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A5 (210mm x 148mm)

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Feint
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Counterbooks	Feint	Narrow Feint	Single Cash	Double Cash	Indexed A-Z	Ruled Feint
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10" x 8"	●				10" x 8"	
9" x 7"	●	●	●		9" x 7"	●
A5 (210mm x 148mm)	●		●		A5 (210mm x 148mm)	●
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Book XXX

June 1971 - 1975

Poems by John Hewitt

June
1-2-3-7-15

Three Monuments and a Journey: the Castle, the High Cross,
the Round Tower

for John Montague

With a named destination To
reach before nightfall
round the broad inland water,
that Town by the sea,
we plotted our leisurely
journey to occupy
the light of an April day
and had some left over,
with three monuments, one I knew
two I had heard of, read of,
that peg the complicated map
of our national past.

Up the steep rutted track
past the new schoolhouse,
we parked near a prosperous farm
behind hewer hedges,
and stepped from the bulging pillars
among the bushes,

Thro' tangled grasses bent heavy
with ^{gelling} seething rain-drops
to the bleak ruin remembered
as Mountjoy's Castle,
a plain block of clumsy
undressed stone
without dignity or restraint
or pretension to style,
roofless, thick anonymous walls
with deep slab-sills
where Planters thrust their muskets
against the tribes,
a severe sad place that had known
the enmity of our peoples.

Then by well-surfaced roads
now flat at lake-level
the going easy, save once
checked by a drift of cattle,
with a cow that we thought all
by her stagger and tremors
till the unperturbed driver told us
that she was ready to calve,

we arrived at the sign-post
and a stride or two brought us
to the little walled hill-top
with railings, headstones, unroofed church,
and the High Cross of Arboe,
its panels of sculpture weathered
almost beyond meaning
the remote legendary gestures
hardly legible to be guessed.

But as I drew breath, trying
to marvel at the old faith
and experience once more
the awe and magic of wrought stone
and expect the ^{imagined} fensured masons
and the hooded snipers,
fists and battalions, myriads
of tiny black flies
-patrolling, possessing
the clinging, drizzling mist,
and irking every inch of skin
so next my senses
I had none to leave open

for imagination. Therefore
no shadows ^{or sound} emerged from the stones.

I heard only

the low stir of water

among the lake's grasses:

we retreated as from one of
the plagues of Egypt.

Then after an hour or two hours
driving through shrouds of rain

along trim new highways
with occasional traffic

we found the right town and turned
the turning to take

past the dark hospital where
my ailing old mother died,

to the Steeple toward
now a municipal park

and now the tapering shaft of our target
beyond the laurels and rhododendrons

and stepped from the gravel to
the short turf where the Tower rose
that bare, stark, silent

self-contained store - needle

We had come from an ancient
embattled place stronghold

empty, without voice or echo,

a husk of old wars,

- and the blurred rite of an

unimaginable religion

to this precise statement

of defence and defiance,

- a challenge, its door high

out of all reach, impenetrable

to leave or enter.

There is, the legend has it,

the stump of such an edifice

enclosed in the Park of the church tower

built by my people

in the fruitful country of

our Irish beginning

when we took this earth and air

as our patrimony,

and, for good and evil, accepted

its fate as our own.

There's maybe a Round Tower
needling through my nature,
defensive, defiant,
shy behind strong walls,
difficult to break through,
unwilling to admit, the
last word characteristically
ambiguous

Yet our hearts need no fortresses,
but something like a High Cross
to gather round, with beautiful panels
of merciful stories
where of how men found peace and were glad
to be free and forgiven.

Out of My Turn

16/17. VIII. 71

Bogside

Shielded, vague soldiers, inured, ^{crouch} stand alert:
between tall houses down the blackened street,
the hurled stones pour hurt-instinct aims to hurt;
frustration ^{bursts in} splashes flame about their feet.
^{starts in}

Lads who at ease had tossed a laughing ball
or, ganged in teams, pursued ^{some} their stunting game,
beat ^{angry} urgent fists against that sullen wall
of faceless fears which ^{now} they at last ^{they} see name.

Night after night the city yields a stage
with peak of drama for the pointless day,
where shadows offer stature, rôles to play,
^{angry} hissing the gestures which could purge in rage
the slights, the wrongs, the long indignities,
the flinty core within each heart-defies.

18.VIII-71

Spectrum

A lad in faded jeans and
a red sleeveless pullover
walked into the art show
and became part of it,

with the blue well-covering
and the red metal sculpture
and the blue sky in a
figurative canvas

and a red cylinder in
a kinetic construction,
as if the lost piece of the
mosaic had been found.

And I thought afterwards
of a small oil painting by,
say, James Arthur O'Connor,
a little landscape:

against the dark foliage

and the dark mossy boulders
a tiny figure on the
brown path, in a scarlet cloak.

There may be no such parcel:
if I have imagined it
I must thank that lad in jeans
with the red sleeveless pullover.

5. IX. 71

I used to think lightly of any
who played an instrument,
the skill and technique, the
fingering learnt.

Akin in much to the singer,
the actor the football player
earning brisk applause and taking
his talent into the clay.

and considered how much more significant
were we who wrought with words
which properly structured might raise
a monument durable as time.

It is all, I realise now,
fairly relative,
a harper of Carthage has left
no more nor less than its best poet.

End of My Time

9. Dec 22/8. IX. 71

Clogh - Bir: for Roberta

Our looked-for journey to the planned occasion -
a poet's celebration, bronze bust, lecture -
thrust us, not expecting, thro small places
where you had lived sharp moments of your past,
your childhood past; among green shenglers,
waged country air and fare for your pale face,
a farmhouse holiday from the grey street,
but found it not all skipping in the sun,
fenced round with unanticipated tasks,
helping round the place, with the new baby
dishes and pans, made-beds, henk-to sweets
Sunday trap-drive to Meeting over a shop
where a stiff set & elier, started with fault.
So you recalled as first of roads evoked,
name over ^{street-} window, signpost, milestone.

As we threaded, beads on our truck line,
the folk-une names of Augher, Clogher,
we paused at Clogher short of Fivemiletown,
and faced up hill its long tidy street
to Saint Macartan's, that plain church.

Protestant,
 eighteenth century Gothic, ~~Church of Ireland~~,
 with the battered crosses, and inside
 the inner porch walled with prints, frames, faces,
 Clogh-Oiri, stripped of its gold, oracle-
 -stone kings once heeded, one of the three
 Sacred Stones when queens sunned at Ailbeach.

Time gone absent, all the best forgotten,
 myth, legend, history, yours, mine, ours;
 but strongest fungus, it was your best
 that answered you and stirred for me with love
 who seldom name such stirrings or yield words
 for the pulses of an accepting heart.

Standing there I saw the lonely child
 with the black tossing head and the dark brow
 as intense and definite as now,
 as talkable, now, musing by my side,
 among queens, heroes, bards, kneeling hearts,
 immortally congregated, That child's face
 known before time, known forever after,
 part of the fabric of which I am made.

30. XI. 71

The wood is sparse and thinner now,
 bald earth, lank grass, as I walk through
 where leaves in generations once
 made stepping soft for younger bones.

The Burnt Post

There's a pub here called The Burnt Post -
I find this name somewhat disconcerting.

The Phantom Coach is easy; it's not far
from the municipal crematorium:

The Saracen's Head reminds me
that the English are an old nation
and remember many Crusaders
riding out and few returning.

But The Burnt Post, its ^{chained} ^{notched with} ^{blades} ^{and} ^{horns} ^{and} ^{horns}
~~chained with blades and horns~~
is more difficult to place.

I have seen the name on old maps
when this city's suburbs / were a scatter of hamlets.

Maybe it began with
some small misadventure,
like the ^{accidental} burning / down of a thatched dwelling - house -
the Protestant martyrs / were immolated elsewhere -
- and survived as a landmark
for waggoners and packmen,
as now, for friends with cars.

Prison Row

Since my intention is to leave
this place six months from now,
whenever possible I choose my way
along the oldest thoroughfare:
step up from the traffic into Prison Row,
past the black-and-white cottages,
those at the corner spurned,
the rest authentic,
the distinction clear at the point
where the wood remembers the adze.

Beyond these, behind the railings
the ^{ivy-wrapped} grey stumps of the deep porch
from whence the Cathedral ran
along the Hill-Tops -
you'll find that name on - a plate
where the steep side-lane cuts through
the ^{front} ~~road~~ of red brick and glassy bars.

And on the right, Holy Trinity with its graves -
inside, the miserables, the quiet lecture,

the stone-pulpit cut ^{out of} the column
the long epitaph of Dr Philemon Hottelard
with its whimsical Latin pun -
I recall these, passing,
and remark, on the left hand,
the long rectangle of grass
where the ~~wood~~ timber bell tower once stood -
too weighty for the high thin spire,
they were taken down - the bells -
and hung in a hut built for them,
like an ^{wingless} ~~embalmed~~ windmill;
this too was removed two years ago
when they scabbled on that ground
for Godwin's bones but found little.
I regret its absence, yet feel a little proud,
although my span of years here is narrow
in a long documented history,
that I can remember something ^{out} of the past
which has left no trace
outside mortal memory.
Walking along Posing Row
I listen carefully.

Court of the Tower

27. XII. 71

17

The Court Fort

The site ^{uncovered from the air,} suggested ~~in a general photograph,~~
at ground level confirmed, with the hill
easily defensible in an elbow of the river,
a steep escarpment, wooded, to the ~~west~~ ^{north};
the river broader once, these ploughed fields marsh.

After stripping the sods, by scrutiny
of discoloured soils they were able
to mark out with string, the granary,
the barnade block, the centurion's quarters,
dig out the water ^{Tank} cistern and the cess-pit,
and set up the ^{eastward} ~~eastward~~ rampart ^{bank} ~~bank~~ ^{bank} ~~bank~~ of ^{soil},
topping it with a ^{palisade} ~~wooden~~ ~~brush~~ work
after the Roman fashion.

a scatter of ^{coins, brooches, shreds,} ~~small coins,~~ ^{pieces of} metal,
gave the span of its occupation;
a rallying post for Vespasian's legions
protecting the straight roads, the Fosse Way,
when the barbarians pressed.

This high timber gateway, which you now see
was entirely constructed by soldiers
using the old Roman methods
according to the Roman techniques
as a practical workshop exercise.

Like the Romans also, they may ^{scarcely} receive ~~some~~
further experience in a beleaguered colony,
for, daily the public prints and the moving pictures
bring us news of the barbarians.

End of My Time Threshers

28.11.71

I.M. W.J. McC 1900-1971

This slow, ^{private} man, a cautious paradigm
of small singular ^a disasters,
mistake-
disaster - prone, shut-off from life
by his own nature, undignified
with any faction. Tragedy
demands a noble stature marred,
the tall potential flawed and felled,
gifts promised offering betrayed.

A certain gift for colour, tone,
offered some memorable themes,
selected paper, proper brush
and proven pigment organised;
but throttled these with theory,
close-printed words, discursive, thought
which only grudging a few filled frames,
the niggard yield of thwarted skill.

That such constricted feeling, will,
which swaddled, smothered all, was fixed
in some involved esthology

supposes an elaborate
system beyond his reach. To set
that cracked jaw badly, split that skull,
Robble those years with ^{his} penury,
argues a lack of mercy somewhere.

29. XII. 71

Legionary at The Hunt (A.D. 60)

Here once a legionary may have watched
for stur in the thick scrub as further men
invaded the rough landscape with their thrust,
betrayed by dipping branch or cracking twig;
a broad, strong veteran, scarred with many wars,
who, when a strapping soldier, on ^{far} a hill
saw three pegged malefactors looted up,
in that dry country closer to the sun,
and heard the midmost give a terrible cry.
Would he have recollected this, from all
the roads and seas he travelled, thronged with life?
or, as he gazed here in the chill ^{northern} ~~half~~ light,
was it ~~half~~ home he dreamed, the vineyard slope,
or the scythe-wheeled chariot's crowding - in?

A Difficult Man

3011. XII. 7,

I

He was boring often, with his ^{labourer's} tedious talk, describing some obscure technical process in tedious detail, ~~in tedious detail, annoying too in his stubborn postures,~~ annoying too in his stubborn postures, for instance, about not painting with colours because he was "thinking in oils". Even the meticulous manner in which he refolded his scarf before putting on his overcoat, seemed surely designed to delay his departure (indefinitely)

This lack of initiative was exasperating; equipped with a host of good reasons for not making a decision. Yet when he got a job, however brief, his first hour he spent in odd ways, pocket torch when he needed shots, ~~on~~ buying himself an expensive patent pipe, French, with a variety of cooling devices, complete with a neat little pouch to carry it in — He got me this years after with ^{not} hardly a ^{trace} hint of use.

II

Yet when all is considered, let me say this: on summer Sunday evening nearly forty years ago,

when we three had had a day's picnic at Doreyoe — he'd got so far as drawing the church on the canvas board — we missed the last bus — and had to walk to Parkgate ^{town} To catch a later bus on another route into the city, and as we followed steadily the long slope of the land, where houses with slated roofs and whitewashed gables, corrugated iron sheds and old thatched outbuildings, hedges and trees and fields of potatoes — and grazing — were held in the side-long light of the setting sun, he pointed out and named the colours of the shadows on a roof, on a gable, a pillar, on every surface, in the dark furrows between the growing rows among the cut swathes of hay — and the heavy grasses: the colour of sunlight eroded into the colour of shadow, a demonstration of the Impressionist theory. Because of him I look for colour in shadow; very few here taught me ^{any} ^{things} ^{as} ^{much} ^{as} ^{more} ^{than} that.

The Dream.

Out of a comfortable dream

I woke to hear your voice:

"It's only six o'clock."

So seeing that the dark

confirmed the time, morning, winter,

I shut my eyes, resumed the dream.

Whatever symbols may hover round

with literary overtones

or images derived

from diploma galleries,

the old tired couples, dark and dawn,

sleep and waking, life and dream -

if only it were

some sort of allegory! -

in itself it was

a satisfactory sensation,

a rounded experience.

Poems in 1972

31.1.72

Symbols

These are my symbols: an old stone bridge
a rough stone circle, a sculptured bird,
a living bird, curled or gemet,
a round tower, a tree, and the grain
of a sawn-plate. Make what you will
of these, and add to fill the chart,
a hillside for the ^{stone} circle and the tree
and, under the bridge, set shallow stream
brown from the bare mountain, ^{rippling} for space
over pebbles
a personal landscape in my thought;
landscape the tower can stand in,
curled fly over, and the felled tree
open its green to weather, and a plinth,
bridge-copy, weathered rock, ^{tree stumps} on ledge
to place the sculptured bird on.

8.11.72 21

Mosaic.

A man may objectively inhabit
a role in history,
unwillingly or with devotion,
soldier, functionary, insurgent,
engaging himself - as an instrument
of ^{required} portability or ^{necessary} experience.

But the bye-standers accidentally involved,
the child run-over by the army truck,
the young woman strayed into the line of fire
are marginalia only,
normally excluded from the documents.

History is selective - Give us instead
the whole mosaic, the tesserae
and the cement between the tesserae,
that we may just if a period indeed
has a pattern, and not merely
a handful of coloured stones in the dust.

Read in
Beffost & Dutton
No lines

Just Jones

4/6 II.72

Crave of My Time

Neither an Elegy nor a Manifesto

Bear in mind these dead.

I can find no plainer words:

I dare not use words

that loaded-word, Remember;

for your memory is a cruel web

Threaded from Thorn to Thorn across

a hedge of dead bremble heavy
with haptic atoms

I cannot urge or beg you

to pray for anyone ^{or anything} at all.

for prayer in this green island

is tarnished with stale breath,

worn smooth and characterless

as an ^{old} ancient flagstone, trafficked

with journeys no longer credible

from ~~legendary~~ places

to lost-destinations.

The careful words of my injunction

are unbetonned, as neutral

and unshred, as any I know:

They propose, no more, thoughtful response;
they do not ^{to sound} vibrate with ^{the drum beats} overtones

of patriotism, loyalty, martyrdom, sacrifice.

For many years I have considered words,

their origins, uses, ambiguities, decay,

~~hoping that sometime I may learn~~

~~to express any thought and feelings~~

~~with precision~~

So
But, since I am one of you, I know too well

how, with your generations, once-resonant words
become ^{written letters} dry bones in a bowl

falling to dust, with no more than

a faint arena as they ^{run} drift through your fingers,

become, perhaps, charms, - as we call them,

or cures, for old ailments for which

the Pharmacopoeia has long since

provided other peoples with specific remedies;

groundsel, garlic, dandelion, yarrow ...

So I say only: Bear in mind

these men and lads killed in the streets,

but do not differentiate between
those deliberately gunned-down
and those caught by unaddressed bullets;
such distinctions are not now relevant.

Bear in mind the small child hit
by the anonymous rocket,
the man shot at his own fireside
with his staring family round him,
the elderly Salvationist wife
making tea for the foreman
when the wall collapsed,
and the garrulous neighbours at the bar
when the bomb exploded near them,
the glacialating deaf-mute skinned
by the soldier's rifle in the town-square,
and the policeman dismembered
by the booby-trap in the ear.

I could have made a list of gazettees,
cadenced like a ballad or a folksong
of the place-names where these several deaths occurred.
but if we are always to continue dancing
thro' the same stencilled rhythms
there will be new names surely, and

the old names will carry
new cargoes of grief.

helpful

I might have noted a ~~series~~ list
of the names of all the dead;
but these could be ~~offered~~ effectively be presented
effectively only in small batches,
like a ^{letter} tablet in a village church
valued while everyone knew everyone
or, longer, while family names persist.

Accident, ^{mistaken} ~~ill-luck~~, disease, coincidence
of genetic factors, or social circumstance
may summon courage, resolution, sympathy,
to whatever degree one is engaged:
natural disasters of lava and hurricane,
famine or flood in far countries, will evoke
compassion for the thin-shanked survivors.
Patriotism has to do with keeping
the band in good heart, the community
ordered with justice and mercy:
this will enlist loyalty and courage often,
and sacrifice, sometimes even martyrdom.
Bear these eventualities in mind also;
they will concern you for ever:
but, at this moment, bear in mind these dead.

No verse written hereafter in 1972

54
Just poem at Stebman's Lane

8.1.73

34
A January Morning

In the bare thorn against the fence,
branches a black scumble on grey sky,
a dark bird nests.

Before the close leaves gather
what will have fallen on this stricken town?

How many will have suffered,

because our listless will

sits, each on its separate twig?

12/13 . III - 73

North West Passage

Tired now both mind and body, bearings loose,
he meshes into meaning now - and then
when an old cog engages. If you press,
it turns with logic. Let attention wander,
it slips out of the trace and spins away,
inventing sentences, like "It's a pity
the boy hadn't reached that stage before he was
challenged by the poetry .." I too
am challenged by the stubborn will of words
that, linked by their own law, communicate
an argument that seems - or eructure
for some new structure of the searching mind.
What linked those words? Who was the unnamed boy?
And at what stage? And whose the poetry?
Is this some flicker of talk yesterday,
when the page prompted - and the verse leaped out
of its dead classroom context, long forgotten?
Yet the vein free from any words we shared.
Ignoring his long illness - and his weakness,
he's just come back who never left his bed;

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protocols rising, - calls to one not there,
or plucks the guilt blind-fingered, its' grasp's firm
for greeting or goodbye, accepting both either:
shadow is substance; time is irrelevant;
sound is actual, but waits its name ..

The hulls leak. As the wheel spins out of hand,
-awash the vessel drifts in mountainous seas,
with tethered signals we've no skill to read.

The lengthening light, the crocuses
 thrust thro' bare clods, the blackbird trill
 with straws, portents and process both,
 remarked and understood.

So I approach, except
 another spring, one more, one less;
 Time's hand that gives and takes away
 is laid upon my heart.

For all practical purposes, as a poet
 I am alone. I belong to no group,
 know very few indeed of my English contemporaries.

I spoke to the blonde Auden once,
 unexpectedly courteous - and apparently pleased
 by my praise,
 at a reception in Venice -
 That conference where Spender kept usking
 in and out of the sessions with a brief-case.
 I met him many years after in an exhibition
 I had put on of Bomberg's paintings -
 the ecologist is out of print - and much sought after
 by the librarians of American universities -
 an aged young man, not over-affected.

And Day Lewis over a drink in the Common Room,
 excited by some sensation he expected
 his forthcoming Oxford lectures to provoke.
 He autographed his books in a minute script.
 I have forgotten the point of his remarks and

any possible reason for academic reaction,
and the books are seldom opened now.

MacNee I met maybe a score of times,
but I found him taciturn, sometimes sullen,
yet once in a drink club one afternoon
he proved surprisingly friendly.

These were the famous bolts of my generation.

14. III 73

39

Yet I count myself fortunate that I know
the younger bolts of my province well -
the kindly, white-eyed Seamus, the genial, full bearded Michael,
the dark little Derek always with a girl in tow,
and the tall boyish Jimmy, smiling,
with the small head on the high shoulders.

These are much more attractive than were
the red-faced Londoners Richard Poulley,
the hunched, silent Thomas Carmaduff, or
John Irvine with the big stick and the barbed stride.

These that I know now are, man for man,
immeasurably better bolts
and more interesting and likeable persons.
But another generation is vying up,
young men with pale faces and long hair
exactly like other young men who are not poets
but plumbers' apprentices or electricians;
yet, among them, they may here
be better than any of us.

Agrigento: Sicily

Raw as a New Town,
the translation incomplete
from drawing board to site;
white stark blocks on a high ridge
shoulder to shoulder, seen for miles
across a bone-dry country
Lashed with rocks and boulders
tumbled, smothered in arid torrents

Nearer, the tall blocks define themselves
within the dull familiar idiom,
offices, flats, garages, supermarket;
It seems a moot point whether
they are being erected or demolished.

It is as if, flood-threatened,
the land-folk had drawn-up, crowded
on their crag and stayed,
had' all water's gone, dribbled, seeped away - -

On the other side, a lower ridge

thrusts down the wide dry plain to the far sea,
toothed with temples, pillars, broken stone,
a famous city once, Acres,
with hieroglyphs on the lion scrolls.

Between them, the wide-groined slope
rimmed by rubble of both, rock-littered;
out of blossom at this season, the almond-trees
twist from, or arch over the parked clouds;
beautiful, they say, in Spring,
as Acres once was.

sermons? Write up the local ...
 operatic society, choir, bowling club, flower and vegetable com-
 petitions, or golf club?
 In the next article I shall deal with the mechanics

Pace Winter 74/75

Put of my June 14/15.115

1916

First, as a boy of nine, I heard our teacher
back from his interrupted holiday,
a red-faced, white-haired man, reporting wildly
all he had seen of Dublin's ^{rest affray} ~~happenings~~ - play:

"The abandoned motorcars, the carcasses
of army horses littering the street" . . .
Also more remains of all he must have told us
of that remote, ambiguous defeat.

It took ^{those} a decade ~~of~~ screamed with guns and bullets
to sanctify the names which stain that Myth,
and to this day the red infection pulses
in the hot blood of half this country's youth.

Yet sitting there that long-remembered morning
I caught no hint I'd cast an ageing eye
any less rifles
or parcels left at ^{steps} doorway, ^{steps} pointed rifles,
or matted ears, - as I ^{edge} ~~stood~~ ^{edge} by.

of Pass
Put of my June

Redrafted & finished
after many years
1968

20.11.73

43

Islandmagee 1921. (Mary Hagan)

She wore high sea boots and a well-doused skirt,
a man's cloth cap, a jersey, her forearms buckled,
wind-roughened ^{young} ~~her~~ strong face; with the young men,
she hauled the boat up, looked upon the shingle:
and as they hauled they called out to each other
she cooed as the rust. A skinny twelve year old,
tall from the city, watched this marvellous
creature, large-eyed, from my sun warmed boulder.

I cannot remember her at any time.
Tossing the lapped hay, taking home the cattle,
or stepping-out on a Sunday: she exists
as that one hostess, knuckles on the gunwell,
The great boots crackling on the bladder-wrack;
one with Grace Darling, one with Granville.

sermons? Write up the local B...
operatic society, choir, bowling club, flower and vegetable com-
petitions, or golf club? In the next article I shall deal with the mechanics

The Fairy Thrasher

At Halloween around the blazing turf,
 the children and the dogs, the talk ran on
 most from the farmer and his wife married sister,
 his wife not holding on to old superstitions,
 to run and ramble through familiar stones
 of ghosts and faeries, artakes, blunders and spells.

For instance, when a cat, the man himself
 joined with his brother to drive cattle in
 and a stink turned and would not be compelled,
 when it had stayed across the sea stone bridge,
 to follow the others, and a neighbour stood
 to mock their efforts till they gave it up
 and he said, laughing, 'She'll come back alright,
 when that wee man there goes after his way.
 A wee man threatening by the door of the byre,
 seen only by the neighbour and the stink.'

And once, between the byres, a woman answered
 a knock on the half door, opened it, and saw
 a wee old woman standing in the sheet

who asked her please to empty no more pots
 across the byre, for she'd just come to live there,
 and all her family were nearly drowned...

Then, how a man, - a famous storyteller
 to whom all happened, who was always present
 when facts appeared, one midnight in Glenaan
 carrying in his hand - a smouldering turf
 which blown to flame would better any torch
 to clear his homeward steps - across the fiefs
 heard a strange creature ^{groaning} ~~laughing~~ in the slough
 and blew on his turf - and by its light made out
 a wee man with his face where his arse should be,
 and charged forward, thrusting the red turf
 into the scowling face, whereat the creature
 let out a yell - and tore into the hedge
 its speed a land's, its ^{loud} howls were terrible

This told with care as slow economy
 was new to me. I thought of Bosch and Breughel,
 and wondered by what roads the tale came here
 out of the Dark Ages, over Europe.
 nor liked it much, as out of character

with the old raths and thons and fairy rits
and distant singing heard and fiddle-music
and dancing lights a lullaby which I take
as proper to the ambience of the glens
and the dim twilight of the older poets.

The fester jolted, as it seemed checked
by his broad coarseness in that company
of children, and his women folk and us.

But suddenly the sister swept the talk
to charms and roadside cures dropped out of use
I knew the father - at this time began
a rambling story of a man he knew
dead twenty years or more who had alone
had a charm for bleeding, erysipelas, strains ...
with nobody that he could pass it to.
He'd got it from an aunt, his father's sister,
and had been sworn to lend it to a niece
for its transmission had to be from male
to female on to male, alternately,
by generation, a secret always held
unless the family sundered. But his need

was out in Boston. It could not be written.

It could not travel. She would not come back:
so ended what was known from Druid days . . .

This wife, the mother of the children then
recalled a story that they loved to hear
a mother's story, how a widow left,
her corn unthreshed, her children infants, heard
a flail thump in the night, and peering out
to thank a kindly neighbour, saw a shadow
a little shadow step across the yard
> and the next night she heard the flail again
this time a fall of snow that smeared the ground
exposed the track of feet from barn to gate
the light impression showed the feet were small
and bare from heel to toe. So she went down
and bought a pair of shoes in the village shop
to match the little feet which she had measured
She set them out beside the flailing floor
and waiting late the third night heard a cry
a cry of utter anguish and despair
would break your heart to hear it, and she saw
the little shadow running from the barn

giving his grief these pitiable words

"She's laid me off. She's given me my wages"

retreated as he ran - as dying out
into the darkness of the wall of hills.

We nodded, expectation satisfied:

The children chanted together "She's laid me off."

She's laid me off. She's given me my wages"

- They'd only held their tongues till their mother ^{finished} ~~was~~:

this was a tale their children would remember,
and a boy on a jil night something see its point

On the Day Time

revised
& finished 23.11.73

49

Art Room in a Coventry School:

The tall young master guided us with care
round the small art room with its clothes-horse screens
and lettered tables, pointing, here and there,
to little triumphs over ^{niggard} meagre means:
the Tigger with a more-than-Bleke-like glare
in her paint; the blossom-peopled scene
a loaded brush presents, of rural peace;
a bottle-lengthy wreath with candle-grease;
the long shy-fingered text boxes which contain,
from treasured scraps of fabric, to compose
an underwater world, wherein, above,
sharp monsters loom; and a page which skews,
in nervous lines crisscrossed, a corn or leaf,
or some still object instructed with repose.

23-11-73
pen draft 7-10.VI.71

By air to Birmingham
on a mid-June evening

Lough Beg a sunbeam, little Coney Island;
the Irish ledges powdered still
with-blossom on blackthorn

We have shot up
too quickly for my wits to draw
the comforting webs of association.
For the moment
I take what my eyes offer.

The Unseen God
who has so hoisted us out of time
and disengaged us from reality
has already promised Speed
Altitude Arrival
-and foretold the weather of our coming

Out of the mist over the city - valley -
because of this mist however we
and the paths the last Forts

51
I have never once been able to comprehend
the city from above - and fix an image for it;
walked through, it breaks into fragments of existence
mine and others I have knowledge of -
we cut through to a gloved landscape,
fleshy in sunlight over a white floor,
not brilliant white, not painter's gesso panel
but rather grey of fleece, of sun-warm fleece;
a furrowed field under snow, thick contours kept,
furrows of rounded clouds
from some gigantic bloughshore losses;
- a stiff ocean of thumb-patched waves -
I once had a ship model in a glass-box
with painted patchy waves, their crests
flicked to white -

Here, free by now,
from flight's involvement, submerged to
abrupt coast, enquired beyond me,
riding easy, the mind unbelts, unclenches
and moves over experience,
reporting, sloughing in sensation.

Our angle changes, the landscape tilts,
as, sometimes, land runs off the board,
and its edges seem
like tangled cotton wool, like tufts on berths.

Then, as the cloud spins thin
and drifts in wisps, we glimpse
the sea below, the actual water,
swirled - Tenneyson's old adjective - to observe
what) here words for - with tiny packers clustered
which indicate
small urgent vessels tugging port to port.

A wavering line of sand furjes green on pewter -
When I see a shoreline I always think
of invaders, running their keels in,
leaping thigh-deep, breast-high
and brandishing splashed standards;
Greeks, Romans mostly, Vikings -
There is a cert in Sicily, slow
Caesar's bylaws in that act -
and sudden sand again, with harshest
Cloud draws its cover over.

53
Above, a level sky like any sky
over a plain; - There are two skies,
earth's sky and ours' -
the round horizon smudged and lost
against the west.

Down then through mist.
Above - a band of gold blades,
needles;
a mat of roads below
of a sharp solid country.

Out of the daylight now,
lamps sparkle like stars
in an inverted firmament -
I've wanted years to see that world -
the constellations
Too regular to be true.

Propellers rainbow:
the dark blades emerge
through flickering shutters.
Strielights and dotted scrubbles.

Closed-masked suburbs glow,
Long shingled eaves belt over the dark lanes,
with here and there, a blot of bloody light,
and tiny insects
with smears of light ahead, astern,
pulse and heave along dim arteries

Our moth is gathered into
the airport web and hood of light.
We replace the megalith
in its elastic net.
The engine alters;
lettered lights instruct

We are on the point
of returning
to ourselves as we are now

J. P. 22. XII. 73
Poetry Dimension 2.
The King's Horses

23. IV. 73
Out of My Time

After fifty years, nearly, ~~remember~~,
living, then, in a quiet leafy suburb,
wakening in the darkness, made aware
of an unfamiliar, continuous, irregular noise,
and groping to the side-window to discover
the shadow-shapes which made that muffled pattern
hessing across the end of our avenue,
shopfronts ^{and} the streetlights shattering,
^{the black hills} a shaggle of flowering shadows, ^{unending,} ^{and} ^{swarms} of horses,
Gypsies they could have been, or tinkers maybe,
mustered to some set roosting of their clans,
or horse-dealers leading their charges to the docks,
timed to miss the day's traffic and alarms:
a migration the newspapers had not foretold:
some battled ragged finish, dream-repeated:
the last of an age retreating, withdrawing,
leaving us beggared, bereft
of the proud nodding ^{muzzles} heads, the nervous bodies;
Some from us the dark men with their ancient skills
of saddle and stirrup, of bridle and breeding.

It was an end, I was sure; but an end of what

I never could tell. It was never reported;
 but the ^{echoing} ~~echoes~~ of those hooves persisted. Years after,
 in a London hotel in the grey dawn,
 a responsible man, grave with my cares and duties,
 I heard again the ^{metal} clatter of hooves staccato,
 and hurriedly rose to catch a glimpse of my horses,
 but the pace and beat were utterly different:
 I saw, by the men astride, these were the King's horses
 going about the King's business, never mine.

When you wave goodbye and drive away,
 although I know that you'll be back tomorrow,
 I always feel sad, as if this were
 rehearsal for a more absolute farewell.

5.VI.73

The man in the bungalow next door
runs a leakage business from his front room:
a plain brown van is parked under the lawthorn tree
and across my front fence;
a long grey metal container
outside my other neighbour's ledge.

He has dug up his small front garden
and paved it, to allow for
the two cars which use it regularly.

Young men with long hair carry rolls of carpet in and out
or climb down from their eaves with despatch notes.

My outlook is totally obscured. ^{the vans}
I can no longer see the buses, the trucks, ^{the private cars}
flowing to and from the highway junction, or the cars
lined along the other side of the street
where there is a bowls-match in the park.

The other night, right into the small hours,

59

his drivers had a noisy party:
with the curtains not drawn, we saw
a bearded young man stand up to sing.

If there is another party like that,
I shall complain to the police.

The lawthorn-blossom is nearly over.

5-VI-73

When I have assembled the ingredients,
 wholemeal flour, salt, water, yeast, sugar,
 I bake my bread,
 paying attention to details like
 leaving the water blood-warm,
 taking the chill off the bowl of flour,
 giving the yeast and the sugar time to froth,
 greasing the inside of the tin,
 heating the oven to the appropriate temperature.

When I achieve a successful poem
 somebody or something must have been
 attending to details
 not unlike some of these

Out of the June

D Jones

5/6. VI-73

61

On the Grand Canal

Leaning forward I watch ^{how} the
 dark trees, the blossom-loaded ledges,
 the stiff grasses, the bent grasses, and
 their exact reflections, both behind,
 while the clouds, ^{as it were} a shade or two darker
 in their translation to water, run a shade.

I look up to observe some way in front
 a hump-backed bridge arch over, and contain
 in an oval, a neat hilly landscape
 which presents no originality
 in its naively obvious composition.

Black and white - cattle grazing in you could see anywhere
 adjacent fields or along the tow path.

The only unusual element
 is that an occasional cottage
 shows the ripped, rounded thatch
 which is traditional on this side
 of the Black Pig's Dyke.

New Statesmen
only my time

6.VI.73

Slower now, ^{less} measure of my footing,
tired sooner, I must ^{estimate} take account
new reshore; ^{new resistance}, ^{reluctant sense},
~~of smaller~~ events, day's circumstance,
~~found~~ resolve;
kerb's height, speed of approaching traffic.

^{used}
Yet response to written words, to
intended shapes, coded signatures,
floods the freeways ~~still~~ I am equipped
for report, ~~and~~ comment, for comparisons.

^{about}
Loitering here ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~edge~~, aware
of early June's colours, odours, sounds,
where broad meadows margin the canal,
senses assemble, mind essents;

happy and alert, I can contain
my world and time, reaching out beyond to lunch
to the ^{smooth} grooves the towrope scored
in the long purlieus of that old stone bridge.

13.VI.

63

The long metal container lettered Bulk Wheat
stopped at the city-centre traffic lights,
and our attention was caught by a splutter
of flapping pigeons rising and falling above,
jinking and posturing on the high flat tops.
I thought of those other feathered parasites,
of gulls and rooks rallied behind the plough,
seizing the circumstance of the turned sod:
no symbol here, save perhaps of the poet
taking his unearned fodder where he can find it.
But I was glad to realise that the planned
harsh world of production, transport, export,
had not excluded the fixtures on the cracks
which admitted the fee wings and the queering beak.

Bury made a subject for Research

.6.VI

For Brian Bidwell

Tomorrow with his notes a man will come,
enquiring when I wrote ^{that} the poem or ^{thus} that,
where such and such an image sprouted from,
if I agree with his analysis

The thought, the time, some near or far event,
and in what order should these carry weight?
And, explicating what I ^{must} have meant,
I'll turn my notebooks up to check the date.

I'll give what help I can. But humbly, pleased
that anyone should show the least concern
for words I shaped, that secret springs released
out of the shadowy culverts of my mind;
eager for what I sought so long to ^{learn} find,
and anxious too, for what we both may find.

18.VI

65

Dissertation

At least, ~~the~~ with the dentist,
I am aware of the drill
spinning forever,
tho' the needle cut the threads
of consequential pain.

But with the research-student
in the next room reading
the letters, the manuscripts,
I feel no bone-tremor:
yet anxiety travels
along nerves not used to traffic.

I cannot rinse and spit-out
the small scorch particles;
tho' my bone-structure is strong,
I bleed too easily.

End of My Time

18.VI-

At Shottery

Admiring the rustic
garden, the fat thatch,
trailing after tourists
thru' the famous cottage,
inspecting the glazed pots,
the grain of the scrubbed boards,
climbing up the toy stairs,
lowering our heads for
the ^{dark} beams in the attic,
no presence breathed or touched,
empty as an exhibit
in a folk-museum.

So sadly we stepped out
into the ~~Fair~~ sunlight,
and faced the green sward
thru' the narrow orchard,
littered with windfalls.

And - at the last low ledge,
overlooking a wide field,

we saw a brown hare skip
in and out of the furrows,
paying no attention,
far beyond our reach;
we smiled to each other,
somehow satisfied.

67

19. VI.

For Roberta

I know when you are at your latest
kneeling on mould, a frown in your brow;
your eyes are bright: your hair is lightly tossed;
you left a young girl's face, like one in love.

Today, the clouds are white against the blue:
the wind is westerly; the sun is strong.
I wonder, when you pause, you do not sing,
to such a moment surely has its song.

151
sketch - XXXX

first rough

An old draft - much revised
& completed
19/V/20

The Fading Leaf: a chapter of family history

69

I'd have been no more than three years old,
if dates are matched, when my grandmother died,
my father's mother, so what I recall
must ~~likely~~ be from album photographs
or one that ~~was~~ ^{framed} on the mantel piece.

Pale narrow face, the straight hair parted
in the middle, dragged to the pierced ears;
dark searching eyes; the lock marked cheeks
I must have heard from my elder's talk
as common enough in her generation -
I cannot tell if I ever touched her face:
black dress puckered, a round cameo;
with folded hands only when she dozed,
or when she had her picture taken.

Sometime later learned that she was blunt
in her plain speech, unaccommodating
even in her ready generosity.

My parents in those days were poor enough -
a teacher's pay at ninety pounds a year

not much for comfort when paid quarterly -
but her brisk help was instant and frequent,
an unsought question ^{settled} and the matter settled.

Rising early to see her men off to work
her husband and those who lived at home,
with a good breakfast in them,
if my mother called, by ten o'clock
the house was tidy, the dishes washed,
the black range shining, the fire red,
no ash inside the steel fender,
the old woman dozing beside it, dressed;
-awake, her hands - at the quilting frame -
There was a quilt ^{made} of my uncle's ties
made me think of Joseph in the Bible,
the boy his brother sold, not ~~the~~ ^{the} others.

A hospitable woman, a book I only heard of
by some American evangelist
named that house for welcome in Belfast.
There had been music; with three singing sons,
harmonium, fiddle, mandolin,
a phonograph with turning cylinders
lested till I fingered what was left.

71
I know no song she loved to sing or hear;
no book she cherished: no opinion
of the world's ways, of the world's great men -
not like her husband, John, who hated Gladstone
because he murdered Gordon at Khartoum,
disliked Bredalagh, saw General Tom Shumb,
considered Buller a coward, Redvers Buller.
joined the Volunteers to scare the French,
the old shako lay on the wardrobe - top,
the pom-pom hood, a toy. I still consider
Buller a coward, skulking in his tent.

No shapes of words, no sound of ^{her} voice from her,
but ^{all} to my sister ~~she said~~: Lesley's ^{new} whistle;
yet she was kind, gave me a woollen coat
that cheered my heart when I had chicken pox,
my hot face plastered with the wind-mill crosses ...

A country girl older than her husband,
they left for Glasgow after his father married
a less of seventeen, the house too small.
In a high close box eleven children
- and saw five die in infancy,
mothered half a dozen of them cousins, ...

That handsome John, her brother, dropped in her laps,
when he sailed on the first of his ^{hundred} many trips
across the Atlantic to make his fortune,
then mother dead or fled with her fancy men -
I met that aged John, the patriarch,
beautifully bearded, tall and gaunt -
he should have been a poet with such looks -
on a small farm somewhere; in his house
a young embarrassed woman made us tea -
my steady grandfather without complaint
fed the flock that my grandmother scolded,
for any child at hand was scolded, they said,
He neither smoked nor drank, resigned his Lodge,
when liquor was brought in, and he the Master:
he faded rest, in a drawer, survived for years.

Returned to Ireland later, a better job,
still at his trade, as seedsmen, found a house,
and waited at the quayside. She came down
the gangway with a dead child in her arms,
died of convulsions - so our story has it -
when the ship's siren roared the Broomielaw,
the others trailing after, two girls, four boys.

73
His urgent task, before they were settled,
was finding - a burial plot for wee Johnny.
So we are scattered where none before were laid.

I know that plot, the headstone, the text
I am proud of, for its honesty:
We all do fade as a leaf; no easy hope,
no sanctimonious, sentimental phrase,
simply - a natural image for the fact.
We write verses of the falling leaf.

The house I knew came later, not the first
nor second, as I reckon, the third or fourth;
in the same crowded wedge of streets,
a clean-faced street of brick, respectable -
where I remember her, and so forever
that is her context, her reality.

A town's slowly mortal: known families
ebbed from the decent dwellings which broke down
to common lodging-houses, doorless shells,
swarming with ragged children, idle men

In time the planners put their drawings out;
The great bulldozer ^{sometimes the bulldozer} ~~knocked~~ them ~~into~~ dust,
And the next sheet, the next, till all ^{is now} ~~is~~ bare
or newly built. The name has vanished
from every list or map. There must be few
recall John Hewitt lived there, or his wife,
and few, if any other than I, remember
Jane Redhalk, my grandmother, that good woman.
That was the text: We all do fade as a leaf.

111 lines

Eternity

13-VII

The best image I ever had
for end of eternity
was that boat floating buoyant
soundless on still water,
^{regathered in mist:}
the men at the bow standing
poised with salmon-spear
and never throwing it.

111 lines

22.7.73

75

In reading Michael Longley's shorter poems

This herded man laughing,
friendly, fond of jest,
seeming to be a large
and expansive extrovert,
nevertheless clenches
the convolutions of his thought,
and will not liberate
the wren, the badger to follow
their purposes outside the
the strict casket of his
content and intricate syllables.

I wait till the badger launches
over to nuzzle my boot,
sharing his secret,
and the bird contract Tightens
till it splits open
with a shower of songs.

Part of My Time

22. VII.

In a genetic ward

Bald ^{jaw} thro, hunched ~~stuck~~ on fist,
or, ten-fingered, holds path;
silent that, strains, leaning
to conjure monsters
from top or counterpane.

Others rigid set,
absent, with empty eyes;
or, prone, sigh, call out,
at times cry quietly,
or moan continually.

One, at his own distance, nips,
thumb-thumb and forefinger,
if he can grip it,
at salt-cellar, napkin,
holding on to something.

The Glen of the Cuckoo

22. VII.

Part of My Time

Glen-dun on a wet July day

Just now the misty hills are filled with water:

The Dan runs brown round stones and over stones,
or amber over gravel - the bleached branch
shaded by shade beside the swaying foxglove
rooted in stony splinters - loud it sounds
tumbling the air with rush and splash and chatter,
and, over, under these, an endless roar;
foam-white at boulder's demur, remming froth
in the sharp crevices abrupt, it hurries
along the glen-foot past the dripping trees,
and the combed grasses and the beaded whirs.

The sounds of running water are its own;
its nature's patient, phint to all use,
but not its voices, nor its coloured shapes;
may offer ^{deep} symbols only, metaphors,
or simply pleasure, but it still runs free
going its own way

13/22.7.

Bradda I.O.M.

You cannot imagine Timelessness

You may lounge on a high green headland
and look down the steep cliff-slope
at the old dark rocks - and the sea
thrusting against them,
at the gulls cruising in wide curves
below them, level with your eyes, above,
riding what wind there is
with easy mastery
on leading strength for crevices
below, out of sight
to the safe nests.

And you may look closer to admire
the enduring humility
of the seaweeds, blossoming
in little tufts on the bare rocks

And it will seem as if
Time's hand had stopped,
pegged forever in its place

by these elemental forms
rock, sea, sky, bird's flight, grass, blossom . . .

79

No man-fet, no politics,
no bathos of mined well
or handled stone.

But the dark surge of the water
marks time

- There on that ledge

the gull feeds her young:
then, below, are bleached bones.

13. IX. 73

Orchard-apples

I think, this moment, of that little orchard
at the back of my grandmother's house,
beside the grassy heart of the garden
Two dozen apple trees in rows of three
with one apart near the house
and on the other side of the lawn,
to the right,
a bigger tree, harvest of its crests,
that you could sit under
in late summer, reading
and trying the windjells for taste.

I sit now at my desk in another town
and turn the pages of a poet's new books
which come the morning by post

26.X

Complet added to W. B. Yeats

[And did that play of mine send out
Certain men the English shot-]

Out of which phrase of mine ^{was} born
the Bomb that wrecked the Abercorn."

7. T. 15.XI.73 revised

Cont of My Time

31.X.73

On reading *Journa de Voyage de White a Landon*.

It's said that old men fool themselves by claiming
they have the qualities they clearly lack:

so one believes he's noble, generous,
wise in the ways of others, all forgiving.

Another's sure he kept the ship afloat
only by shrewdness, till that chance storm struck.

Landon loved art and hung his walls with herb,
with scorded and tattered lands, gazed long at ash.

Now shuffling, drifting toward the cluttered shore,
I know I'm tired, worn, intolerant,

wise with the ready tear, too sharp of tongue,
with theories framed to every attitude

that moves my selfhood, sweetest most of this,
the man men see is not the man I am.

Cont of My Time

1.XI.73

The Lagen: meeting F.W. Hall.

83

October's end, a still, blue sky;
rust-red, flame-red, yellow of all shades,
the tall trees holding autumn's moment;
the sedges, grasses, dry and hale,
beside the river, drifting, a dark glass
with muted, deep reflections,
and from each branch, each twig above,
single leaves launched out
to drop and float in the bright air,
gently to reach their place
on earth, on water, moving with slow flow,
edged or ruffled by slight circumstance,
or layered and crisp on low-halt
at hedge-foot kept in swales,
chestnut, elder, beech, oak, Hawthorn, ash,
broadfens or crumpled tokens, signs of summer,
the prime of that green landscape over now.

From years back I recall an elderly man;
he was tall and droop, but friendly,
who came each season to that place

to note its changing colours
with a guide, having trust, and how it was
autumn which roused his vision, roused his heart
to exaltation in the visible world
till his little panels, six by eight,
brimmed with a quiet joy

And as the leaves fall, as the tireless water moves,
their motion making stillness absolute,
I toss a pebble in the stream
remembering him:
the widening ring of ripples my tribute
like - a distant lift of the hand
to a generous friend.

On the Preservation of work-sheets.

It should not matter how I shaped my lines,
hit a cadence, sorted adjectives,
cancelled a showy word for one that gives
a plainer texture or, more stark, defines
a signal smudged by clumsy counter-signs,
or altered phrase to make a change of gear,
the word suggesting word, stance, combis
to make some level of intention clear.

Should I expose each stubble of my thought,
each accident of memory or of sense,
thro' which the structure, to completion, brought,
is seen as weapon of my self-defence?
Not more absurd ^{than} that I sweep up and store
the heaps of filings on the workbench floor.

23-XI-73

Air-Borne

At fifteen thousand feet we ride
a surf of clouds, a froth;
bright day above white floor, the sun on snow;
the cabin cool with its reflected light,
upward all shadows thrown,
above us over the curved roof;
suspended, each bit face redeemed.
Look there, below - the cloud floor now
a seething saucer of boiling milk
Only that sooty hole
of the exhaust
reminds us of our transience,
smudges the margin of the text
with grungy motel thumb.

Poetry Supr Xmas 74

June enough

23. XI

47

The long mile street you nudged to school
last factory wall and painted sill
house - doors, curtains, little shops,
that grey church pediment with gable left,
was sloped and stoned with ashtrays.
First, leather shop that flashed with brass
bits, stirrups, bridles, dogger - brush,
huge blinkers for shy animals
and with the smell of leather
and farther, under a large sign,
Registered Farmer, it spelt,
an open yard which offered you
lemmer an ewel, the shank taste
of scorched horn kissing
and, farther still, a narrow door,
dry scent of straw, warm tang of hay
scatter of grain jerked round the steps,
which brought the flapping pigeons down

If you were not and had a mind
to buy yourself a little horse

he could be saddled, shod and fed
and never need to leave that sheet.

1974

see 23.11.73
drastically
revised

Art Room in a City School

-17.1.74

59

The glass released, the master guided us with care
round the untidy artroom crammed with lurching screens
and littered tables, pointing broadly here and there
how joy's surprise at sudden moments supervenes:
the angry Tigger with the nose then Blake-like plane
in laboured linocut; the bright imagined scenes
a loosed truck evokes with seas and flowers and hills;
a batik-hanging rainbow wrought with candle grease;
the roughly-scissored textures which with craft contrive,
from hoarded scraps of random fabric, to compose
an underwater world wherein, as if alive,
strange monsters loom; and the penulled cord which skew,
in careful lines cross-hatched, tense across, ^{clear-}from veined leaf,
or other little object clenched in its repose.

Art Room again revised

copy my text

Revised Catalogue 7. II. 74

Dedication of The Rhyming Weavers To
G. Brendan Adams

91

None in our day has, to such sure effect,
^{defined} measured the textures of our jangling speech:
from ^{through} ^{drawing} ^{loosening} ^{each}
well-honed ^{three} ^{well} ^{we} ^{may} ^{learn} ^{respect}
for the least ^{rich} ^{colours} of each dialect;
this, ^{given} ^{ready} ^{to} ^{friendly} ^{usage}, yet may teach
our stubborn hearts to ^{unclench} ^{and} ^{open}
across the gaps that sunders sect from sect.

So take this little sheaf of prose and rhyme;
the prose is mostly mine, the rhyme belongs
to weaver, ^{alongmen} ^{farmer}, blacksmith, from that time
when every townland knew its work in song,
and craft and comradest ^{were} ⁱⁿ ^{their} ^{prime},
while ^{still} ^{yet} the Coed tongue rings clear and strong.

march

City Hospital

detergent, disinfectant, piss,
Lord, what an atmosphere is this
wherein to draw the bravest breath
against that old encroacher, Death!

Out 9 My June 15/16.IV.74

Culhanam The Ulster Folk Museum
to Renee and John Kilhealer

93

After looking at the enlarged photographs
of obsolete rural crafts, the bearded man
winnowing, the women in long skirts
at their embroidery,
the objects on open display, the churn,
the fluff-mill, the dogskin float,
in the Athenorhouse galleries,
we walked among the trees to the half dozen
re-erected workshops and ~~houses~~ cottages
transplanted from the edges of our region,
tidy and white in the mild April sun.

Passing between the archetypal ^{round pillars} gateposts
with the open five-bayed gate,
my friend John said:
What they need now, somewhere about here,
is a field for the faction fights.

Donelan

20.V

For my Irishman

Your face and name will tell
Those masters of such scholarship,
as the veins of a pebble
readily encapsulate
an exact geology,
the lava-flows, the faults,
the glacial periods,
the sediments which formed
and how we locked and rocked
in the cold tides that beat
on these disastrous shores.

But want show to all my days to a
weary in look of service & the
the Rome of the 15th

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[Begin 1-73]

20 v. 74

De Reditoribus
(P. Titius Namantinus)

Now having served Rome honestly and earned
just keepers for my age, I have returned,
free of all office, to my native province;
of office free but not of interest,
not a close man contained by his small fields
and what the seasons give or take away,
not free of all conjecture, rumours,
more sure in stance and habit learned in Rome.
There a provincial, here an advocate.

So now I strive to ^{set} my thoughts in order,
weighing my past, my service and this present:
where Rome now stands and what she stood for, what
this instead offers in continuance
or if her slower pace leaves out of steps
the notable changes I was conscious of —
from these, if I may now define the part
I still can play while yet my senses yield
dwindling responses to the altered facts
before I bend the tubes upon the scroll,

But must I show to all my thoughts a door
opening in look of service & the usual
the Rome of 100 years

yet
not a lonely, ^{lost} ~~lost~~, bewildered man

Why Rome seemed not my service; what I gained
by sojourn among strangers; how from Rome
the ways lay ready for my easy passage
to ancient cities, famous stoned lands
whose treasures made the mind and spirit rich,
then stones still vocal with old oracles,
Delphi, Delos, Rhodes, Hierapolis,
that rampart to the north by ghosts beheld,
the lost Pannonian vineyards, the broken columns
beside the eternal spring, and farther east
where the great stone balls stride with heavy flutes
cut into rock, unaging, grained with power.

How at this edge of time, this Rome surrenders
her old authority to new allegiance
not of armed men but hucksters bickering,
an arena fenced round with feeble spears
against the glowering Mongols round its walls,
Rome's sceptre handed to her former foes;
her senate splintered into quarrelsome factions.

97
Not thus the Rome I served. My service ended,
time and my term conspiring at that point
when clerks and money changers cast their nets
over all action, all was offered up
to signalled bidding, and the things I loved
by sorcery transformed to merchandise
to sell or buy and never reverence
for their own nature or the skill that made them.
I felt dismay at this, yet deep relief
I need not elbow through that marketplace.

So here returning free, I sought again
what had seemed kin and kindly through the years,
the friendly faces and familiar streets
each thickened with old stories, and the hills
those comfortable hills, the black faced sheep,
the brown streams thrusting down the mossy slopes
the little towns each with its dialect
so Rome barbaric, but beloved by me.

But in my absence, these old warring tribes,
mine and those we mastered, have with flame
and war-horn resumed their old debate

we'd thought a promise belted on a story
among the colored legends children speak.
Yet Roman legions still were quartered here
no longer with bright eagles tramping fast,
but further at street corners, ready armed,
against the dangers of uncertainty.
A little boy, I watched the legionaries
take ship for Gaul through cheering multitudes,
and when the bonfires signalled victory
^{the included}
~~the included~~ low soldiers in the streets
were shouldered high as heroes; when I press
a wayward now those brave scenes flesh back.

When Rome enlisted me, I found my place
among kind strangers buttressed by tradition
to more secure and tolerant of opinion
free born citizens expecting justice
achieved by words and uplifted hands.
Thus heartened, this was as I had been taught
by the established scrolls how states should steer.

Among them moving
I came to realize they were my people

99
for all the centuries and tides between:
my tongue their tongue I knew before
their words mine to copy, for my writ-
ter cut to the same template;

but it was odd that what I took for words
and principles of thought with them were breath-
and natural modes of being far too close
to need escortive just or obvious name

So long embattled in our colony
our hopes and fears were beamed with the old names
to mark us off from those we dispossessed;
but these folk wore their freedom without flags.
So having learned to live with men long skilled
in civic use and polity, who wrought,
each in his party, for the commonweal,
or what he deemed that weal, I therefore took
the Roman virtues as the rules for play,
and not those tribal rituals we'd learned
since my clan crossed the sea to colonize
this showery island in imperial days,
where we have lived so long it's now our home
no less than theirs we benighted to the hills,

or drew to labour in the fields we cleared.
So now two nations cherish the same ground,
the native tribesman and the colonist,
no longer mere colonial's on the ruin
of that vast empire, but of here by right,
for, if we will, there's room and wealth enough
that each might share in wary fellowships
till the old fears wither and each nation,
find common shrines to kneel at and revere.

So ^{stands} ~~stands~~ the tale I structured for my robes,
for it's a natural impulse to give shape
to what our senses gather out of life.
I deemed it true, but truth is relative,
the story lasts but changes in its meaning
until the meaning given changes it,
as Jupiter grows like that Jewish god
that men have died for, since he also died
and those triumphant - so their story ^{reads} ~~reads~~.
And there may come a time when men find Number
the essence of creation, and explain
by measurement, why this, not that, befell,
and build their crafts more cunningly, assured

101
swiftly
of ~~swan~~ landfall for their setting out.
This too may serve - as I have heard men claim,
grave learned men, professors of the schools, -
till Number thrusts among unnumbered things
and draws them, magnet-like, into an Order
of counted particles - and charted space,
and traces the moon not Luna, but a waste
of rock and dust, and hurls it among
the kinds of rock and dust beneath our feet.
But number'll fail, for who could calculate
how such a sack a word will give a man
a bolder step, a stiffening of courage,
compute a hero's quality in terms
that repetition equals, or assess
the depth of grief, the incidence of love,
the shades of madness or the strength of joy?
I doubt he may a story will describe
the infinite complexities of being,
and each will offer its conditional
and temporary ^{truth} sanction to back ~~up~~ against
the complications of the human heart.

I break my meditation, turn again

149] to my next story of the colony
become two nations bound in amity.

Conditioned to accept the critic's virtues
which answered predilections of my own,
being also of Rome's breed, a distant kin,
and plucked awhile from out the time-worn place,
I brought a sharper eye, a surer mind,
to judge not only what I once had known
equitable with better scaled comparisons.

150] but how the scene had altered through the years
not simply to my eye but in itself. [22.v.74]

My old professor had a word for it,
tho' long gone out of use, it still expresses
the nature - and the excellence of art,
the key to taste in how a woman dresses.

It is the essential quality of art,
of any architecture, decoration -
its presence or its absence shows each part
appropriate or not in its relation.

I use it as a touchstone, tuning-fork,
in judging what I see or what I'm reading,
the test and talisman of every work,
the sign of merit in all kinds of breeding.

So ask yourself, when rhyming or other versing,
of every word or act, is it in keeping.

23.XI.74

November dusk, at four o'clock,
I walk in the deserted park:
The tight-lipped trees are still; the mist
has scarcely drawn its gauze aside
since light at eight leaked hint of day.

The season's in an autumnal mood,
the epoch's end, to every sense
the cadence of the dying fall:
as empty as the bowling-green
that waits, indifferent, for play

23.XI.74

The Funeral of the President

107

I watch the pageant on the box,
the crowded pews, the catafalque,
the Presidential obsequies
in Swift's old church;

and I recall once, years ago,
as guest of honour, minister,
he seized the chance to call to heel
those novelists who satirised
that kindly state.

As guest myself, from our Black North,
when my turn came, I spoke for them
who darnt rebuke their Minister
and foul the nest.

24.XI.74

All growth securely grabbed to the ground,
two winter paths I take my usual round:
among the bushes where the proser stood
and now we cut to spiky stubs of wood,
a young man taking, takes the time to toss
a word about the weather, as I pass.
I call assent nor slow my pace to tell
that my own tillage, too, is going well.

24.XI.74

3.XI.74

109

Firm footed, small, she thrust my beam
ends
its uphill ~~ends~~ downhill way,
intent on country air.

I can recall our sheltering
beneath a lantern in a lane,
dark doused
a cloud across the sky.

And as we watched the slanting drops
a drift of petals settled on
my buttoned coverlet.

A wide road now that lane, with cars;
the hedges rooted out; the fields
on either side built up —

And of that moment what survives
in these numb syllables except
an old man's gratitude?

June 2nd

Vinno

4.8.74

E. H. (1877-1958)

She was my harbor, harbor
and my lexicon.

I ran to her for shelter.

She filled my plate with food.

I learnt my letters from the lines

she lifted from the shelf.

These twenty letters hint my debt.

Poems in 1975

25. II.

Written the day before my sister's cremation.

I leaned to catch her quiet murmuring,
my pain-clawed sister on her tilted bed,
her pinned-knee hoisted in a canvas slip,
The looked tubes drooping near her weary head.

The sense was plain: "the friendly minister
had talked with her, knew how she'd like it planned,
appreciated what her feelings were -
you'd need a poem I would understand".

I nodded my assent, my soiling thought
a chill black wind, - a gale of screaming birds,
not, at that instant, to be quelled or caught
in any net of comfortable words;

but this injunction I could not deny;
I was to need a poem at the end,
when we were gathered here to bid goodbye
to wife, sister, mother, grandmother, friend.

So I have made these verses for her sake

who showed what love and nurture both demand;
if, I imagine, somewhere she's awake,
this is the poem she would understand.

June 1967

A Great Event

11-13 - April

A great event when I was small
was when a heavy cart-horse fell,
for, running to the spot, I'd find
a ready gang had gathered round,
eager with gesture and advice
on the best remedies for it -
- 7 surfaces on slippery stones,
for buckled axles, broken bones -

The cart knelt upon the lead,
while someone grabbed a sack to spread
under the thrashing ruins of steel;
The girths and harness loosed, they'd haul,
slow inch by inch, the cart away,
its shafts, one fractured, sprung askew.

113
With panting flanks and frightened eyes
The creature would attempt to rise
by scramble, slither, lunge and strain.
The center, clatching bit and rein,
would bawl to warn us, crowding near,
to ~~stand~~ ^{step back then,} ~~stand~~ well clear.

Then, stammered struggle, hoof and hock
would find safe footing on the sack;
The horse would stand and sliver with
air clouded out of shaken mouth.
A nose - bag looked on ears and head
would quiet the queasies.
And we would hurry home to tell
how spite of danger, all was well.

13.4.75

Gramsci

That Sunday afternoon
when there were few stars,
in a back-street of the village
we found the Party Room:

tidy, sparse and spotless;
inside, chairs, a table
from faded posters on the walls
with names we recognised.

The old custodian,
clean, in a thread-bare suit,
smiled friendly welcome, relating
our pleasure in the names

He pointed out with pride -
our smiles and fingers spoke -
a hand-drawn graph and summary
of local elections.

We attended to it,

gauging the pace of change;
then smiling again and shaking hands,
put love in the box.

We heard the orators,
studied the theory,
read the books, written manifestos,
distributed leaflets.

That I carry no card,
when my confidence seeps,
I remember the face
of that anonymous comrade.

Time Enough

13.4

The flat-earth people lift their eyes,
for God's ^{stare} in there, and Hell's below;
an ^{unconvincing} ~~unconvincing~~ exercise
for those of us who think ^{we} ~~they~~ know
Australia's on the other side
of this our lovely spinning sphere,
the milky Way is across with,
our sun conveniently seen.
Yet when I see the starry sky
by metaphor of dome or cup,
To explicate immensity,
I like my world the right side up.

13/14.4

Shook & Hand Bar: April '75

He threw it in; the bomb went off:
the dark combustible put,
noisy with neighbours, crones, friends
came down in dust, went up in flames,
with thirty injured, with four dead.

Is there no metaphor for this
Is inanimate, identifies
the view in this poisoned place,
that, passing, instantly we see
on any brow the brand of Levi?

24/15-4

"The Weaving of the Black"

Having read the recent anthology
the visiting English journalist
complained to the poets:
None of you has tried to express
what it must feel like to kill a man.
And the poets made no reply.

Then one morning shortly after
the youngest of the poets -
they had been his first published poems,
naturally he was proud of them -
was murdered on his way to work
with four bullets in his back.

I can imagine the poet's expression -
his photograph was in the evening paper -
but as for the young gunman's face
it was reported in the same paper
that he wore a stocking-mask
and drove off quickly.

It is not, I think, irrelevant
to note that the first of the poems
begins with the line:

Why must the gun be used?
and that the last line of the poem
ends with the word "death".

June Envy²

14.V.75

After a temperate winter
when garden flowers went mad
blossoming through December,
a cold spell, snow at Easter,
drew the wanted line.

But taking trees as signals,
for flowers on fickle evidence
I had watched the blunt things slowly
and felt a forest promise
in the birds' intentions

With May the trees in the gardens,
in the avenues, in the parks,
are vivid with young clean green
and I often, soiled, thought sadly
of Spring's innocence

wishing we could imitate,
let Spring renew us like the year -
a fool's hot fancy, you may say,

but not without its relevance
in this fine Fortunes place.

121

14.V

When the agony's forest
only to be approached
by muffled rhetoric
the hands too hard to touch
and probe actuality,
how can one shape a symbol,
durable, resonant,
which offers compassion
to the tortured, the bereaved,
has meaning for the struggler
and fortifies those of us
caught in the midst?

"shape" of entrance examinations, (d) the Burnham Committees, (e) the Union subscription and what it buys, (f) why smaller classes? (g) how to become a teacher, (h) new treatment of some epidemics, (i) physical factors that retard a child's progress in education, (j) for and against parent-teacher associations, (k) why a yearly Conference? (l) some bright ideas in the local—and other—schools, and (m) why have a school journey? The list is endless.

Of course the titles must be "snappy" ones to catch the eye and intrigue the attention. The main thing, thereafter, is to give the facts.

This goes not only for the local Press. The national dailies and weeklies, as I have suggested, are strangely ignorant of educational matters. Indeed, this is almost virgin ground.

HOBBY INTO LIVELIHOOD

THEN, outside your job, what are your interests? As a boy I was a butterfly and moth addict. I earned some hundreds of pounds over the years from butterflies. Does local history interest you? There is a whole field of operations, beginning with the church records, the school log-books and the county histories and ending with latest "finds" in the vicinity. This is specifically a local enterprise: see the editor of your local paper and outline your series. Then try to get a grant to publish the series in booklet form for school use.

Are you musical? Fond of sports? (Many teachers already act as football and cricket correspondents.) Interested in the local flora and fauna? Able to dig up old coaching way-books and stories of local "characters"? Able to describe clearly and simply local coal-seams, fishing grounds, electricity plants for the non-mining, non-fishing, non-electricity-minded members of the local area? Estimate whether writing, reading, arithmetic, art, etc., have improved or retrogressed during the last 50 years (by reference to school records)? Describe simply the gist of local sermons? Write up the local Buffaloes, boy scouts, girl guides, operatic society, choir, bowling club, flower and vegetable competitions, or golf club?

paigner. Competition is fierce yet the good factual article—on education, for example—is always welcomed. Study the target closely: study each paper, length of articles, style, even try to get into its atmosphere. Then go to it and God bless you.

IN WHICH DIRECTION?

NOW as for one's own gift of writing. Is it possible to estimate the best direction for one's own pen? Is one a humorist or not? Is the writing of the macabre the special gift? Or is it short stories? Or essays? Or mystery?

There are some pointers in the success or failure of one's work—a brutal test and not always sound. A better test is provided by the amount of pleasure one has taken in a job. What "came" most easily, and with most satisfaction, in the re-reading? What was "warm" from the pen, and what had to be squeezed out with discomfort?

When one has decided this most rewarding direction then one must perfect the use of the gift, by practice, by the study of the work of known masters, and by trial and error. This may be a long business, but it is worth it. To diffuse one's writing is to fail, except for the Balzacs. Specialisation is essential in journalism as in anything else.

HERE, then are ordinary suggestions to "tap" interests and one's employment for subjects. I repeat what has been said before, that for success in any kind of writing, determination is, in my belief, more important than gifts. Rejections will come; they must be fairly faced. It is useless to cry "favouritism," to talk about "knowing somebody," or of "cliques." Good work is its own recommender. If an article is rejected it may be because it has faults—faults of length, of style, of freshness. Examine the rejected manuscript as if it were that of your biggest enemy. It is a natural reaction to be as blind to one's literary children as to one's real children. One's own manuscript is as vaguely apprehended as the face of a sweetheart. No, look at it. Sneer at it. Cut it to pieces. And then go ahead to the next job. Grow a thick skin for the reception of rejection slips. You'll probably need it.

In the next article I shall deal with the mechanics

Tom Enayk

142

After the school's broadcast,
The listening class asked questions:
my pocket money? Comics? Sweets?
Did I remember the names
my sister gave her dolls?
And one: when did I decide
to become a professional poet?
and was it better then?

I jumbled with my answers
using too many words
unable to conjure back
the shy and lovely child
skipping his paper figures,
aligning his lead ~~columns~~ regiments,
dreaming of icebergs, blizzards,
the lost Titanic, Captain Scott.

Some Enough

14.2

After the sc
The lister
my pocket
Did I remem
my sister
And one :
to become a
and was
I jumbled
using too
unable to
the sky and
substant
algebraic
dreaming
The last title

Here again the list is endless. Follow your interest and make it pay. Move out from success with your local papers to the national and weekly press. (By "local" papers I mean all in your county and in all the adjoining counties.) But give the facts. Avoid airy-fairy speculation. What does he want to know?

Some writers prefer to fly high—at the national dailies and weeklies rather than at the local Press. There can be little objection to this, save that writing for the local Press gives practice and encouragement. If you would prefer to write first for the national press then study the field like a clever cam-

The Origin of Some Old Nursery Rhymes *

By THE REV. NORMAN EDWARDS, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

HOW few people who know the old nursery rhymes know anything of their origin. They seem to be so far removed from everyday life. On the contrary, they satirise real personages who held high and often precarious positions in Church and State, most of them during the reign of Henry VIII.

Among all the sovereigns of Europe there was none so endowed with kingly qualities as Henry at his accession, or so fitted to call forth the slumbering enthusiasm of a loyal people. From the moment he came to the throne the history of England gained a new importance, for the country ceased to be a mediæval island, and became a modern state.

Henry had no deep interest in religion, nevertheless he wrote a pamphlet against Luther, for which he obtained from the Pope the title "Defender of the Faith," a title every English Sovereign has since retained. In Wolsey, England's first great Foreign Minister, he had a brilliant and ambitious Minister. But Henry's wish to marry Catherine of Aragon, his deceased brother's wife, was to cause a rupture with Rome. Queen Catherine was getting

of the trade. I am conscious that many good articles are rejected because of elementary mistakes made in the writing and in the mechanics of submission. There have no doubt been masterpieces written in pencil or on filthy sheets of scrap-paper and their worth recognised. But miracles of this kind are not of daily occurrence. Give your manuscript the best presentation you can. Dog-ears are not good visiting cards.

Finally, if I can help in any way I will do so to the best of my ability. But please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. It is useful. It is also courteous.

[Next Article: III. The Free-lance. (b) The Mechanics of the Trade.]

older and the hopes of a male heir grew less. Henry sought a divorce. But as Pope Julius II had granted a special dispensation for Henry to marry Catherine, Clement VII was unwilling to repudiate the act of his predecessor. Wolsey, as a Cardinal, felt bound to support the Pope. But no man can serve two masters. So began the separation of the Anglican Church from the authority of the Pope, and the fall of Wolsey.

The people seeing what was happening in the name of religion, and not daring to express their feelings too openly, fell back upon satiric rhymes. So came to be written what in later years were associated with the Mother Goose rhymes which were written by Perrault, the French writer—"Cinderella," "Blue Beard," etc.—and published in 1697.

HENRY AND THE MONKS

AMONG his chief opponents were the monasteries. The monks at this period were lazy, ignorant, living behind the sheltering walls of their rich monasteries, and withal very unpopu-

and in that department.

I have read somewhere
in a popular book
on natural history

That this has
remarkably short lives.

123

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Among all the sovereigns of Europe there was none so endowed with kingly qualities as Henry at his accession, or so fitted to call forth the slumbering enthusiasm of a loyal people. From the moment he came to the throne the history of England gained a new importance, for the country ceased to be a mediæval island, and became a modern state.

Henry had no deep interest in religion, nevertheless he wrote a pamphlet against Luther, for which he obtained from the Pope the title "Defender of the Faith," a title every English Sovereign has since retained. In Wolsey, England's first great Foreign Minister, he had a brilliant and ambitious Minister. But Henry's wish to marry Catherine of Aragon, his deceased brother's wife, was to cause a rupture with Rome. Queen Catherine was getting

of the trade. I am conscious that many good articles are rejected because of elementary mistakes made in the writing and in the mechanics of submission. There have no doubt been masterpieces written in pencil or on filthy sheets of scrap-paper and their worth recognised. But miracles of this kind are not of daily occurrence. Give your manuscript the best presentation you can. Dog-ears are not good visiting cards.

Finally, if I can help in any way I will do so to the best of my ability. But please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. It is useful. It is also courteous.

[Next Article: III. The Free-lance. (b) The Mechanics of the Trade.]

older and the hopes of a male heir grew less. Henry sought a divorce. But as Pope Julius II had granted a special dispensation for Henry to marry Catherine, Clement VII was unwilling to repudiate the act of his predecessor. Wolsey, as a Cardinal, felt bound to support the Pope. But no man can serve two masters. So began the separation of the Anglican Church from the authority of the Pope, and the fall of Wolsey.

The people seeing what was happening in the name of religion, and not daring to express their feelings too openly, fell back upon satiric rhymes. So came to be written what in later years were associated with the Mother Goose rhymes which were written by Perrault, the French writer—"Cinderella," "Blue Beard," etc.—and published in 1697.

HENRY AND THE MONKS

AMONG his chief opponents were the monasteries. The monks at this period were lazy, ignorant, living behind the sheltering walls of their rich monasteries, and withal very unpopu-

Diptera

Walking along the tow-path
we encountered a young man
in jeans, with a knapsack,
swishing his long-handled net
among the reeds and grasses.

Stopping, I asked if he
were taking a rempten census;
he was, he explained
an entomologist
in the local museum.

I remarked that he'd worked there
for almost thirty years
about twenty years ago.
He asked my name
and in what department.

I have read somewhere
in a popular book
on natural history

that flies have
unmarked slot lines.

The landscape bounded by the serious
 edge of the dark mountains;
 the middle distance just hills,
 in rough places grey, mounds of whin
 rock - yellow on the turf
 lawns breaking white in the hedger
 long ribs of dry stone wall keep
 the black faced ewes, the scattered tents,
 apart from the black and white cattle grazings
 on the rounded skyline of each field;
 over all bird-song generous.

And I thought of the images waiting
 for the nature-poet - violets,
 primroses, stickwort, vetch,
 fern-robot, lurking in the fungus
 of a grass-lore: a proliferation
 of appropriate detail -
 and though I could only recall
 the exact whereabouts of a few
 of the celebrated megaliths:-

125
 the tripod dolmen, a sculptured bed,
 the castle round the souterrain -
 I accepted these as inevitable
 annotations to my country's past.

Then I remembered that the nature poet
 has no useful prosody for
 class or property relationships,
 for the social dialectic,
 the stubborn tenure of the small farm,
 the billowed hillsides of timber
 brimming the high walled demesnes.

So I was anxiously responsive
 to the fresh graffiti on the gables
 of roofless cottages at the crossroads,
 for these bespoke some thing
 of more immediate significance
 than the stumps of the Round Tower beside the church,
 the ruined box of grey stones
 surmounting the Anglo-Norman moat.

25/26. V. 75

On Colnivard: The Scattering

Late in May under an open sky
with drifts of cloud that scarcely flecked
a film of shadow over
the new-warm landscape, half a country wide,
great cargoes of when-gold
kept on each neighbouring hillside;
on the bare hillside
where uncertain feet must tread
the yielding surface
of that long tasselled slope,
we stood, we four -
husband, daughter, brother, brother's wife -
to give my sister's ashes
to the bright gentle air,
to blow and flicker with light,
to fall like sand, like pollen, on
last year's withered grasses,
this season's thrusting stems,
on blossomed sprays of lady's-mock, on
on tiny bilberry-bushes,
on primroses half hidden.

near by a lark ^{rose} ~~was~~ singing.

A distant best lowed somewhere,

Sadder lark!

in the wind's whisper

cupped single cockcrow foreway.

A slow/bee loitered best.

A falling place for dust

to start again its journey.

Jim Gray

June 1975
Revised in ~~May~~
after 20 years

The Spring Pestle

They wanted water. Once there'd been a spring,
then succour in that distant summer's drought
where thick hedge buffers lay and corn apart,
a lucky flick of memory's peck it out.

With only hints to lone his peckoning
he gripped his hook and went to make a start.

Close by the hedge, among the meadowsweet,
beyond the last swathe that the scythe would mow,
with fobber-speckled feet he started his way
with stride and stroke deliberating, slow,
through falling stems that loomed at his feet
as the crazed earth laid bare its face of clay.

Glance satisfied, he recognised the place
by taller ash-tree, under thrusting wren,
dragged out the dead dry tussocks bough by bough
breasted the hidden ditch and slipped in
but mottling bracken smothered every trace
of the bright tunnel that had sneaked below.

129
With random swing now, jarring steel on stone,
he nudged the lush grass off the upper side,
glimpsed threads of liquid trickle from a sod
as though the spring had burrowed hard to hide
but could not keep the secret long its own
when every ^{the} whole ground was glutted where he trod.

Then hawing round the hell roots at his knees
chilled fingers found the wettest sod of all
which signalled that the spring was passing near
through some lost crevice in the deep chalk wall
and scraping back the muck he could release
an urgent jet to spurt and rolley clear.

As ready evidence where certainty
required no former search, he searched out
a foot-long tube and half-a-dozen stones
that once had been the shaft, that propped the shaft
and a thick slab of black and sodden wood,
the floor that held the bucket steady once.

Choosing what mossy flints best plugged the space,
thumbing the soft mould round and wedging -

30.11.75

The Old Mystic

131

The crusted metal nearly as before,
 he saw the baffled element begin,
 now it had come to the remembered place,
 To dubble, struttet splutter, ready to pour.

With sweet-smearing brow and knuckles tremble soon
 he straightened back, his effort gratified,
 watching clear water's crystal ebb and fall,
 his sinews' tenderness armetimed with pride,
 for, though a tiny spring had been restored,
 somehow the act was allpounced.

A some man, he had learnt his craft
 from David Cox who showed him how to handle
 wastes by an unrecorded method.

How had he learnt from Cox, dead so long?

He'd come at night when others slept.
 O he had many visitors by night.

Black, of course, I had not needed telling,
 and thinkers too, philosophers. Even Shaw
 crying like a child for that black girl,
 and many others repenting, he could name
 but he was won to science.

And Paine, Tom Paine, I venture, a brave man,
 sceptic, dissenter, no man's echo,
 high on my private list of protestants,
 gilt on the lips of fundamentalists
 who lay their heads on his Godlessness,
 dying in turn most commendable.
 Paine never came; he knew I'd not like him.

Time enough

30. VI. 75

A Seaside Town

We went where we had often been before,
but not for forty years: the promenade's
Victoria bay windows perched for paint,
the unfrequented station's redlocked gates,
the whitewashed lighthouse basking on its cliff.
Rimmed by black rocks, a scanty jens of sand
a few shill children waded, bucketful,
and wagtails flickered a beaked-bladder wrack.

But cornered among stones, below high tide,
spring water issued ^{and} obtrusively,
and a woman clambered ^{down} to it with her hair,
its permanence accepted; here before
the lighthouse winked its warning, and January men
bought season tickets for the summer fairs.

Time enough

4. VII

133

At the morning break

The senior boys in Fours and Threes shod down
the practice field to the dark wooden fence.
We dare not follow, dare not imitate,
scattered before them with our puppy tricks;
They fanned away us, vast, invincible.

A leg's length-off the fence and all in step,
each they thrust against it with a lifted foot,
then turned, a swimmer's twist, to march away;
a ritual reserved for these great men
the hulking heroes of the first Fifteen,
the first Eleven, the Athletic team.
Heroes all, we listed their names with awe,
and when they erred gave us leave to speak
we stammered hesitant
admitting our condition, our respect
but lost the status in our little class:
'I told Bull Alley Smelhi wanted him
reported and hersted in those terms

In the crowded fifty years since then
I never met one of them anywhere,
slumped few guessed names in printed paragraphs,
they must be aged men now, say alive.

That fence is down; a tall plain feathered flock
housing the swarming children, fills the field
and the girl's nets beyond it, To the coast.

The Last Summer

4 VII

Deck chair in our backyard among 7000 flowers,
bee-trifled poppies, tall Impatiens
in delicate blossom, triggers not yet set -
we brought its seeds first from an Antrim glen
a reek weed by a stream side, of no repute
in any gardener's land book
and pose of Sharon in a golden bush
Thrift with its tiny mosebuds on bare stems
Cornflowers feathered best than now, still sweet,
Delphinium, Oxalis, Mimulus,
in all their coloured companies

135
we draw the sunlight in to warm our bones
against the crucking months, nor vex our wits
for metaphors to flourish in their place,
or map our myth of being where we are.

These flowers are free of ambiguity,
or other baroque than their single lives:
our senses are not focussed to accept
more than here is offered; we accept
the momentary excellence, accept
the excellence as also we accept
the mood, the moment, knowing all will pass.

As You like it

~~Summary~~

The little meeting called for Law Reform assembled slowly. Someone fetched the key, and there were four of us for ^{twenty minutes,} half an hour, setting the chairs in order, clearing tables ^{needed to greet our guests,} The friendly chairman ~~introduced himself~~ found us an ash-tray, showed us circulars which summed its decent air, its frail support.

When half a dozen dribbled in, it started.

Thinking us two as representatives of last year's ^{volunteers} signatories to their appeal, the chairman outlined why we'd come together, and called upon the secretary to report on the ad hoc committee, courtshowerers, refusals blunt or sharp, evasions bland from those who wanted time to reconsider since to some ascending public men our project had its queasy overtones; posters, petition, arguments for both and certain warnings; deputations, letters, and which might be of ^{most effective} ~~immediate~~ use.

137
We studied our associates, strange till now; the tall men like a barley front-row forward, the quiet workmen with collar and tie, that fat lad whose brave jokes gave light and air, the whispering friends who shared some private ^{gossip,} news, the ad hoc secretary.... It could have been some sports committee, a debating club, or ~~other membership society.~~

Then two slight girls in slacks came clomping-in on those high hooves they love now, with bare arms, and little golden chains about their throats.

I tried to place them unsuccessfully, not among any urgent for reform - in my long days I've learned the stereotypes, for civil rights, for workers' unity, for the free mind against the shattered mind, for rage against oppression somewhere else. Which of these ^{urges} causes I could not decide impelled such youngsters, till at least they spoke with ungl. - resped backstreet voices - they were heads linking with us against Tom legged law

which leaves them superimposed, out of step -

My first thought after, that they posed an image
not to our serious purpose, giggling, coy ...

I have some feeling for the loneliness,

the latches of the homosexual,
friendless among the ^{suggesting} stammering families,

waiting, with frustrated hope, for one to love

~~whose story is shared in like loneliness.~~

There was no protest ^{lowered by} ~~born~~ of indignation.

This was they acting. This was dressing-up,
largely amusing, childish, ^{dissonant} out of place.

Yet as my thought swerved suddenly I recalled
^{young boy} the boyish actors of the Blackfriars ^{stage}
^{read drama in} I'd know from books, but ~~had~~ unrecalled,

tripling their maiden-steps to marvellous work,

The smaller, ^{the smallest} ~~dark~~, could have been Celia's ^{gamin}
^{taller, fairer,} the other could ~~well~~ have been Rosalind's

boy playing Perdita full disguised as boy,
with all those ^{shaking} ~~troubling~~ ambiguities;

but that dominion's lost. They have no play
save what they bring from their boy circumstances -

139
And if it seems like farce, I am unjar.

Then see they acting ^{trines} ~~spurs~~ my resolution

~~once more~~ to pin my ^{shut} ~~name~~ to principle:

They have their great quints. That is one of mine.

whose destiny's the same; the further posture
posed against rebuff, against Tabu.

The smaller could have been the unloved Celia,
the taller, heart-high Rosalind - Gynemere, -

The Man from the Mountains

A man I once met,
 where I was a foreigner
 and could not speak his tongue,
 told me as much as I needed to know,
 sitting at a cafe table,
 about his life.

From the mountains, as sled -
 he pointed vaguely up, then resumed the journey,
 and stamped with swinging arms -
 he came to town for work -
 this he showed by moving his forearms,
 beating with his fists,
 describing circles and spirals with a finger
 to indicate the nature of it.
 The machinery was noisy -
 heads over ears -

Then the war - he sined and fired -
 with a closed ^{left} eye and puffing lips;
 and swooping heads - gave me
 attacking planes -

Date every scrap of paper
 your pen puts words on;
 the practice might someday
 settle a disputed point
 which worries historians.

At the very least,
 if you keep and compare several,
 they will demonstrate
 how illegible your writing has become
 your memory how leaky.

of the trade. I am conscious that many good articles are rejected because of elementary mistakes made in the writing and in the mechanics of submission. There have no doubt been masterpieces written in pencil or on filthy sheets of scrap-paper and their worth recognised. But miracles of this kind are not of daily

Here again the list is endless. Follow your interest and make it pay. Move out from success with your local papers to the national and weekly press. (By "local" papers I mean all in your county and in all the adjoining counties.) But give the

He ran away to the mountains (hills?)
and hid (slept?) - cheek on hand-back.

Captured by the enemy

after a lengthy search

- he lifted the cups and plates

and peered under and round them.

Punning fingers demonstrated the long chase

(how he kept a lid's knots together)

He was caught, exhausted, and taken

with five others to be shot;

- fingers counted them with an

inclusive index finger for himself -

They fell in the repeated volleys

- one - two - three four - five - six

he supplied the necessary noises -

Wounded, he fell, lay still,

and after awhile crawled away

when the enemy had marched off -

This he showed also

Thanking heaven - an upward glance -

for he was a Catholic

143
Here in a Communist country,
he crossed himself repeatedly, with
nimble surreptitious fingers.

He had a son, grown now;

he would telephone him to come and meet me -

memory son, telephone, meeting,

I shook hands with the son

and praised his father, my good friend,

with expensive gestures,

I, who, before, had simply nodded

or shaken my head.

17/18. VII

November 1917

A winter day; dark at breakfast time.

Mama told us not to speak to Papa;

he'd had a letter telling him:

Uncle Sandy had been killed in France.

Sandy was our father's youngest brother,
a watercolor painter, a poster maker.

I saw him once, faintly with boots and cane,
on the seafront before the war.

So our father sat all day in the front room
writing to Sandy's widow and other people.

We did not run in with our questions.

It was the stillest day I ever knew.

And for nearly sixty years my habits' been
to take grief quietly, never to rage
against Fate's awkwardness, against
an unresponsive, indifferent universe.

They say repression's always dangerous.

145
leads to rumbling trembles and explosions

can crack the walls; but since that still day

I have believed there's virtue in holding-in

June Enough

August

Person of Poet in Ulster 1955

A Local Historian

He copied the rhymes and ballads
from a hundred volumes or more,
and looked for the broken couplets
among the screws on the floor;
They had ^{for} silenced his rhyming weavers fell silent
when they ^{entered} opened the factory door.

He imagined a Fionn mac Cumhaill
and stepped aside on the grass,
to let Cu Chullain's chariot through
and the beautiful banners pass;
but they gave him the travelling gunner
in place of the galloper.

And, since there's no wage for such labour,
he stands where the four roads cross,
and his heart's with the lonely heron
and the curlew high over the moss
for the drivelling men of the market
have their symbols for profit and loss

June Enough

August

Person asked at once Irish Glass

We are careful never to
say 'Waterford' or 'Cork' or
'Dublin', where there are no markets,
but simply 'Irish' with a
whimsical smile, dis-
claiming any precision
in our expertise.

These then you may take (the hand
makes an inclusive gesture)
as typical: the boat-shaped
sided bowl with the flared o-
-ven rim, or the square foot, set
rather crooked; the squat jug;
the heavy bevel-

- like decanter with the three
collar-rings; the cutting deep
in 'strawberries', in prisms
of light. Not the bluest haze
which is a shopman's table

of the trade. I am conscious that many good articles are rejected because of elementary mistakes made in the writing and in the mechanics of submission. There have no doubt been masterpieces written in pencil or on filthy sheets of scrap-paper and their worth recognised. But miracles of this kind are not of daily occurrence. Here again the list is endless. Follow your interest and make it pay. Move out from success with your local papers to the national and weekly press. (By "local" papers I mean all in your county and in all the adjoining counties.) But give the

giving a false impression
of ready knowledge.

Made certain in Ireland
by Englishmen evading
the House of Commons duty
on the metal, and only
then, till 'the economic
balance' tilted, when they fol-
-lowed the profit home.

Typical it may be in
that the deep cutting, the weight,
were appropriate to the
ready squawking his kept boots
his card tables, his candles
and his stucco flicking in -
- To the microacting boy.

Re-created for tycoons
furnishing their tables to
entertain Common Market-
guests, they offer evidence

149
that we are conscious we have
a cultural heritage of
'glittering masterpieces'
'born in white-hot fire.'

1. X. 75

When the first white flakes
fall out of the black Antrim sky
I toboggan across Alaska.

When a friend jells all
I release the funeral oration
since I am for completeness
not having learned to love
at least with incompleteness

1957 - 1972

early
October

151

Not that gaunt mask - suspect comparisons -
No Dante he; no Florence his sick town.

Yet there was exile after a defeat
and years spending walking the exiled place
among ~~kind~~^{strange} strangers;
evaded the us kin
and there was return,
as the Russian poet wrote,
To that betraying, violent city,
immediately home

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ATHENS OF THE NORTH"

BELFAST 150 YEARS AGO

"The arts and letters of Belfast" was the subject chosen by Mr. John Hewitt, deputy director of the Museum and Art Gallery, when he addressed members of the Belfast Women's Institute Club, in Bryson House, yesterday.

"Athens of the North" was the name by which Belfast was known 150 years ago, said Mr. Hewitt, for although it could then be described as a fairly civilised market town, there was a small but progressive cultural society. He illustrated this development by outlining the lives of some of the outstanding personalities of the era, and by the fact that artists like Mrs. Siddons and Edward Kean had performed masterpieces in Belfast to highly appreciative audiences. However, when the industrial revolution hit the town there was a marked cultural decline, continued Mr. Hewitt, and with the advent of ships of iron, the expansion of the linen trade and more interest in material things, from a cultural point of view, Belfast went into the doldrums.

GREATEST SUSPICION

There followed a period when writers and poets were regarded with the greatest suspicion, and those who were talented in this direction had to hide their light under a bushel because in the great business and industrial centre that was growing up in and around Belfast it was not considered the thing to do.

In this century, said Mr. Hewitt, there was a very thriving theatre movement, and a feeling for drama and arts generally, and he felt that nowadays the position was "set for fair," but he would like to see more of Belfast put on the stage, in the books and on canvas.

Commander B. J. Coade, R.N., travelling secretary of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society, gave a short talk on the origin of the society, and made an appeal to the members of the W.I. Club for their help in raising funds for the society in Belfast.

Mrs. T. Kennedy, president of the W.I. Club, presided at the meeting.

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HEWITT as requested.
Looking forward to
seeing you on Friday.
Best wishes

Anne-Marie

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