, a limb  
twitches, then stiffens.

### Vineyards

overwhelmed, -ash in the mouth  
picking over  
cinders for ~~bread~~ bread:  
a long life of markets, mosque  
harvests  
fast-days, hunger, closes, or one  
hardly opened, shuts.

### Rage, pity

shake us as the camera pans,  
but acceptance reasserts  
our rationality.

### We will step

tiptoe Fenomeno anxiously  
over the perilous earth-crust  
briefly, the logic of this slipping,

for we accept the nature of things,  
from our minds which are not equipped  
to weep or bleed.

### The skinny old

woman in black watches her wall  
collapse as rocks fumble, stones bow  
inesistibly down, a bright door -  
key hanging at her lean hip

29.V.71

## My Uncle

"My uncle", the little girl calls him  
who comes in to visit my wife  
when games ball or she falls out  
with her friends.

He walks past her at all hours,  
his white head bent on narrow shoulders  
plodding alone intent, always going  
from or to the house where he sleeps.

I gave him a lift once -  
the occasion of our only conversation -  
we talked holidays, it being near that season,  
and he remarked that <sup>the previous</sup> best summer  
he had been to Iceland.

And I thought suddenly  
of the <sup>harsh</sup> rocky landscape as the helmeted warriors

and the laughter in the great halls,  
of Eric Bloodaxe and Magnus Bareleg,  
of Keatna brought dead to Beithkeed  
and the Fearless Gudrun.

My uncle 'trotts' forever  
clenched in his silent dream,  
beset by a houseful of sturdy children,  
a lone sister - and her cheerful husband  
- and a hidden <sup>old</sup> grandmother.  
aged

29.V.71

married with no children, Joe  
always went to work so early  
that I only glimpsed him every evening,  
his curly head bent over another car  
jacked <sup>in</sup> at the open mouth of his garage,  
his own MG parked at the kerb:  
when it grew dark his face was lit up  
by a handlamp or a long flex.

But one afternoon I hessed him  
already postured as usual,  
and thought it odd, till I recalled that  
his factory was shut by a one-day strike.

Since  
after someone informed the  
Income Tax authorities  
<sup>have not</sup>  
I ~~never~~ set eyes on him again,  
or on the MG <sup>crunched</sup> ~~was~~ at the gate.

29.V.71

126

## Equilibrium

Every morning as I leave for the office  
the printer who works on the evening paper,  
a large man with black eyebrows,  
hesses me with his big dog on a lead:  
he wears a cloth cap and rubber boots,  
and heads for the rough field round the corner.

He has achieved, you might think,  
some sort of balance.

30/31.V.71

## Patriotism

Riddled by frustration and failure  
To a resonant shell and only,  
The high dream nevertheless finds flesh  
in plotted acts of Terror;  
The sense Patriots plant their explosives,  
and the terrible beauty gutters-out  
in a child's fractured skull, and a  
crowd of agonized lads peering at  
the dead soldier on the stretcher.

31.V

126

The illiterate and incoherent  
american pop singer  
closing his performance  
had a kind word to say  
for our "cute little country"

little it may be  
but it has a language  
obviously quite  
out of his reach and beyond  
his comprehension.

1969 Jan 8.1x - 30.x1 To 2.1x.69 : 29 : 574

Sept: 19 - 414

included in

Oct: 11 - 200

[Total 1969 61: 1231]

Nov: 2 - 43

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1970

Feb: 4 - 71

March 6 - 88

March 1 - 104

April 1 - 24.

May 1 - 14

August 8 - 146

Sept. 2 - 64

1970

[23.511]

1971

January: 9 - 223

February: 4 - 69

May: 10 - 139

[23 - 431] to end of May

*Century*

REF. D59

A J. W. Dickinson Product