

79

Book 63

Book XXXI

July 1976 -

Poems by John Hewitt

Last verse was written in early October 1975.
After Robert's death 19.X.75 I worked on
revisions only until 16.X.78. Then began the
autobiographical sequence.

This continued strongly until end of Feb 79; then a struggle of
single poems [exc. July 3] until August 79

Lassie month

21. VII. 76

[written at Fochabers, Morayshire during a visit
to the Mackies]

I

It was from one in a row
of single-storied freestone cottages
whence a talented and remarkable
love-child of mellifluous tongue
and comely presence rose
to high office in the Kingdom.

The conscience and the courage consumed
by the swift virus of vanity,
that handsome shell was finely
discredited and disowned.

The official biography is as yet unwritten.
There is a plague beside the door
with some of this information
cut into it.

II

At the back of another cottage
in a flagged yard with empty flower
beds

The comely member of Parliament
 in a peacock-bright long dress
 gave us wine and cheese,
 mixing, to my surprised approval
 a rebel belled of my own country
 with amusingly malicious talk
 of our local representatives.
 But I could not help thinking
 of that great man
 born in that other house

This was the pub where once I took that man
 famous for broadest brawling, talk;
 he warned me going in he had no money
 and only drinks one pint of money offered.
 This was the pub where I was bid to meet
 the Russian poet; when he asked my age
 he kissed me on both cheeks and called me Father.
 This was the pub where the small bald barber
 always called me Doctor or Professor
 on my infrequent visits.
 When that building is restored, recovered,
 with festoonable surfaces and textures
 what plastering-glass will offer such reflections?
 What corner's echo gently bounce them back?

Mrs Stone, or You've made my day

In Moscow waking one best midnight,
 light in a tall 2nd floor block,
 distant, young voices singing in the dark
 somewhere among the concrete cliffs
 fumbling uncertainty
 towards a heart-song, harmony,
 gaining confidence, not very drunk,
 A whistle-blast preamble;
 footsteps scatter: the song shuts off, abrupt;
 then after silence, further off
 begins again with fewer voices
 trailing, diminished, lost.

A moment's lapping,
 challenge and response,
 insurgent youth, authority, ^{strong men} stark men
 Some of the public statues within earshot
 smiling or thin blinths
 whose fists relaxed with talking too
 lapsed back to bronze or stone.

But one, at least, I'll swear
 next morning winked back at me
 as passing I gave him a searching look.

I found my way to the Cottage Hospital,
 basking in sun, at curve of village stream.
 The matron out, - a smiling nurse
 led me upstairs to my aged women
 sitting by the bed, the other two
 contentions were gone, one asleep
 or making doleful, the other smiles.
 My aged woman feared, punctured her eyes;
 loudly I named myself; she recognised
 but asked if I'd been blessed then.
 Sure of her ground now, talked of Robbie Burns
 great-hearted poet, and one piece he wrote
 about his latter end, addressed his Maker
 better than all
 she with a little smile: I put you there
 in the same room with him as those I like
 My memory's all in letters; here and there
 I have my cameras. You wrote a poem
 about a sunrise over by the Bay -
 I'd was fully thirty years ago
 I know her slightly then, a small woman
 across the counter with little shot -
 Proud but embarrassed

I thrust the title of another's verses
 which was current in my younger years
 among the people and which still has
 echoes I have sought in likely places.
 The opening stanzas come; the confidence
 put out some way. A prose narrative
 trails out the threads. This leads before her face,
 she blames the faded memory, as she said
 "You can't put your own words for the poet's words,
 for his words are the poem"
 Snatching at the closing verses she runs
 thanked me for calling, for having met her day.
 Humbling I now, more than one day made

John Hewitt, seedsman 1841 - 1922
 John Hewitt, reader 1907 -

Pacing that sun burnt lane, on either side
 the mowed grass heads, stiff and memorised
 by the long season's drought, brought back to mind
 my father's father, who could name each kind
 simply by touch, that - are all grass to me
 like bush, like heage, a landscape property;
 a skill I envy but can never share,
 his namesake but ^{his} disenfranchised heir.

Then suddenly recalled that I myself
 can finger swift along the crowded shelf,
 quick to the textures of the homespun verse
 of weavers, plowmen, the best harvesters
 of a rich word-trade, vint long ago
 when seasons marked the time, and all was slow,

with no son's son to envy me my skill
 A lonelier knowledge I may add to still,

Lines to a friend (Teen Craig)

Dear girl, dream-daughter of my widowed age,
 my lost you're beckoned, ^{surrogate} ~~comely~~ substitute
 for one who was the anchor of my days
 and cornerstone of all I strive to build,
 now risen from me roughly out of time, —
 or so I figured in my loneliness,
 calling these muses out of my fantasy —
 too great a weight for any face to wear.
 Yet I should be absolved, for it was you,
 known since your birth, your parents were our friends —
 you looked, sisters threaded through our lives;
 imagination — claimed you next of kin,
 you of the candle eyes, the ready song,
 who sparked the tinder of my withered heart.

How crazy can you get?

Long past midnight

the comely young woman in her bed
 turns and turns in a complicated net
 of decisions and indecisions.

In another room the elderly man
 lies still thinking of her firm shoulders,
 her soft white arms, her sleepily feet,
 her un-kissed lips, her undiscovered breasts.

4. X. 76

Revised version

Now he, a grave and sober man
 constrained from ecstasy or rage
 by disciplines long laid upon
 years that have matted past middle age,
 has found each course, time-blunted sense
 alerted to such gentleness
 that when - a firm schooled reticence
 surrenders to surprised - ears
 wild fancy necromancer's art
 has lodged abundant charge of joy
 in what had seemed a shrunken heart
 would best befit some eager boy.

This morning my charwoman stuffed
 a fistful of carnations in a jar
 and set it on the chest of drawers
 I thought they fill the living room
 with fragrance
 sweet to me as I sit reading
 accustomed so much to other odors
 Tobacco, coffee, forest;
 and suddenly I recall
 a moment from my childhood
 when I stepped into the quiet parlour
 to look at my grandfather
 in the open coffin on the long table
 afloat in smells.
 Why should the scent of flowers
 remind me of mortality?

9.XII.76

At the door, in that fat black pot-
brained with dark water, wisps of greasy fleece
steeping, wait for the boiling, drying, -easing
to be spun on the treasured wheel,
silent beside the hand.

blackened off wire fence bars
trembles, hawthorn hedges,
all that long summer in the fields
for other tests, tired hanging home;
out of the house on bright evenings
when the worm would feed its brood.

I take the flat squares, wooden bats,
with their close knots of tilted teeth,
to card and comb the wools
which may be spun tomorrow.

13.XI.76

13

Decades Hence.

Would I could make some simple song
which you, in later days, might sing,
the ready words laid on your tongue,
that, instantly, remembering
this quiet man who loved your voice,
your body - and your long pale face,
you'd move and truly rejoice
you get such youth and joy and grace,
alerting every trembling sense,
to the tired autumn of his years
with heart's unchecked manhood,
which left no overdraft of tears.

1977

15
march

In the Lenin Library, Dushanbe.

Having been shown with interest to see
the illuminated Arabic manuscripts.
by famous scribes unknown to us,
the many illustrated translations
of the Rubayat,
and the dispersed volumes presented
by the British Library Association,
we were conducted to
the Director's office.

A dish of grapes, a coffee-pot,
coffee-cups and a platter
traced and piled with rings of bread,
were reflected in
the polished table-top.

When we explained that shortly
we should be leaving our evening meal
at the In-Forest Hotel
the interpreter said firmly
that it would be disastrous not

To break bread with the Director.

When we were each introduced
and seated round the table,
that next man in the sports shirt
picked up the bread and
broke it into fragments
and handed them to us.

The biblical phrase, the psalm,
reminded me instantly
how, earlier that day,
driving up the steep road
to the foot-hills of the Pannis,
our bus drew aside,

allowing a great flock of sheep to pass
coming down to the water
from the upland pastures,
and the shepherd who led them,
called to let them drink
among the splashed stones of
the rushing, shallow mountain river.

The breaking of bread and the shepherd

leading his flock come out of
white was all our Holy Book;
but here the grass was blonde, straw-coloured,
and the waters were not still.

1978

1 week in June

Prelude To Variations on a Theme
Post-script

Then
I wrote this first nine years ago;
now fashion's made much obsolete:
blue jeans and floppy dresses flow
across the road, along the street;
the transformation is complete.

Since then, in Asia - in Tashkent -
I noticed, with amused surprise,
low slant-eyed office typists - went
in brisk ^{bright morning} ~~alm~~ - linking complexes,
^{many} ~~some~~ with ^{thin} ~~obstinate~~ skulls about their thighs.

So, comforted by that, I renewed,
^{here at home} ~~though what I'd ^{9 in} ~~was~~ out of date~~
in that regard, all else was true.
The New ages batter at the gate,
but I am ^{I'm strongly} ~~an old and~~ obstinate,

and hold the standards I have held
since, in my childhood's magazine,
some famous masterpieces spelled
in lines and curves, with dots between,

gave rhythm and structure - to the scene.

So I may let these verses stand
though much has withered year by year
The hand that wrote them is - the hand
once made art's granite rocks clear,
its errors doomed to disappear.

25.3.78

Walking back from the newsagent's
with the world's troubles folded under my arm
I lifted my eyes to the west.
The rain had stopped; the sky had suddenly cleared,
save for a swift billowing of clouds
white against what we call blue.
Drenched with delight
my spirits were airborne, sleeker,
Cumulus cumulus white.

I thought instantly that I must tell
whom ever was at home to step out and look:
for the sight was something to show
But before I had reached the traffic lights
The billows and curves had flattened out,
and it was an ordinary overcast sky.

26.3.78

At a break in the steep cascade of steps
into the important mosque,
we sat on a bench, resting,
watching with interest
the tide of climbing tourists
with swarthy faces, shut-many other eyes,
jet hair in braids, fringed women,
from nations in the Union we could not name.

A small man with a flock of birds and children
stout, in white shirt and dark trousers
with a neckless velvet coat,
stopped to comprehend the foreigners,
friendly, grinning, as his slant eyes questioned
I nodded and answered with the one word "I not";
The eyes puzzled, the smile broader, he looked us up and down,
drew himself proudly to his modest height,
and, with deliberate lips, pronounced what sounded like
"Khorjia", placing himself where he belonged.
You must recognise your race.

It's in this season I think most of death
 with lackeyed promptings of the fallen leaf,
 the chill air, the stiffly shortened breath,
 the darker mornings, sunlight gotobed and brief.
 And at this time of year my dark spouse died,
 after our forty years so closely wrought;
 absurd it seemed that she should step aside,
 and leave me lonely, to my crippled thought.

For, in October born, we both had shared
 whatever slant of star or circumstance
 for the strange sequence of our days prepared,
 only to find it pivoted on chance:
 let luck or lack intrude, this still must be,
 for every mortal, the ^{best} ~~old~~ certainty.

Of course, the hardest prompting comes from age;
 I've passed my biblical three score and ten,
 and realize I soon must leave the stage,
 and wait to hear that prompter tell me when.

During last August's holiday I went
 to see the new pope skew himself in Rome;
 he was the third I'd seen, by chance event,
 since ^{with} ~~with~~ ^{with} Pope John ^{wid'felt} so much at home.

But this third man was humble, smiling, too,
 younger than I. I thought he'd be ^{the} best
 I'd live to see - and ^{regret} ~~regret~~ a very regret.
 It was not so. That ^{shuffled} ~~portly~~ hurried best.
 So much has perished I assumed I knew,
 that Noman's island still must hold its trust.

17/18. X

I've seen no more than three loved persons die;
~~seen~~ ^{watched} dying's something else; I've watched a few;
 They ebb or drift in loneliness, or lie
 inert within the carapace we knew.
 But death observed is final, ultimate,
 never by any circumstance reversed;
 a shattered window, or a bolted gate,
 X a toll well rubble when the light bomb burst.

Yet how could these finite images presume
 to yield the merest hint of what death meant?
 It is a brief and singular event,
 that sudden absence in the silent-room,
 survivors' whisper, while the world outside
 persists in its ^{low} roar, self-justified.

death watched for is something else; I've watched a few

18.X.78

My father's father breasted his four score,
 till, stepping from a train, at eighty-one,
 before it stopped, he broke his collar-bone,
 and in the cottage-hospital he wore
 his bandages with lemon. Every day
 we called to see him. After several weeks,
 though colour had not left his weathered cheeks,
 his breathing bothered, but none bade us stay.

Next-morning, going in, my father said "Sit you by
 "I'll speak to matron. Sit beside his bed."
 The bright sun flooded ceiling, floor and walls
 with golden light. Then suddenly his head
 dropped ^{forward} on his breast, and he was dead;
 as the ripe grain before the reaper falls

My mother had three brothers; each one died
 when he had touched or passed into his prime.
 There seemed some reason made them step aside
 before they'd reached on the plateau of time.
 Their father, well before them, had gone out,
 with six grown children orphans, as if the genes
 put him in perpetually in doubt,
 if not the will, some weakness in the means.

Structured like them in body, blood and bone,
 I dug a hidden ^{dread} fear I'd share their fate,
 that ^{been} ~~dread~~ drove deeper with each year withstood,
 approached the undeveloped but drestic date;
 but from my father's ^{cells} ~~loins~~ the messages
 were coded with a certain sense of ease.
^{quality}

See 90(6A)

The first to go was William. I recall
 the winter night we heard that he had died,
 the quick types crunching on the ice outside;
 my mother'd held her foregone of all;
 her school was famed when he was principal;
 his bachelor's degree the family's pride,
 on strength of these ~~with what~~ my great father she'd decide,
 for his ambitions and rewards were small.

I knew my father. He was just and kind,
 never in temper clenched an angry fist,
 never betrayed a principle or friend,
 loved music, art, a gentle socialist,
 no blemish on that estimable mind;
 the compass I shall carry to the end.
 his

21/22.X.78

The second brother, John the black boy,
 stayed with his widowed mother many a year.
 Sun runner, golfer, clever engineer,
 he married late and left to live next door.

At twelve I wondered what he married for:
^{when} with everything a man could need was here,
 house, garden, mother, dog, fish, books were near
 and, not too far, the golf-links and the shore.

I never saw his bride. The ledge was high
 between the gardens. Yet she was a thief
 to steal our uncle from us. Suddenly,
 when influenza ravaged far and wide,
 her nursing of him ^{was} ~~seemed~~ to our belief
 incompetent: he never should have died.

23.X.78

The youngest of them, Richard had a wife,
 Aunt Bertha, with no child to complicate
 their singular enjoyment of their state;
 theirs seemed, indeed, an enviable life.
 I loved to sit in their high motor car
 with the brass headlamps, wind their gramophone
 to play ^{me} Peter Dawson's baritone;
 but otherwise I envied from afar.

Never so close as when he lay upstairs,
 a corpse uncoffined and I stood alone.
 I set myself the ^{strongest} ~~breast~~ of my arms,
 and touched his cold nose, cartilage and bone.
 With widowhood the bravest of careers,
 she lived in that same house for ^{some fifty} ~~forty~~ years.

24/25.X.78

My father's closest-brother of ^{his} the three
 became an artist, by compulsion made
 his living at the lithographic trade,
 in Edinburgh first, then, finally,
 settled in Finchley with his family.
 He came back once. I still can see him plain,
 his tilted boater and his swagger-ear;
 a lovely man. He shared ^{small} some jokes with me.

Soon after war broke out he wrote to say
 he had enlisted by deliberate choice,
 not wait to be a conscript, to ^{his} boys
 who'd ^{might remember it} maybe think of it some future day.
 I still recall my father's countenance
 that day we heard he had been killed in France.

c 1875-1917

25.X.78

Those boys were twins, but only one survived;
 their widowed mother married a good man
 who took my infant cousin and continued
 to treat him fairly - as an elder son
 with ^{a good man can} the small boy who ^{hurred in} came upon his wake,
 but, for convenience, sharing the same name.
 The tall lad was excited when he came
 to visit us, for stricter kinship's sake.

A captain later, from the second war,
 he visited us again, not married yet;
 his mother, widowed for a second time,
 grasped him close, as if it were a crime
 for him to let his fancies travel far.
 His sudden death summed-up a vast regret.
 also marked

25/26.X

Thomas, the eldest brother, shipped across
 the western ocean where he found a bride,
 the daughter of the farm, this proved no loss;
 a well-stuffed office was no crazy stride.
 From her surname they took their son's first name
 and sent no stacks of photos every year;
 with Office, House and cars, there would appear
 that family fall, the same and not the same.

After depression: that Bermuda trip,
 the seeping jewels subdued by surgeon's knife,
 the blond son smiling in the partnership;
 it seemed the sort of Transatlantic life
 that set in next spring; yet there ~~was~~ were
 those ^{Christmas} monthly dollars for my grandfather.

c. 1895

31.X-1.XI.78

33

My father's youngest brother stayed at home
 with his old father when the others left.
 I can recall the treasures in each room
 altho' the house is gone, the street bereft
 of all but name. The rarest of bezels -
 huge hollow cone shells; chain of prairie grass
 twisted in coils; nests, lizards tanked in glass;
 live pigeons in the attic; snakes in jars;
 the Orange sash; the Volunteer shako;
 the phonograph with spinning cylinders;
 the stamps; the butterfly; all disappeared
 into the limbo where small treasures go -
 gone ^{too} even that wheel with which my uncle steered
 his fabled ornithopter - gone for years.

c. 1912

1.XI.78

This uncle was my quiet Prospero
 That house his island-duke-dom. There I shared
 his marvels and his magic. We would go
 with netted rods and jammers well prepared
 To face the Fow-path by the drifting stream,
 or stride thro' leather for the furtive moth.
 I gaped to watch his magic-lantern's beam
 colour with life the ^{hoisted} humble tablecloth.

His nimble fingers thrilled the mandolin
 or strummed benjo. Once, with a pointed blade,
 he gouged a fist-size eagle from tough oak.
 He glittered thro' my days, - a haladin,
 in all accomplished, nature's tricks his trade,
 till one sad day, for me that dream - spell broken.

1.XI.78

Counting a widow briefly, Grandfather
 affronted his grey son - and fled to us.
 My uncle bought himself a little Kaese,
 red brick, suburban, shortly finding there
 his next-door neighbour, ^a spinster painting flowers.
 Her house was larger; there was room to spare;
 one house, not two; it seemed good sense to share.
 They married. It was no affair of ours.

Husband and wife now both past-middle age,
 they got a son, a sickly child soon dead.
 Careless, my mother thought it very odd,
 'A wonder of the world' was what she said.
 Her carried words provoked my uncle's rage;
 the row resulting closed that period.

c. 1915

3/4. X1

He had been born in eighteen forty one,
just like the Prince of Wales, led always say.
The old Queen's reign had sixty years to run,
and with good health he would outlast her day.

An early marriage - John was seventeen;
Jane two years older - Mark then followed suit
and brought ⁱⁿ a young lady home to set the scene
for certain kitchen - justice in Clansoot.

So John and Jane, that windy Christmas Eve,
set sail for Glasgow, huddled on the deck -
the voyage rough, yet offering relief
for, from then on, there was no going back.
And so our Scottish sojourn then began
which gave a touch of tartan to our cloth.

4. X1

39

And in a Glasgow close they found their home.
Countrymen's fingers opened him a trade,
the seedsmen's trade, and this conjunction laid
a table, ^{made} a heart for all ^{which} would come.
First Mark with eggs and chickens basketed
to Bromilaw or deck: John's Jane's brother John,
to stow his family, then mother fled,
leaving him free to journey farther on.

This youngsters swelled the growing family.
Jane scrubbed and fed the lot. John bairn all,
no ^{bore} gamaged the footloose fellow any grade;
with foreman's opt responsibility
became a Volunteer, ^{lest} but war befall,
and rose to Master of his Orange Lodge.

L. 1860

So Jenny Geddes leads my heritage,
 and that man voting with ^{comrades} a steady voice,
 and Burns who's never narrowed to a page
 but lifts from lips of lively men ^{to} and boys
 with wit and love that laughs ^{and} ^{yet} never dings.

But from no known kin of mine I learnt the rage
 which yields ^a blade to youth, an edge to age,
 with conscious fairness ^{as the} counterpoise.
_{the} ^{still} _{it}

From Scots so much, but from the English more,
 from books, for blood, and learning to be free
 those fifteen years I-gave to Coventry.

* My father was and kept me, socialist;
 justice and ^{mercy} kindness were the arms he bore;
 his was the open palm. I clenched my fist.

↑ For he loved Burns, most often would remark
^{most nobly} the ^{necessary} complements which he most enjoys,
 the glowing bottle-side tale of Cally Sake

Tho he was not like us a reader
 X like not like his son

In Eighteen fifty nine, that Year of Grace,
 when searing shars of frost broke fathom lands,
 with fearful husbandry few could withstand,
 for every homestead seemed a stricken place,
 and thousands swooned, or stood with ravaged face,
 bearing the wounds, old sores, the sinner's brand,
 which - a remote theology had tolerated
 as fitting forecomer to the Halls of Praise.

My mother's mother, Ellen Harrison,
 young farmer's daughter from around Wolfhelt,
 fell smitten with her family and rose
 redeemed by Mercy, all of them - save one,
 their kindly father, ^{unrepentant} still,
 not trod the path ^{that they (now)} ^{enfranchised}, sinners chose.
 They, ^{now} ^{enfranchised}.

They gathered round in prayer, had preachers brought
 to strive and wrestle with his stubborn will,
 smote him with texts and sermons, - and besought
 his sin-pierced heart to recognise its ill,
 shewed him and neighbours all admitting still
 their perilous state, ^{the sinner} salvation Christ had wrought;
 but he, ^{unwittingly} unconscious of one sinful thought,
 could feel no need repentent tears to spill.

They urged: "By one last effort you may bring
 your soul to glory. You are skilled in song.
 A song for Zion then; the Lord is strong."
 But when he lifted up his voice to sing,
 they found the songs they prayed for change into
 familiar ballads he already knew.

1859

The Old Orange Plate.

A carpenter called Joseph Love, it's true!
 married my father's sister Sarah Jane -
 with names like that some belted should-ensae
 of rural peace, lonely joy or pain.
 Not so. He was a bright young working man;
 my father liked him. Later - out of work
 They emigrated, settled ^{near} in New York,
 and (started there a brave hardworking clan)
^{from then on} became American.

But once, before that, with my father - crossed
 to Liverpool to hear Keir Hardie speak,
 returned committed firm to Labour's cause. -
 I cannot reckon what that journey cost;
 its gains ⁱⁿ New Jerusalem to seek,
 free from ^{such} all hostilities as require applause.

c.1890

My mother's mother, born in forty-two
 saw bearded husband die of Bright's Disease.
 Of his brass foundry all I ever knew,
 Those Two Napoleons on the mantelpiece.
 Each night he ^{lean} ^{when}
 He always had to (step down to) the gate
 to light his pipe, for none dare smoke indoors.
 Churchgoing, handsome, rigid, strict, sedate,
 my quaking terror of her still endures.

When walking with her in a summer lane,
 I plucked a brothy flower, admiring it,
 but she whose briskest word was to forbid,
 asserted ^{with} ^{her} ^{drilian} ^{coax} ^{again},
 and, in ^{her} ^{starkly} ^{familiar} ^{tones}, my error chid:
 "Throw it away, child: it is Cuckoo-spit!"

c-1915

My native tongue is of my time and place,
 articulated with deliberate care,
 hinting of Scots a little, at its base
 the Planters' Tudor. This, though, I detect,
 since absent from its usage, to my ear
 its local tone's grown coarser in effect.

Tho' Glasgow born, a child still in Belfast
 his voice mature along the telephone
 had a Scots-tinctured timbre of its own;
 an early echo from his muffled past
 his daily speech would seldom demonstrate;
 but the odd words I'd heard or underlined,
 with ^{speech} words and fingers he would explicate;
lum hat and pinkie come the first to mind.

My native tongue was of ^{the} ^{time} ^{and} ^{place}
 articulated with deliberate care,
 hinting of Scots or Gaelic, but at base
 the Planters' Tudor, ~~now~~ with such wear and tear
 that, after ~~my~~ absence from its usage, I,
 (remembering, can hardly justify.

I detect

1873-1945

here

It has grown coarser to my careful ear.

Its local ^{tone} use is coarser in effect

y 6 Cliftonbank Avenue, 1894

My uncle Wilhem was made principal
of a town school, a church aptitude then;
relations like this were general,
accepted still by creed-conditioned men.
His family, my father's, worshipped there,
a meeting-house for Methodists who came
to hear long sermons, testify with prayer,
and sing their hearts out in their Saviour's name.

Associated with that school a house
some distance off, the master's residence.
Unmanned, Wilhem brought the family
to live with him; which circumstance allows
a sober comfort, next to no expense,
and a tradition which came down to me.

1880+

Fourth in a five-house terrace, stucco-faced,
three storeys, a bay window, hatched gables,
red tiles
tiled path to gate, the hailings iron-crest,
respectable, no longer working-class
as their last house was, doorsteps on the street.
The half mile walk to school - to church and school
each Sunday with the family complete -
that walk ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{was} something more than dutiful.

My mother and her elder sister taught
in Wilhem's school, untrained, sang in the choir,
or, round the new piano, sang at home;
then younger sister to the keyboard brought
rich resonance. At times they'd light the fire,
and have a party in the drawing-room.

1888?

That zenith, summer, ^{day} no ~~was~~ too ~~far~~ brief
 I cannot estimate its length in years
 The ^{days} decades, months or hours subsumed in grief,
 encapsulated in the family's fears
 when their proud father died, still at his prisms,
 after repeated crises of disease
 brought them together, singing, on their knees,
 while he, the breast, led them every time

to ^{enter into} greet his end in glory. He lived on.
 They could not face that music, weakening,
 called in a nurse to guard him in their stead;
 till one, when she, to fetch his tray, had gone,
 death took him swiftly without quivering;
 * alone - and lacking song, the men was died.

when she returned she found him, songless, dead.
 came back

1898

Time telescoped. My mother in two years
 married my father. William found a bride.

Richard botched up a couple of careers.
 John, ^{built a house in Benson} had a comely land built, to provide
 his widowed mother with a home, ^{at least} secure,
 no lodger in a Teacher's Residence.
 His sisters, till they married, could endure
 their mother's private life to Providence.

John, for himself, assumed his father's role,
 surrendered all to this, a future wife,
 a Whitworth Scholar, Company Engineer,
 to be the anchor of that widowed life,
 changing the factory, ^{with his} under firm control,
 to prosper in the new electric gear.
 and with latest lecting

1898-

John, for himself, assumed his father's role,
 to be the anchor of that widowed life,
 -changing the foundary with his shrewd control
 to prosper ⁱⁿ with the latest lecting gear,
 surrendered all to this, a future wife
 a Whitworth Scholar, Company Engineer.

I loved that house while knowing it not mine,
 where every season was designed to please -
 for I loved there ^{to} a year when I was nine :-
 the blossoms, as the apples on the trees,
 the gilt lebanum, beech tree catkins brown,
 the pebbles on the long path to the gate,
 where I in safety on broad shoulder sat
 to watch the Circus ^{travelling} blowing into town.

Yet from the faded cards of memory
 two moving pictures have survived for me;
 those joys in cupboards where my granma's hide
 secrets no mumbled fumble could restore,
 the ^{red} tiles, scumbled table, and the kitchen door
 where black Jim mourned his master, when John died.

1915

I lived there half a year when I was nine,
 the longest visit, saw its apple trees
 blossom to fruit, tho' only orals were mine;
 but of the recollections which most please,
 tho' earlier, one was perhaps the crown:
 when ^{struggling} I ~~tried~~ ^{loose} pebbles to the gate,
~~where I sat on my father's shoulder, safe~~
 to watch the Circus ^{travelling} blowing into town.
 as Duffy's crew

to Duffy's Circus struggling

the earliest remains perhaps the crown

Tom Brownie took me over to Six Road Ends
with my aunt Lis. He must have carried me
^{most} part of the way. What age I was depends
on how one dates the meeting properly;
say, five or six. We three were standing there,
facing the platform ^{erected in} under its mangrove,
the crowd so huge, Tom lifted me to see
Sir Edward Carson ^{formally} declare —
_{with an hour,}

For what he did declare I'd here to look
That old newspaper files, since what he said
has left no echo in ^{my} that infant's head —
Yet I can swear I saw that jut-jawed face,
right arm ^{up held} stretched out in challenge or rebuke,
once, and once only, in that famous place.

c. 1913-14

Then Ballylone held three surprising things
which scarcely could be met with the same day,
however venturesome your wanderings:
That blunted windmill several fields away;
and where two roads converged, hid in the wedge
they formed, a theatre's engine - churned and roared,
and clouds of gritty shaft spun up and soiled
in endless fountain over the high ledge;

and, metaphor no less or more than these,
on any morning unpredicted rain,
— whenever seen as often sure to please,
the regal spectre of that gaunt old man
eventing his leggings on a tricycle,
slow wheeling up, — and swifter down, the hill.

c. 1920

In Ballylone three memorable sights
telling you morning
taken together made you lucky days
~~it happened to me once~~

Tell us a lighthouse, front of these delights
was the blunt windmill several fields away

25.XI.78

In Bangor's eastward suburb, Belby Holme,
John's house was pitched, not in the older town
where buildings, dwellings, shops tilt slowly down
to join the sea front where the steamers come,
but on a long level quiet road
one of the villas of those businessmen
who travelled to Belfast and back again,
leaving their families handsomely bestowed.

Those villas, not memorial or vast,
were comfortable, every need supplied
by errand boys, with things which came by van,
for all that happened there occurred inside
except on Sundays when whole families passed
to pay the tribute to the Son of Man.

c1916

25.XI

For all that happened there occurred inside.
I think at once of when the man next door
(a dripping corpse) was carried (in a ^{blanket} stretch) from the shore;
my elders nodded, whispered 'suicide',
as of some sore affront to local pride
had been committed by some nameless one.
A horse that breaks a necessary bone
on ill at home, had a more dignified
dismissal when they stop him when he lay.

X For this was drama, never overstept,
for that ^{this} we gathered round with lots to say,
or edging closer, from the kerbstone, erect,
thrust into silence when the curtain went,
and men with horses drew his cart away.
For that whole night I hardly ever slept.

1916

X In such a case, compassion never slept

For it was lively round that other house
 where I was born and lived so many years.
 Life surged about us. So that Time appears,
 its interludes suppressed, in happy shows:
 dark organgrinders with ^{their} (slow footed) bears
 and sewing lanterns; women selling delft;
 the German band; the Ulster Volunteers
 with wooden guns; ^{a singer} one drummer by himself.
 one fiddler

3. street football every autumn; tates in spring;
4. girls skipping; slides and snowballs in the snow;
2. the fire brigade, all brass and fanned flames;
1. home preachers, canal singers in a ring;
5. all those activities which were the names
6. of May Queen, Kick the Tin, and Rally-0.

1907-1930

My mother's elder sister married Tom,
 a country lad become a schoolmaster, —
 for so it seems half my relations were, —
 lived in an avenue some distance from
 our hot end centre. I was often there.
 A childless house then, I would most remark
 those lovely dancers — drawn in poker-work
 hung in the hallway. These I could compare
 with the bright mirrors in their velvet frames,
 fierce gun dogs haunted on them.

Forty years,
 my waking life, I go to galleries,
 familiarised myself with styles and names,
 learned critic's jargon. Yet recalling these
 touches a feeling not so far from tears.
^{to} ^{appears}
^{in them} ^{c. 1912}

That's my aesthetics sadly in arrears.

A friendly host, ^{since} for, till their daughter came,
 for any child, I stood as surrogate,
 a kinship I could never after claim
 when my small cousin stoned, a little later,
 who, thro' the years, showed spiteful end still
 already hunted elsewhere in our clan
 but never master-essed, till she could fill
 the long hair, ^{by} ^{ready} ^{it} ^{to} cunning open
 with pools, well water deep, which upped out,
 or, ^{plangent} ^{Latin} ^{plunging} ^{down} ^{surged} ^{like} ^{the} ^{tide}.
 This was as if the ^{with} ^a ^{hills} ^{slender} ^{streams} were brought
 to ^a fulfilment they could not provide
 singly; my father's cells, mother's song,
 and Edith's (native talent to prolong.)
^{exhibit} ^{occasional} ^{yet} ^{strong}
 keyboard pieces random.

1910-6

Aunt Edie married Sam, an amateur
 footballer - 'Daddy Martin', to the crowd -
 head, affable, ^{ev.:} ^{confidently} ^{square} and loud;
 his tasselled caps with braid provided sure
 proof of his art; in business prospering,
 listed as sponsor, his ascent with ease
 to social status seemed a certain thing,
 already lettered Justice of the Peace.

Then land was large and in a leafy park,
 a grand house and a motor car;
 they entertained performers from afar.
 My cousins' Christmas seemed like Noels Ark.
 But when war ended, business fell apart;
 (bankrupt declared, unvenged ^{unwished} extrovert).
 a bankrupt, ^{to} ^{escape} ^{another} ^{slant}
 more modest

1919

27.XI.78

My only sister, Eileen, - always was
 an elder sister to a little boy.
 Half-roads to mother, she could still enjoy
 my simple games, was quick with the applause
 she saw I needed. When our parents went
 to concert or to meeting made my tea;
 and when older rough boys grew too strong.
 she with my combenior's growing violent
 here was the ready hand ^{ann} ^{protected} defended me.

And with the years her uses multiplied;
 Taught me, at Ballyholme, to tie my shoe,
 in seely took me up the stairs to bed,
 and, only once, reported when I lied.
 At times I missed a brother, it is true,
 but that was in addition, not instead.

I would have liked a brother

1902-75

x Carried up my candlestick to bed
 and made me milk
 and led me up by candle light to bed

27-29.XI.

In those days, always, the School's Manager
 was the same man who ministered the church,
 for we were Methodist; his custom there, ^{and a} ^{perch}
 a four year stint before he'd leap or lurch
 to greener, ^{well funded} ^{boscaz} ^{run in search} somewhere else;
 if he were calculating, he might cruise
 to comfortable pulpit, steeple, bells,
 with shorter sermons, ^{thicker} ^{softer} ^{enlarded} faws.

Each year they met in conference to agree
 whose turn this was, who'd sulk or make a fuss
 if sent to till some rugged tony
 or find some corner what might prove his best.
 And several times, when meeting in Belfast,
 some country minister would stay with us.

clay-keels

28/9. XI. 78

By chance, the minister, when I was born,
 was just that fellow father rated best
 he could be well described if with some
 him they would designate, with quiet scorn, —
 as looking like a ^{or a} 'German', 'priest'
 not father, surely mother, —
 His bearing was dictatorial and rude,
 white haired, ruddy faced conservative,
 obstrosing, more even more than country word,
 the splendid dreams by which all free men live.

So when the time came for my christening,
 my father saw that from a source like this
 the forehes-abled blessing which proceeds
 would be no more than empty posturing.
 In conscience then, he gave that rite a miss,
 and, from that day, live stood outside the creeds.

A powerful cleomen in the brotherhood
 which such sharp features
 to them Senon said

1907

29. XI.

65

The tall dark ^{handsome} men who lived next-door,
 schoolmaster also, with his family
 set out for better days across the sea.
 My father too, once dreamed some distant shore —
 perhaps New Zealand — would reward him more,
 for living on a teacher's salary
 must have been different)
 was promising. They had it ever truly;
 but never once I thought of us as poor.

I never wanted much I could not have,
 food, shoes, toys, books, and every Saturday
 the pence for sweets and comics I required;
 we always had a summer holiday.
 But now I know my parents frugal, true,
 and by ^{his} domestic loyalty inspired.

c 1919

With those folk gone, next door was tenanted;
 by a ^{mid} quiet man, an Army Officer,
 two girls, a boy, left in his anxious care;
 because his wife, their mother, ^{deid} ^{three years} ^{ago} ^{was} ^{deed}
 We shortly found that they were Catholics,
 the very first I ever came to know;
 the boy ^{who some would call a rascal, a misdoer} soon taught me several gentle tricks,
 an instant friend, though innocent and slow;
^{before my} Just ^{his} of my own age. The Christian Brothers' School
 ✓ ^{approved} ^{the cruel} ^{sounded} ^{seductive}. As an elder-by
 he ^{had one fear.} was afraid. His magazines were full
 of men and places named, unknown to me,
^{Binbury} Clontarf, Cuckaleinn, Wolfe Tone, Fontenoy.
 I'm grateful to you, Willy Morrissey.

Colinbarr battle of, 1646

c. 1920

the boy who called friends might call a Maest?
 soon learned to get whatever I would do.

✓ X to me seemed cruel:

Port Stewart. Number fourteen. Willy's - clutch -
 our cousins, Edna, Cecil, Uncle, Aunt -
 rented a house with us. There is not much
 I can remember now's significant;
 The swimming pool; the jelly fish that sting;
 The ~~present~~ ^{children}; how the film, unreeled, would fall
 into a open basket; that is all;
 that end a smother chorus. ^{which the birds sing}
~~you have no gaps in time when you are young.~~

The war began in Europe. Bishops blessed
 the Austrians, the Russians. It was odd,
 both benches humed opposing prayers to God.
 We thought that silly, had more interest
 in picnics on the Strand or Castle Rock.
 By August, back in Belfast, came the shock.

1914

My letters came from labelled bottles, tins,
 my mother lifted from the pantry shelf,
 before some rite like baking cakes begins
 I was allowed to imitate myself,
 scraping the empty bowls and learning taste
 as well as letters, names, of Sugar, Flour
 Salt, Spices, Cloves, for there should be ^{no} waste
 when half the world is starving ^{at this} hour by hour

But better still, the others gone to school,
 my father, sister, she'd sit down to him,
 or sew, or darn, and I'd draw up my stool
 to tell her where my hero-self would put
 into the prompt-looped safe ^{serious} ^{she shan't do us}
 which, at this hour each day, ^{enveloped us.}

c. 1910

One woman, by my mother much admired
 had had two fine sons, Harold, ^{and} Lancelot;
 both names, but more the latter seemed inspired
 with elegance and breeding - so ^{my mother} she thought.

This woman was a niece of the Miss Boyd
 who ^{ruled} ^{the} ^{circle} ^{of} ^{the} ^{town} famous in our town,
 and all within her influence enjoyed
 some magic emanating from that crown..

13. XII

My father disagreed. Our names are plain,
 honest, not fleshy. John was good enough
 for his own father, for her brother John;
 a Lancelot would sound affected, vain;
 but if the child should even an inch of cuff,
 we'll slip a Harold in, for letter on.

1907

Old Doctor Ledlie brought me in his bag;
 he had a King's beard and a long frock coat.
 And so when other children used to brag
 of flying stakes or, loud vicarious, vote
 for cabbages and goose-biry tudes as
 the places insistent where they first appeared,
 I always felt I had ^{claimed} a higher class,
 a doctor's bag, and stout King Edward's beard.

Those summer months she waited for the day
 the doctor'd bring me, my small mother sped
 to a secluded seat upon the bank
 above the sea, somewhere near Helen's Bay,
 fill her mind with lovely thoughts; she
 to think of lovely things, she later said;
 and for that kindness I had her to thank -
 so such those thoughts I must have

for such thoughts, I, perhaps, had her to thank 1907

My mother's mother loved that same Miss Boyd,
 accepted her admired authority,
 was, when my parents married, overjoyed
 that her friend's wedding present all should see;
 but, coming from a liquor-licensee,
 the gift was fainter, so my father vowed,
 and straight returned it, thereby disallowed
 such ~~wholly tainted~~ ^{wholly tainted} her ~~ostentatious~~ generosity.

There was a row of course, my grandmother,
 was much ~~displeased~~ ^{displeased} by her ~~son-in-law~~ ^{daughter's man},
 her ~~kindly~~ ^{gracious} friend insulted, felt abused
 that such ~~an act~~ ^{two eyes, seduce} should ~~so demean~~ ^{stand against} her;
 but men of principle see not ~~in a straw~~
 if, in their ^{light} armour, ~~one suggest a flaw~~ ^{has been harshly used} roughly

but with good grace he overcame her ban,
 in all, the Christian virtues fully used.

1900

by this ~~eyes~~ ^{eyes} act which so demeaned her;
 yet for ^{all} the jessed vedas ill she used
 his ~~upside~~ ^{upside} stance ~~abated~~ ^{abated} not a straw.
 despite

13/14. XII

Three Photographs

The photograph behind my father's chair was of King Edward on his quarter deck. These pictures smaller, his companions were Jim Larkin launching some severe attack, and R. J. Campbell, long forgotten name, benignly preaching Christian Commonwealth; these three might seem odd fellows in some sense but stand the pivots of all social health.

On kitchen walls for years. Led in its
a King to stand for freedom under law,
4 and on his stand another for the freedom of the spirit,
3 the third for justice for the human race.
From these my father sought his strength to draw;
These are the loyalties which I inherit.

On kitchen walls for years, led in its place:
a crown for to stand for ^{justice} under law,
a fist for justice for the human race;
a gentle voice for freedom to the spirit;

L 1910-

That bag was opened in the top front room, there, on my parents' big and friendly bed. But later that apartment would assume a magic nature in the years ahead. For six long weeks when I had scarlet fever, cut off and curtailed from life's daily ^{tasks} ~~tasks~~, close escorted by mother's calm endeavour, I ate my meals, read books, played carpet wars

Ben Cresy's Battles, plotting each campaign with my lead regiments across the floor. Feller, with his telephone and the crystal set, I fiddled with the twisted wire which let the dance band's billowed rhythm, the song's refrain retreat like closing, ~~and like opened door.~~

~~shut~~ ^{shut} and ~~retrace~~ ^{retrace}, advance ~~across the room~~ ^{across the room} bounce in or beat the door ~~slam~~ ^{slam}

See Edward Cresy: Ten Decade Settles of the World

Island megal, 1921.

Those summer days of nineteen twenty one
 were hot and sunny all that long July;
 farm carts fetched water, for the pump on an dy,
 the hard ground crumbled in the endless sun.
 The beans were ripe to pluck; the blue stone spray
 in rusty drums stood at the furrows' end.
 And Seady, berry boy or bolen, now my friend,
 joined me at cricket where he'd cut the hay.

The farmer had a ball, prize winning, black;
 men drove a knife in once, to be served -
 on a act 'd not seem ^{shelled} _{shelled}
 I had not read the ^{like} _{like} on any page -
 and from the hay left's ventage I observed
 his forelegs ^{hoisted} _{hoisted} ^{snip} _{snip} ⁱⁿ _{in} ^{thorax} _{thorax} ^{end} _{end}
 Not yet, from then, that day I came of age.

shelled [body]

31. XII. 78

Poems in 1979

4.1.79 15

I saw my father die. For two long years
 he had lain stricken. Still he could address,
 when fair play prompted, letters to the press
 which ^{when} _{when} ^{labeled} _{labeled} ^{pictures} _{pictures} ^{with} _{with} ^{box} _{box} ignoble sneers.
 And then a Polling Day, in quiet rage,
 he hobbled on my sister's arm to vote
 against that clown who'd often changed his coat
 but not his malice or his verbiage.

He died a few weeks after. We sat there,
 my mother and myself, beside the screen -
 in other verses I had sketched that scene
 assessed ^{revised} _{revised} that sentence, ^{knowing} _{knowing} ^{it} _{it} ^{unfair} _{unfair};
 sans love, sans mercy, with no sort of totem,
 did those last hours of that bewildered men.

When my wife's sister's husband came to die
 I took my turn to sit beside his bed,
 and watched that good mind written in ^{that} his head
 which had conformed so much to decency,
 for friendly words when the sick my friends
 and doctors, nurses, hospitably shy
 their caring crafts and skills. But now instead,
 his light into weakness, rallied, fluttered, fled
 back to my moments of his infamy.

This was an idle and a clumsy end
 for one whose strength was action, charged and lit
 by ^{rising} real wisdom (country humour) wit;
 x Comprehensible, unassuming friend.
 ✓ If there should be that Judge to whom men pray
 He might have brought him home a kinder way.
 4 x a Trollbe-addict, ^{business man} ~~business man~~ and friend
 5 x If there is that Good Strider, as men say,
 some

Brown's Bay, 1915

Once, with my mother and my grand mother,
 I went to lend a hand, fetch water, go
 on errands to the farm. Our cottage there
 stood on a ridge, whence certain hours would stew,
 steaming it down, returning, in a row
 the dark minesweepers file, each evening.

Yet while, in France, we dealt them blow for blow,
 at Europe's edge here, we were wondering
 if U boats kept the issue still in doubt.

One morning, fests accomplished, for a stroll,
 I scoured the turf and rocks round Skerrieglen;
 and fifty yards off, swelling like a shoal,
 the ^{waters} ocean broke; - a submarine thrust out.
 I scrambled fearful, from that waving men.

5.1.79

I had piano-lessons once a week,
the instrument-^{then} which everybody knew.

My mother played w say; my sister too;
my father made his cello grunt w squeak,
contesting Handel's Largo. Now and then
friends heard a trio, friends at parties sang -
soprano ladies, tenor gentlemen, -
till our brass palm-plant near the window rang.

But I set dumb. My fingers were unskilled
with Henry's Tutor limiting my scope -
Miss Harrison, my sallow teacher, filled
the terms up w words which gave no hope,
and I was left, relieved, to carry home
only the tick-tock of the metronome.

11.1.79

79

Upon my father's shelves there was a book,
a year's bound issues of a magazine,
and through those pages frequently I'd look
before I knew what such strange words could mean.
A man called Spenser, in monthly articles,
printed a famous picture, opposite
a diagram of curves or parallels,
or other ^{math} things ^{to} explain how the artist structured it.

So I learned from the skeletal Landseers,
Turners, Da Vinci's, Michelangelos -
the tip surviving my unlettered years
to give my gallery-days a running start -
along what simple lines emotions flow
that, in a master's hand, attains to art.

Landseer: The Bay Mare

W.E. Shakes

Turner: Best of the Fighting Temeraire

Da Vinci: The Last Supper

Michelangelo: Sistine Chapel

16.1.79

I loved to watch him shave, his broad thumb pressed
 on chin abrasives, to let that striped steel skin
 the white froth off. I felt I could not rest
 till one day I should share this rite with him;
 such skill, such peril, some unerring grace...
 This was my daily vigil - one might share;
 the morning bathroom was a holy place;
 one celebrant, one silent worshipper.

This finished, he'd begin a lesser rite
 scrubbing my face, my neck, my hands, my knees,
 wholly engaging me in sheer delight
 my stance entranced by some ^{remembered} ~~secret~~ spell
 from Aristotle, or some tale from Kingsley's Greece,
 Gould's Book of Moral Lessons, Wilhelm Tell,

F. J. Gould: Children's Book of Moral Lessons (1850)

17.1.79

My father made his articles, reviews, -
 I saw post bring him books - though now I'd say
 That H.S.Neill is not the latest news,
 his was the brightest star of many a day;
 when those three volumes of The Dominion
 his log, Dismissed, In Doubt, dropped through the door -
 his later books I'd name less certainly -
 my father felt more strongly than before
 surely

That he was right to lead his slumbering class
 To frolic in the quarry - on Carehill,
 or ^{near} ~~near~~ ^{down} ~~down~~ ^{to} the Baths to learn to swim.
 Inspectors could not let such Fresco pass
 when there were tests of spellings, sums, to fill
 The ^{ruled} ~~strict~~ Time Table. They admonished him.
 squared

On 23.1.79 walking along Ormeau Avenue, I saw a couple
 of buses drawn up at the Corporation Public Baths, and
 parties of little schoolgirls dismounting to go in.

18.1.79

With rimless glasses and a ^{clipped} ^{side} mustache
 my father faced life, gently confident.
 In his first manhood doctrine and dress,
 his manner mellowed & quickly as he went
 about his business, never with a frown,
 but with a ready pocket ready in relief
 of any trouble. No oath, however brief,
 slipped from his lips at any slight removal.

He'd been a cricketer but for it was
 after he married, turned to golf instead,
 but won no medals let alone a cup.
 On each dry forenoon - Saturday he rode
 to plod with fellow-teachers round the links,
 the game enjoyed, declared the Clubhouse drinks.

18/19.1.79

My mother played no games; she trimmed her hots;
 her eye for colour was acutely true:
 needles, scissors rolling pins, not bats
 comprised the tools which she expertly knew.
 Her tongue was lively, notable for use
 of country-phrases from her mother's youth.
 quick, vivid, picturesque, not coarse or loose,
 nor ~~was~~ veering greatly from the truth.

She gobbled novels, loved George Eliot,
 and George MacDonald, Coethi, Barrie, Wells;
^{for} ~~but~~ it was for character far more than plot,
 which figured in ^{the} telling parallels
 she drew with people. Dickens had ~~was~~ ^{was} prime.
 I learned the sentence long before the crime.

I looked in and ⁱⁿ recognised the same

19.1.79

My sister walked me every day to school
 till I grew taller than the Infants ~~class~~;
 there were such lovely monuments to pass;
 the corner-butcher's, tiled with ^{green} ^{tiles} and
 the harness shop, its windows filled with brass,
 whips, stirrups, saddles. — O that leather smell! —
 and round the corner, at street crossing, was
 the Smiths, the Farriers — a word to spell —
 burnt horn to sniff, the clanging & rattle sound. X

Then hounds, sweet-shots, and an open door
 spilling its ^{ants} greens and chaff ^{into} the ground,
 where pigeons flock ⁱⁿ ^{my} ^{nose} ^{bleed} ^{away} or ran before —
 O scent of hay, of straw, of grassy seed!
 If you but had a horse, ~~no more you'd need.~~
 what more'd you need? ?

20.1.79

A little woman, when I knew her, stout —
 as small but ^{stouter} ^{than} her sisters were —
 before she married, slight, with waister length hair —
 feet, firmly planted, stepping neatly out,
 propelled her steady movement everywhere.
 Her features comely, her complexion fair,
 her ankles, when I glimpsed them, slim as mine;
 she chose her costumes, ³ gloves, ² hats, ² scarves, with care.

Once, at some distance from an house, at play,
 I saw her nearing figure with surprise.
 When she passed by, I pressed against the wall,
 and gave no sign of greeting her at all.
 Later, at bed-time, I found Torque to say:
 "You would be lovely, if you were so high."

20.1.79

I went to school when I was four or five,
 the Infant School downstairs, on spacious room,
 an empty Mission hall you might ^{have} assume,
 did not mixed infants bring the gloom alive.
 long narrow desks and forms, and at the back
 the high-tiered gallery where newcomers sit.
 as round about ^{us} ~~them~~ two vest ladies flit,
 and Miss McCleery rules ^{it} us all, in black.

And over those long desks slate pencils squeaked
 on blank grey slates, not to be cleaned with spit
 even if you'd like, but with your little sponge,
~~the faintest cuff or stroke~~
 lest hoised cens' vengeance certain be wrecked,
 though further cuff or stroke could well expunge
^{broken} ~~the~~ disjointed letters of the alphabet.
^{cracked}

20.1.79

The Ethiopian Eunuch.

I went, in Benson, to the Sunday School,
 at ^{my} grandmother's required request; my teacher there
 was daughter of a well-known minister,
 a sweet kind lady, gentle in her mien.
 Some Bible stories were her chiefest care.
 Good answers earned no trophies. She was kind.
 I found her easily shocked and most refined:
 on question which I asked, embarrassed her.

We'd read that story from the Book of Acts,
 I asked her what a eunuch was. A slave,
 wooden reply. I thought this answer gave
 severe distortion of the Bible text,
 for I knew well by now, ^{if} ~~if~~ the meanings vary, (see 15)
~~your best asset is to the Dictionary~~
 your best, as I had, try the Dictionary

Miss Robertson Rev. J.C.P. John Charles M.A.

For years ^{they} we had a stream of servant girls
 from far off places; one came from Coniq,
 a widow's daughter, ^{red-faced,} noisy, broad and big,
 she whose trust rushed thro' the house in dusty whirls. ^{curries}
 On cinders, she called chambers, better swept
 beneath the mats or rugs. Even more surprising,
 one round the room - door where my parents slept
 she totted her loaded head, with "Who's for rising?"

And there was one who voiced her discontent
 we did not dine on chicken every day
 as she expected. ^{It's so enthralling} ~~It's not so interesting~~ X
 the few ^{of those} who came and went:
 that ^{so nobody} ~~so nobody~~: the fiction was
 my mother's fiction was they came for training;
 a reason for their pitiable stay.
 one

But there was one who was their patron,
 that separated wife who wore a veil -
 I wrote some ^{lines} verse about her later on -
 to ^{my} nurse and mother's help. I marvel at
 the love I bear her still, remembering
 the comfort she provided and her voice,
 strong drunk it was, to us a shocking thing.
 she came to us and stayed and left us, twice.

The first phase finished with that fatal trip,
 to reminding me somewhere to her tippling friends
 now to the promised park. The second ends
 when her drunk husband ^{shoulder} ~~bothered~~ ^{or on gate} ~~on our door~~. /get
 Now, though she's safe in my heart's fellowship,
 I think ~~of her and wish~~ ^{I regret that I had} loved her more, too late ~~late~~

my love achieved its utterance too late

22.1.79

My dear spouse died - a Fumour on the brain.

I gazed with pity on that shaven head,
so man-like ^{silent on the smooth skin} as she lay upon the bed.

We watched her breathing gently. It was plain

she would not stay, would never more regain

that vivid being who, so recently,

had walked through Samarkand and fought with me

when hurrying ^{back} home from Russia in the plane.

We sat together in the silent room,

our nephew Heith and I, both well aware

this was the end. We had no words to share.

This was the end, I thought, an end for whom?

For me, of love that living had increased

^{these} for more than forty years. The breathing ceased.

23.1.79

Her situation seemed - a pitiable thing,

my martyred sister on her sloping bed

her pinned knee hooked in a canvas sling

the loose tubes drooping round her tortured head.

For years, sometimes she sat or only stirred with pain,

nodding at times or sleeping, if at all,

but quick to speak, though never to complain,

if someone else ^{with} showed interest or please.

I loved her always, there, ahead of me.

She loved her brother, eagerly would greet,

when he announced it, some small victory,

or labour sullen under a defeat,

just as she took death's coming quietly

making it ^{seem} but an orderly retreat.

1877-1958

24.1.79

Ten years a widow, my old mother's mind
 became disjointed. First the box played trucks,
 with horses in the hall; then she would find
 comedians' faces quickly intermix
 with those of ancient friends; and once she thought
 I was her husband and she would denude *in human*
 me for the treacherous cruelty I'd brought
 on her last days, by taking a young bride. *women*

We drove her to the Mental Hospital,
 and passed a new-built chapel on the road,
 which noting, she considered "Well believed";
 a shrewd remark; no evidence that all
 her lively verbal processes had slowed
~~at~~ ^{with} ~~willfully~~ by aimless craziness enslaved.

St. Gerard's R.C. Church Antrim Road.

25.1.79

My first reported speech was "Ship, Boat, Water,"
 -greeting from my pen, on hillside here,
 the gleaming loagh with its amazing scatter
 of sails ^{and} steamers, hulls in shipyard, plain.
 This might have been a forecast I should follow
 some wild career upon the Spanish Main;
 but such predestination would prove hollow;
 no lust for tossing seas I entertain.

I voyaged only on the Benga Boat,
 that paddler-^{my}aged, that broad deviation,
 with room to run from rail to rail, and dot
 upon the dipping gulls, or stand to see
 the green hills slipping past on either side,
 and wonder that the world appeared so wide.

25.1.79

I never asked, or heard, enough to know
if there was anything they might have done
contrary to the owners. If you go
to the same church, say in Moscow, have fun
at the same soirees, if both families
are friendly, socially are similar,
should taking strike it will mature with ease,
that only if no unfavourable circumstance might mar.

This was my parents' fortune. They were married,
he twenty seven, she was twenty one.
Affection, I observed, between them carried,
with small abjection, two score years and five:
Two opposites by nature; when all's done,
irrevocably gentle and alert.
Then love was firm and undemonstrative

words
then spirit was gentle, undemonstrative

25.1.79

I heard about, but never truly knew
the old horse trams with three-ways on the hills;
though sometimes passing them my father's show
the warning boards still left on certain wells.
Our trams were trolley and electrical,
sharking at corner points, and double-ended,
and at each terminus they'd swing the pole
round by a rope which hung from it, suspended.

The driver, like the pilot of a ship,
stood up at front and creaked his handle round.
The conductor punched a ticket for you or fare.
Iron steps were steep and I would often trip
ascending ^{from} or descending to the ground.
Trams changed on shining trembles everywhere.

The ^{hour} day we'd forced to leave on holiday
 a horse and cart came clapping to the door.
 The trunk was hoisted up the usual way
^{hauled in.}
 We climbed inside with lots of room for foam.
 The driver cracked his whip and gave a cry:
 The brown horse trotted down the avenue.
 We sat, and in the gloom, ^{as she had by} spoke quietly:
 The holiday had started; it was true.

Drawn up at station, ^{whistle,} low end hiss of steam:
 scurry of porters, endless trappers crowd:
 The trunk is lowered deftly, all is well.
 Ganged shut ^{the} the door, the sound unique and loud,
 a sound I sometimes hear, - as in a dream,
 but always with that fainty lester smell.

but always just with ^{the} extension work

The Troubles came; by Nineteen Twenty two,
 we were aware, accepted violence
 in the sheets at hand. With the Curfew fine,
 each evening when that breathless hour was due,
 you ⁹ never wandered far from where I knew
 I could run home to safety. At the door
 I'd sometimes stand, till, with approaching roar,
 the wire-edge Crossley Tenders swept in view.

Once, from front bedroom window, I could mark
 black shapes, flat-capped, across the darkened street,
 two policemen on patrol. With flesh and spark
 fierce bullets struck the kerb beside their feet.
 Beneath the shattered street-lamp, in the dark
 blurred shadow undefined best quick retreat -
 crouched

27.1.79

After one night when sky was bright with fire,
 we wandered down familiar Agnes Street,
 and at each side street corner we would meet
 the frequent public houses, each a scene
 of rafters charred, the smoked tiled-floor a mess
 of the smouldering debris - side board, table, bed,
 smoked counters, broken bottles, shards of glass -
 the Catholic landlord with his family fled.

I took that walk with Willy Morrissey;
 though I disliked his Church, he was my friend -
 because of this I never could pretend
 to such blind hate, such sect-bred enmity,
 which makes both Green and Orange brotherly
 when decency should end it, or tolerance.

27.1.79

A hundred
 say, fifty yards along - the other side
 from where our house stood - near the high gate wall,
 grey, bare as black with every thing to hide;
 all interest - at the front gate where they call
 with captured men in vans. Well, once, that time,
 the place was packed with gunmen - I.R.A. -
 shot freedom they secured another way
 than breaking out, for they were skilled in crime.

The prisoners had scrambled to the roof
 and clattered mess tin, canteen pot or tin -
 those metal instruments they use in jail -
 to keep the town awake when we would sleep.
 We heard the rumour, never to see the proof.
 The shots were slapping; when they shaked, steep.
 chanted

He removed road and ran to roof

28.1.79

Still, from those days, two incidents remain,
which challenge yet my smug philosophy,
and, in this neat street, a corrosive stain,
which mock the holes of what I hope might be.

First, on the level edge of an enclosed field
intent till dusk, when my game, I ran
by accident against a striking man
and glimpsed the weapon he thought well concealed.

Then, once, I ^{saw} watched a workman attack
a cycling sergeant. Whistle, warning shot.
As if by magic plainclothes man ran out,
grappled ^{the string on} ~~concealed~~ legs, pinned his head
against a hardy wall. I watched the red
blood dribble from his mouth; his limbs ^{grew} went slack.

28.1.79

107

We had our cricket team, our football team:
we wore blue jerseys for our heroes were
-great- Glasgow Rangers, United: we'd declare
we'd be as good as one; it was no dream.
On Dunmore's waste we kicked with small success,
our goalposts banded coats, all penalties
disputed, lacking whitewash to express
the lines and spaces which the ^{book} game implies.

But cricket, every summer, on those fields &
balls bounded or shot, erratic on the clay.
No word or mention any record yields &
of ^{our} ~~such~~ excitement every Saturday.
my fellow players ~~now~~ names now, boy and boy,
John Dilla, Ted MacMearns and Hugh Foy.....

28/9.1.79

The side streets of my world in order ran
from Roe Street, Avonby and Annalee,
to Dangle, outer limit of my span,
where lead about its corners lured me.

Roe Street was quiet, swept its gutters clean:
most of its fathers' words, you could say.
Its doors had a shut look. At Halloween
had were ^{the} bells to ring - and run - away.

But Annalee it was, and Avonby
where my chums lived. ^{here} ^{it} was the first
served as the left, the second the right leg
that gobbled me through childhood, better served
in all the quints of life than if I'd been
entirely closed in soft domestic scene.

29.1.79

Our avenue was long, - a thoroughfare
for carts, with coal, bread, milk, or passing through.
You'd risk no games across it, or but few,
so frequently those cartwheels rattled there.
Houses with tiny gardens set before,
some peopled with school teachers, ministers, -
the biggest with steep steps up to the door, -
with ^{civil servants} ~~and~~ ^{and} factory managers.

Yet faces, voices, fill that picture frame;
The bearded doctor of divinity,
the next grey-sailed Company Secretary,
each as he features, each one had a name;
but for my ² story and romance ¹ + ¹² ~~with the world~~ ^{close}
The Rosenfields, the Weiners ^{into} ~~with~~ ^{the} Jews.

families,

Dr. Wilson

WJ McGuffin

29.1.79

I learned to use The Public Library -
 That red-brick haven which Carnegie built -
 On Red, at table, I read greedily, (avidly)
 for, in our home, there was no hint of guilt,
 'because you stuck your nose in that old book'.
 Upstairs, the landing held a well-filled case,
 and when my books were read, I'd often look
 through those my parents scattered round the place.

I borrowed 'Coral Island' Ballentine,
 but got far more from Henty and Jules Verne,
 prized Haggen² highly, Dimes, Stevenson.
 But always prose. I never read a line
 of any poem I had not to learn,
 with Hiccup, the exception one.

29.1.79

I was promoted to the school upstairs
 - not all upstairs, two classrooms, the boys' yard,
 to which, at certain times, your class repairs
 for the boys' yard holds our high regard,
 for there we squint-lets water in an arch
 lucky it lifts its rainbow to the sun,
 or gather round and in close menace march
 against the boy by whom the wrong was done.

The other larger classroom, not with desks but forms,
 is where we greet the pointer-prodded maps,
 with rhythmic lists of islands, counties, towns,
 from chanting lips. The victim of pest storms,
 the creased maps' toward to shed - a vermined scrub.
 [Correct, she smiles. We hesitate; she frowns.]

at least
 leaving us few other - names to pronounce.

29/30.1.79

The upper room loomed vast, an oblong space
 by the top platform cut down to a square:
 the middle desks, with forms about the place;
 we must have had six classes gathered there.
 The children stood in circles, set in rows,
 from blackboard puzzling what was to be done,
 need from their lesson books some verse or prose,
 a turn from right to left, or in unison.

Those schoolroom odours were particular,
 with chalk dust, ink, and jerseys all endowed.
 If you were lucky you might be allowed
 to fill the intervals from an earthen jar,
 or hand the eel book out with its owner's name;
 but those spilled marbles brought a blush of shame
 most

30.1.79

old registers

My Teachers then, the records would attest,
 were certain maiden ladies. I recall
 Miss Murdoch, very ancient, stout ^{stubby} and small,
 whose ^{her} mother's leg needed frequent-furtive rest;
 and Maggie Thompson, lean, with greying hair,
 by Uncle Willie counted for a time.
 He married some one else, a heinous crime,
 the quiet for this she sometimes made me share.
 I felt she

Then Annie Eels, with prominent front teeth,
 long legged and tall, and spitting when distracted
 her glasses glinting, lively, often kind.
 Yet should I rook forever down beneath
 the wilting leaves of later days, I'd find
 I could not name a single shred they taught.

[See 6] Revised

The first to go was Willem. Inceall
 The winter night we learned that he had died,
 The quick fumes crunching on the ice outside.
 My mother held him ^x paragon of all;
 his school renowned when he was principal,
 his bachelor's degree the family's pride.
 Though ^{deep} ^{grief} the shock, the lamentation wide,
 I was not taken to his funeral.
^{and} ^{see} the crowd

He left a wife, a daughter and two sons.
 His widow ^{thickened} sudden penny defied,
 big resolution ^{there} all their needs satisfied
 and saw them safely adult, friend of her.
 To that commended men I never once
 stood ^{close} near enough to ^{gauge} his character.

x nonpareil Prince Imperial ✓

1917?

We went to church, though neither was compelled,
 and occupied the pew against the wall.
 A ^{strong} preaching house, its ~~solid~~ pulpit held
 a dominant position over all.
 The organ and the choir, behind it ^x tiered,
^{droned - us} pronounced the dreary ^{melodies} (music ^{which} we sang;
 my father at the ^{top} left hand appeared,
^{round the gallery} and the large building ^{filled} with ^{loud} intense song.

The preacher told the restless young a story.
 The plate which took our envelope passed round.
 A forty minute sermon on some ^{other} ^{text}; ^{could be}
 by ^x old ^{men} (heathen) in the front ^{who} ^{belonged} ^{to} St ^{George}
 and Praise the Lord, a punctuating sound.
 I leafed the ^{book} ^{stably} ^{hymn} ^{book} ^{for} ^{the} ^{next}.
~~my bible and read the text.~~

x by one dear old man who belonged to St
 and Praise the Lord, a set, archaic sound

4.2.79

And once we had a loud evangelist
 To plead, persuade, To threaten and alarm,
 but though he ^{beat} ^{Bible} ~~smote~~ the ~~cashier~~ ^{cashier} with his ^{just},
 not many ^{learned} ~~seemed~~ to come to any term.

It was in smaller, greater mission halls
 the masters of the craft achieved success.
 In my grandparent's days such heart-felt calls
 drew hundreds in to suffer and to bless;

rise penitent, redeemed, and leave, transformed,
 from pews where we now shuffled, ill at ease.
 Alo citadels of Satan here were stormed;
 Only that deaf old man from the front pew
 reluctantly fell upon his knees:
 his name was Isaac, ^{little} now I never knew.

4.2.79

Well, nothing more than ^{that} ^{with} this. With pony-cart
 he joined the town to sell his cabbages,
 his turnips, carrots. ^{With} None but Christ to please,
 he travelled ^{so} ^{gaily} with a ^{joyful} ^{grateful} heart.

Once, praying at the roadside out of town,
 he stood entranced. The ^{stayed} ~~envious~~ ^{stayed} ~~to my~~ ^{stayed} ~~wanted~~
 two hours or more, then trotted briskly down,
 (^{home to the} ~~to the small house~~ ^{where} ~~Isaac~~ ^{came} ~~belated~~.)
 (with ^{mute} ^{report}) that Isaac was delayed.
 reporting home

[And going to a Watchnight Service once
 I met him in the porch. He shook my hand
 and asked me gently how my brother was.
 I had a sister. Now I understand
 no man need never lack companions
 if he has Isaac still to plead his cause.]

At Watch Night service once he shook my hand,
 and asked me ^{little} ~~gently~~ how my ^{little} ~~brother~~ was.
 I thought that silly. Now I understand
 how utterly beyond all mortal laws
 he stood, the victor, ^{needing} ~~having~~ no defence,
 in his ^{in his} ~~invulnerable~~ ^{innocence} ~~innocence~~.

5.2.79

7. II. 79

I was promoted when grandfather died,
 finding my bed now in the - top back room.
 The wardrobe, where so carefully he'd hid
 his apples, held ^{its singular} that ~~old~~ perfume. X
 I took all over, piled the mantel shelf
 with books I owned, hung pictures on each wall
 that I had been allowed to choose myself -
 Murillo's famous ^{the good} Shepherd, crown of all.

I woke at dawn soon after, felt he lay
 beside me on the bed. I could not stir,
 but, shut-eyed, moved, how long I cannot say,
 remembering he loved me in his way
 as I loved him. No cause for ^{could be} had I for fear.
 I turned my head and saw he was not there.
 I reached my hand out, but nobody brother
 X odd, distinct

heavy
 the wardrobe

where he used to hide

1922

They brought his coffin home, and laid it on
 the polished table in the dining-room.
 Though it was summer still, a mellow gloom
 pervaded all, the blinds, the curtains drawn.
 Carnation - wreaths - it was that time of year -
 lay round the coffin as I tipped in; ^{scared}
 [I saw] the white shirt ruffled round his chin,
 The odour of carnations everywhere.

Once, long years after, - I was seventy -
 wedding, remembered only by my thought,
 I smelt the sweet ^{those} carnations suddenly.
 It was today the cleaning-woman brought
 a headful in to put them in a vase.
 I saw that open coffin ^{saw} and his face.
 X ^{was}

1922

Parades were splendid. I have often seen
 swim men with oars and banner fill the street
 with drums of thunder, facing the defect
 of craven Patriots with their flags of green.
 But first of all, I saw the City's Mayor
 in a gun carriage borne while the young Citizen
 young Volunteers in grey, paraded there;
 men led, ^{men boys} ~~men~~ they. So soon they would be men.

And once, to see the last march to the ships,
 one summer night my father brought me down,
 whence they would sail away to hence to fight
 for little Nations and the might of Right —
 how easily the tarnished javon slips
 into a sludge where honesty must drown.
~~at hand~~

of Fenians with their yellow, white & green

Y.C.V. the Irish designation

With friends for tea, there, in the dining-room,
 [I was] too shy to face the unfamiliar guests,
 like a small, nervous puppy, with guests,
 I'd crawl to sobriety, under table's gloom.
 There was a lady with a birthmark face,
 I was hauled up to greet. I gave a cry,
 and beat retreat; ^{my} they inferable disgrace,
 a letter text for future courtesy.

Among the shoes and boots I'd squirm and toss,
 till, - pressed by parents' coaxing, I'd comply,
 crawl from my lair, strike attitudes, for one,
 stand rigid, hand in vest, Napoleon.
 or find ^{some} ~~as~~ floored, ready to lie,
 with arms extended, Jesus on the Cross.

Sam took ~~me~~ ^{us} to the Christmas Pantomime;
 it was my first, this tale of Peenstake Jack.
 I'd heard that story told time after time,
 but, from the pit, the telling here seemed stark
 the Jack - a girl, his mother, man, the Cow,
 all men in front and one behind, to mark
 those clumsy canvas legs-jerked any how;
 I could not tell what these were meant to prove.

I liked the Giants' children on their stilts,
 heading that dropped legs up to each in turn;
 but only that. Years later I enjoyed
 these Shakespeare plays in 'Lorco, Rome, New
~~all done - that was a drag, in tents, in tents,~~
^{would learn to learn.}
 but this one convention I was ^{to} ~~to~~ learn.
 Here, from the first, illusion was destroyed.
 The truth was all
 quite

One Christmas Eve my grand mother fell ill,
 staying at Dicks; my mother, from resort,
 was begged by Bertha for her best support
 She left with father's wife, ungrudging good will,
 though he himself lay quinsy-stricken here,
 the sock of lot set hardy to relieve.
 The crisis ours, but the decision clear;
 Tomorrow Christmas. This was Christmas Eve.

Mother had whispered where our presents were -
 the top shelf in their wardrobe - as we found.
 With these and other sundries from around,
 we sorted in a very ^{we thought best} ~~considered~~ fan
 and filled our stockings. With such enterprise
 we fell asleep, and wake with feigned surprise.
 went to bed,

9. II. 79

That season yielded me a moment's pride:
 each Christmas eve the carol singers came,
 while night endured, to stand and sing outside
 Churchmembers' houses. This year was the same.
 It had been Father's duty to go down
 for doorstep greeting, giving alms as well;
 but, best of all, now, to hand that bright halferoon
 devolved on me, sole well responsible.

The long night dragged. I mustered all my powers
 to meet ^{my} high purpose. Often I could hear
 far cards sung somewhere, then coming near,
 till choir passed laughing. These were none of ours.
 I knew their sound, and rose prepared, before
 the leader climbed the steps up to ^{our} the door.

9. II. 79

Spring 1912

125

In these years time had other tragedies:

When Captain Scott and his companions died;
 when Bates, heroic, simply stepped outside
 where even polar bears and penguins freeze.

march
1912

That next me sorely; but, by far, the worst
 was when we ^{heard} ~~read~~ incredulous the news
 the safe, the double-skinned Titanic burst
 on that sharp berg, while on her maiden cruise.

April
1912

We had been proud. So the Olympic was,
 she had been made here. And her bend still played,
 but not for that we'd launched her with applause.
 That day, while stopping ^{on} ~~at~~ the station for the Bengor Train,
 I heard a news boy, saw the bill displayed.
 She would not cruise down Belfast Lough again.

March 1912 Scott's end.

9.11.79

I mitched one day and hung around the rocks
 beyond the Pickle point that dreary day.
 One old man stopped to ^{gossip} speak. My luncheon box
 had folding sides. I folded it away,
 and coming home too late, found that the news
 had been reported by the paper boy
 from my own class. I wondered what's the use
 of any plan a chance and ^{could} would destroy.

My mother angry, grandmother fiercely stern.
 Till father, back from Fom, sent me to bed.
 I wept a little, thought this was the end
 There was so little time,
~~the time so short~~ so much to learn
 a fox guilty sinners, ^{one} those without a friend;
 then father brought a book up, ^{slipped and} showed me, read.
^{stairs}

mother was angry, grandmother enraged;
 what my ^{Da} father heard, I was sent also to bed.
 My morning sleep promised no such end.
 My sobe were steady, not to be assuaged.
 Then father came and sat beside me, read
 some Dickens story. I still had ^{one} a friend.

10-II-79

129

Spring, 1916.

In Bengal, for some months, I went to school
 I now have scanty memories of the place,
 could point it out, but ~~a single face~~ ^{not describe one}.
 One instant only was it colourful;
 when Lord Clemmoris called; his shirt was pink,
 as was his ^{shirt, his tie} face. ~~He glowed~~. His hair ^{was} quite white.
 The masters smirked and ^{bowed} ~~stamped~~, and seemed to slink;
 but when the class stood up, I stood full height.

Our master, back from ruined holiday,
 told us of Dublin and its Easter week,
 of the dead houses ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} motor cars.
 But of the ^{politics} reasons ^{of} for that ~~real~~ ^{real} affray
 he certainly made no attempt to speak.
 We could not guess its seed of future wars.

11.11.79

I'm vague about my father's mother, Jane,
John Hearit's wife; she died in Nineteen Ten.
But if I knew which month I could explain
and estimate what then my age had been,
for I was two or three. That year between
in which she gave me my white woolly coat
should have been lit by some remembered scene,
her busy life not trimmed to this cant note.

But what I did hear of her, I say again.
Thrifty, worked hard, rose early, kept her house
and person tidy; was most generous,
my mother would repeatedly maintain;
and through the years her image still relies
on those bright quilts she made from uncles' ties.

1910

12.11.79

The Forty Four: 1919

131

There was the Strike; the city's engineers
to cut their weekly hours to Forty Four,
their jingle threatened, "Or will work no more."
Then, sudden, solidarity appears;
The Bulletin, The Strike Committee's call —
we only saw that in the streets each light
went out, stayed out, as gemen joined the fight —
for some tense days the strike was general.

My mother visited my grandmother,
at Eddie's, now; some miles, she led to tramp,
with no trams running, there and back again.
And when at night, late, I expected her
a ^{swinging} moving light approached. It soon grew plain;
it was my mother with a stable lamp.

x when late one night, I watched, expecting her

13.II.79

My father, almost every Easter, went
as delegate to Teachers' Conference
His fellows numbered far more eloquent
and trusting men, but few with cooler sense.
When, with Partition, Protestants hired off,
he stayed in loyalty to all his kind.
To be a teacher simply was enough,
to bannered sects inexorably blind.

and
He went to Derry, ²Cork, to ¹Waterford,
and to ³Dublin, liking Dublin best, his training
at college, knew the Castle and the Courtyard
and to the end unconsciously retained
the old convention, ^{with the fitting} choosing the right word
in "Up to ~~Dublin~~ going, 'Down from', coming home."

14.II.79

133

Then Papa, Mama, were the names we used,
far from this generation's Mum and Dad.

Some folk, on hearing us, were much amazed,
for, even then, these words ^{their} some quaintness had.

The children in the streets cried Ma and Da;

we thought this common like some other words -

for with them the youngest infant was the Be -

unintended as the decibels of birds.

Spontaneous they seemed, as songs
as natural

Yet, even then, I learned to change my speech,

that for the home, that fitter for the street,

though still unconscious that there is in each

a native logic ^{to which we} proper to respect,

as, walking in the country, later on,

I had to finger through my lexicon.

respect = except

is logic & cadence

15.11.79

Meeting R.J. Welch for the first time.

Once, in a tram, in nineteen Twenty three,
 as I sat reading, in my normal way,
 the passing, houses, corners, known to me
^{churches} ^{and} ^{streets}, each
 I do not need to notice every day;

a bearded man beside ^{me} turned and peered
 at what I read, I ^{smiled} in some unwise

a set well book, Benedic Comedies.

His curiosity was not deterred.

"What are you reading?" ^{curious}
^{catchest} of replies,
 I showed him all the title-page declares.

"Benedic has to do with country things.

Reading on a tram ^{with rain} affects your ^{young} eyes."

With that warning, suddenly he springs
 out of the seat, and rushes down the stairs.

17.11.79

For years I mastered on the kitchen table
 my spiky regiment, not merely led,
 as the box lid declared, but bred and bred
 to wage the fiercest war you ever need.

A bigger boy, called Harry, strolled around,
~~Thursday~~, ^{on}

revealed his cards of colored uniforms
 showed when their higher qualities showed,

suggested ~~to~~ ~~have~~ ~~them~~ ~~on~~ ~~his~~ ~~terms~~.
 They'd be mine as easy

So he proposed, in fairness, I exchange
 a single soldier for a single card.

Almost a gift. I should not think it strange
 he held these treasures in ^{such} high regard.

Swap followed swap, till I had every bit
 of cardboard, he, my army, all of it.

24.11.79

That was the drama; that was our suspense;
 but of that illness I remember more
 the disinfected curtain at the door
 the cool hands of the doctor, and the sense
 of being with my mother on my own
 the ^{room} sunlit day, the cool fire red by night
 my father and sister brushed out of sight
 my mother tending me and me alone

There is a page in Pukka later read
 of when the self is left a prisoner
 by sickness still set free to live and grow.
 The six weeks of the fever strangely led
 my little mind to wander everywhere
 and come back larger with so much to ponder

6.III.79

137

The dustcart anchored in our cinder field,
 unused and empty, stood from day to day.
 Padlocked with chains and stationary wheels,
 it gave a ready platform to our play
 We swarmed and clamoured, boarded, sailed away
 to Inverne Island, staped our humble piece,
 with swords and bendoleros, for Armistice,
 our school-awarded medals on display.

Once, from the stern, I tumbled, cut my knee,
 jagged and rough from such a fearsome drop.
 My shipmates bore me to the chemist's shop
 where the bald freshly cheerful owner, Connolly,
 swabbed it with care, till scrupulously clean
 with cotton wool well doused in iodine

16. IV. 79

116

I had a wooden boat to float and sail ^{the}
in knots, ^{in tracks} ~~or streams~~ or on safe banks of sea.
I named her Argo after Jason's tale,
but never knew her age or history;
for father'd found her at a market-stall
or in a junk-shop with a shattered-cask
with masts and spars intact, and over all
her sturdy bulk she wore a homely grace.

Once, - at the shore, where rim of tide washed wreck
clenched a smooth bay, I set her on a course
to where my father'd meet and turn her back;
but opposite the choppy gap she stilled,
shivered and heeled out - as if enthralled
by the good prospect of the eastern shores.

100A

24. V. 79

No 100 Revised

139

Sam took us to the Christmas Pentemini
it was our first, this tale of Beensalk Jack
we'd heard the story told time after time
so though they danced and sang I still kept track.
but Jack a gut, his mother a man, the cow
a man in front and one behind seemed deaf;
the clumsy carvers shape bulged English;
it was small wonder other children laughed.

I liked the giant's family on stilts
leading the dropped eep up from left to right
but that was all, till in my ^{school} ~~fourth~~ ^{boys} years
those strutting players, Doren and his peers,
Caesars in togas and Macbeth in kilts
first set the darkened theatre slight.
for me first set the curtained stage slight.

7.VII.79

We picked the marching season by July.
Gay arches shamed the streets, and gables were
bright-nubbed versions of what stood before
in flicking patches of our history:
"The Young Men shut the Gates," and "Derry's Walls
repell King James," then "Browning breaks the boom,"
"King William's horse runs bare through cannon-balls,"
"King William's sword blunt sword pounds the Papists' doom."

For weeks we had and hoard on loads of sticks
to build the bonfires. The Eleven's Night,

so summer dusk descends skew them slight,
and blazing skyward like some legendry.
We stay up late till flames with coals mix
to keep the dying embers of the fire

Recosity of No. 98

-15.VII.

The Y.C.V.s and the Ulster Division

143

Surprised one day, I saw Belfast's Lord Mayor
borne a gun-carriage when Young Citizen
Volunteers in grey first took the public air;
more lads they seemed, for soon they would be men
In some few months we went down town to see
the khaki soldiers marching to the docks
To sail away to France to keep us free:
That general show the aftermath still marks.

And later still, as time's strange telly grew
the newsboys cry fresh tidings in the street
of Jutland victory, Dardanelles defeat,
and, propped on crutches, men in slopky blue,
at sheltered corners, told us stories from
the murderous trenches or the bloody Somme.

17. VII. 79

When John moved out grandmother could foresee
her lonely widowhood too much to bear.

My sister first and then our family were
conscripted to come and keep her company.

So, for six months, that Bengor house was home,
a chapter vivid in my history.

The deeper tensions were not clear to me;

I only thought her cross and troublesome.

So we retreated. When my uncle died
the house was sold. Through her remaining years
that angry dotting gipsy plagued her brood,
each shift a useless effort to provide
her lasting home, each left in storms and tears
her matriarchal right misunderstood.

Re-casting of No. 33

17. VII. 79

155

From Bengor days some sights delighted me,
yet never coinciding, each unique:

that blunt-topped, wingless windmill you could see

three fields away, ^{all} ~~each~~ day in any week;

in season, when two roads met, in the wedge

they formed, a threshing engine sometimes roared,

white clouds of gritty chaff spun up and soiled
in endless fountains over the high hedge.

Symbols perhaps, interpret them who can,
or casual glimpsings, not unusual;

but one remains I treasure over all,

the regal spectre of that gaunt old man

slow urging up and gaily down the hill,

creaking, in leggings, on ^{his} high tricycle.

31.VII.79

We heard the rumour, ran to swell the crowd
down at the far end of our avenue.

For in an empty house some women viewed
a vicious gunman hid. It could be true.

Someone already had reported it.

The soldiers had just come. A young man tried
the door, was warned, hesitating stepped inside.
The stout police sergeant urged us back a bit.

There was a burst of gunfire, sudden, clear.

We could not see, but knew it very near.

The young man had run through to the back door
and opened it. And from the entry's end,
behind the houses, soldiers fired, before
he'd any chance to show he was their friend.

122

last week in August 79

147

This narrative's made up of what he knew
from elders' talk as we considered fit;
what he himself experienced is true
as memory's hidden censor edits it.

For, later on, he proved a mythmaker
as most men are, but conscious none the less
whatever helped him must take its share
in shaping what he told should best express -
when held in judgment by his living peers
and those who after come - the man he was,
intending kindness, trying to be just
in thought and act, desiring that the years
should yield his quiet verses some applause
best both and in redacted dust.

Poems in 1980

3.1.80

Mrs Smeltzer. the ^{psyc}spiritualist.
psychometrist.

My mother takes me to a ~~spiritualist~~ medium
Sheep Parakey!

The medium took my belt and closed her eyes,
some moments meditated, slowly spoke,

as summoned by her trance for our advice

beyond sight's ^{edge she mist} ~~border~~ gathered friendly folk.

From her description mother recognised

her father, ^{one} ~~her~~ ^{known} ~~deed~~ ^{brother} for a start.

The medium by their gestures realised

the boy's true future closely bound in Art.

At home we told my father. ~~He~~ ^{she} ~~was~~ ^{is} ~~firm.~~ ^{sent}

A chancey life as sandy found,
though all ^{whit} ~~the~~ ^{those} ~~phantoms~~ ^{ghosts} ~~urged~~ ^{to} ~~was~~ ^{kindly} ~~meant.~~ ^{meant.}

He'd better far set out for some professions
doctor, or teacher; there's ^{not} ~~a~~ ^{safer} ~~ground~~

where he could claim the family succession -
^{would stand in}

under
stands

Additional stanzas "for The Ruin Answer"

Our towns splay out, yet, - at the heart, decay,
where many wake to greet a workless-day
while endlessly before their hemmed eyes
flesh spoils of gain or enterprise,
and in light flecking flat, in rotting street
small screaming vandals muster to engage
their bent frustrated eyes
where eye and penny bag ^{hit} ~~each~~ ^{retreat}.

Yet still the order stands, its fabric stayed
by simple acts of industry and trade,
and most ~~for~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~margin~~ ^{margin} of their days
in customary ways
while all unseen there hangs the poised event;
The radars be, the missiles are deployed
some twitching finger may explode
to scatter all in this predicted accident.

27.10.1980

Latin version 12.1.81

^{announce in}
 Offer the object, fact;
^{depth}
 name exactly place and face
 declare the angle of the stone;
 avoid abstraction lay a small.

Among inscriptions on all stones
 blend values shrink or burst
^{avoid}
 Don't all ringing verities.
 Identify. Identify.
 Recognise.

16.3.81

Present the object. State the facts.
 Name exactly time and place.
 Declare the angle of your stone.
 Avoid abstractions lay a small.

In inscriptions on the stones
 blend values shrink or burst.
 The horn is the network.
 Recognise. Identify.

1981

17.I.81

151

The Grave of the Reverend Adam Crawford

One day they argued whence their family name
 and asked their father. ^{Armsbury} "Scotland" he replied
 "Three hundred years ago a preacher
~~A Covenanting minister~~ first came
 to plant us in the Arfion countryside;
 his graves at Dougore". The elder son
 wondered awhile if there'd still be a trace -
 the same - ^{he shared} - upon some weathered stone -
 to show that he had ^{found} come to the right place.

He travelled there, and in the churchyard sought
 among the stones, ^{sure that someone shared,} ~~a sudden face appeared,~~
 a woman from the house outside the gate;
^{who} ~~she~~ ^{plunged} ~~her urgent question,~~ and it brought
^{the} ~~grave~~ ^{name} ~~for which he looked,~~ deliberate.
 "Yes were a long time comin'", she declared.

Her peremptory challenge ^{boldly} ~~stoutly~~ brought

19.1.81
recast 20.6.79

Sunday School

I went, in Bangor, to the Sunday School
at grandmother's behest. My teacher there,
the white-haired daughter of a minister,
most gentle in her unobtrusive rule.
I thought her ladylike and most refined.
Selected Bible stories were our fare
with praise for ready answers. She was kind.
One question which I raised embarrassed her.

I'd read the story in the Book of Acts,
and asked her what a eunuch was. She gave
a little gasp and simply said "a slave",
which failed to take account of all the facts.

After the class, in innocence they came,
my cronies, and I told them - to my shame
I betrayed her -

20.1.81
recast
22.11.78 (31)

The ~~Beaga~~ House at Ballyholm.

Its excellences were more evident
than ours at home, much farther from the road,
with two bay windows, spacious rooms endowed
and loosely pebbled paths which curved and bent
round to the back, with gardens front and rear,
flowerbeds, ^{copper bushes} bushes, ~~grass~~, with apple trees,
^{the} ~~with~~ bright labourmen... It is none of these
^{stark} which fixed the moment ^{now} ~~that~~ I thought most dear..

Not one of these. My richest moment comes,
remembering the cowboys and the clowns,
the capes, caravans, the banging-drums,
when ^{hunting} ~~running~~ down the long belt to the gate,
X I scybel on my father's shoulder set
as Daffy's Circus ~~was~~ divided into Tom
flourished

X my father's shoulder bore my infant ^{weight} weight

7.11.81

Incident

About 8.15 this morning
a police reservist called
at the newspaper's for his morning paper.

When he came out of the shop
he met a stray of bullets
which killed him and wounded
his companion waiting in the car.

One of the bullets - cut a hole
in the upper ~~left~~ pane
of the shop's glass and metal door.

Colleagues of the murderer -
or murderers? (I do not know
how many guns were fired -
captured, sentenced, imprisoned, insist
that they are 'political prisoners',
and to establish this status
they neither wear nor sleep,
nor cut their hair.
I asked some for a blanket
they smeared their cell walls with their shirts

8.11.81
remains unknown
from earlier draft -
159

With coloured words my eye,
I traced where pain seemed due,
and still had some to spare
for textures ^{thence} ~~red~~ and new,
Till, sated, took withdrawn
from fashionable wear.

Now I ^{must find} shall ~~seek~~ again
within my sceptre ^{heart}
Those rhythms which should sustain
and pace my stride spent,
with my slow measured art,
incorrigibly plain.

Defeat

recess-9

13. II .81

So from defeat I learn -
I should perhaps have known -
that wood may shank or burn
but stone is always stone
no matter what way thrown

Now after this I know
while time still troubles me
with each successive blow
I suffer
~~endured~~, I still must be
at once both rock and tree.

[3 original lines retained + a few words.]

(Rough wood to ash may turn)

12.4.81
center version

For Stonecutters

Select your stone. Incise the facts,
exactly marking time of year.
Define with heat the viewer's stone.
Let light and shadow emphasize.

Cut deep or shallow as required.
Avoid obstructions large or small;
all value judgments flake or split.
The lettered stone's ^{the} metaphor.

26.4.87

The Demolition of 96 Cliftonpark Avenue

J-hey myll - have waited, had they been aware
 that I still lived, before they knocked it down.
 Broken up and blind on
 With windows broken, the terrace still stood there
 as in some so many - 51
 like other stricken streets in this sick town.
 Sealed off / sealed off from sight
 But shut inside, rooms begged their memories,
 the kitchen with its range, the dining room,
 its cool fire lit for small festivities,
 the room upstairs where singing friends would come.

And in the top front bedroom I was born;
 familiar with each vivid scene I grew
 to memory; every window, stair and door
 to the spreading world my senses knew. / scene /
 led to the world my widening senses knew. / scene /
 walls, woodwork shattered, textures shred and torn,
 & these haunted corners hold my dreams no more.
 can stir this ageing stranger's dreams no more.

1982

159

No Verse except revised single lines till June

Addendum to

in No Rebel Ward (1948)

So rem my programme forty years ago
 in safe iambics sotto voce, slow,
 and since the bulks are close, the circles wide,
 I've kept on forget, and am satisfied
 when I recall behind the placid verse
 a man still stands whose attitude declares
 his loyalty, to hope, unquenched belief,
 despite the incidence of age or grief,
 in man's rare-hinted possibility
 of being just, compassionate and free

x x x

I struck these verses also in a set
 of plodding lines which offer comfort yet.
 The Pill-fueled now, unsteady in my gait
 and conscious daily of my mortal state

June 28

see 20.1.81

The House at Ballyholme. F

This was my granma's house for a different
 from ours at home, much closer to the river,
 with wide bay windows sturdily endowed,
 and with a long straight path which narrowed, bent
 right round the house, with gardens front and rear,
 one half-ingress, bay garden, half apple trees;
 that at the front in summer saw the foliage
 with scent and colour lavished everywhere.

Yet of all that my brightest pictures come
 shingled and banked ceream and cloven
 with hoards preceding to the bounding drum
 when down the jolting pebbles to the gate
 my father's shoulder bore my infant weight
 to watch the crows flourish into town.

29th June
see 8.31

17

I knew it well, but never felt it more
 than frequent visits, often holidays,
 and lived there half a year when I was new;
 at that first door my mischief was betrayed.
 It's often thought of that leburnum tree,
 whose pods were poison; it was sinister.
 The small back garden indeed used to be
 a magic island; I was Crusoe there.

Within those walls my wits held little more
 -then cubboards where my dotting granma's lace
 and mangle over cushions here and there,
 then kitchen tiles, scrubbed table, the bed room
 it was when the black dog Jim would fidget and moan,
 mourning his master when our uncle died.

To Roberta in the garden

24-7-82
(a retreat)

I know when you are at your dearest,
kneeling or mould, a trowel in your glove;
you raise your eyes, and, for a moment, rest,
you turn a young girl's face, like one in love.

Intent, entranced, thus low, in gardening
surely to life's length process you belong.
I wonder, when you kneel, you do not sing,
for such a moment surely has its song.

First draft 1941

25.7.82

The Christmas Rhymes Ballymore 1941

The Christmas Rhymes come again last year
we boys with blackened faces at the door
not like those shapely legs that would appear
dressed for the mummies' tents in times before
to set the old play on the kitchen floor;
at war work now or fighting overseas,
my neighbour's sons; there's hardly one of these
that will be coming back here anymore

I gave them coppers, but then I am and so,
and as I watched that useful regiment
head for the road, I felt that with them went
the songs we sang, the rhymes we used to know
heart'sore imagery the years without
The Doctor, Dantie and Wee Driv' Doubt.

Dear girl, dream-daughter of the childless years,
 known since your birth, of ^{such} ~~the~~ surrogate
 and of her ^{too} ~~whom~~ ^{heart stone} ~~father~~ ^{trunk's estate} ~~of my state,~~
 the staff, the anchor, ^{butress} when beset with cares -
 those forty ^{now} ~~living~~ years ^{now} ~~no~~ other share -
 till riven from me by a mindless fate
 when I most needed, older grown; so great
 a shield of masks your single visage bears.

when on that ^{right} ~~best~~ day ^{chance brought beneath my} ~~you and your sons~~ ^{you sought a roof}
 with you ~~two~~ boys, I snatched at the relief,
 a sounding lance to stem my lonely grief.
 Now, six years later, with the daily throob
 of this exsanguement, if you care, my love
 may these brief lines yield evidence thereof.

Tall young negroes now in Paris

wander about the boulevards and streets
 attempting with apparently limited success
 to sell leather handbags and bone or ivory
 bracelets to passing tourists

In open spaces they may be seen
 demonstrating little wind-up birds
 which flapped and fluttered in erratic circles
 often to drop into puddles or lodge themselves
 in the autumn foliage of chestnut and plane.

Last year they could have been observed
 similarly trying to sell
 little elephants of ebony or black and wood.

This activity may be thought to be due
 to the absence of western technology
 in its effort to assist
 the fringe-economy of the Third World.

27. IX. 82

I stayed in Paris for a week
in a house in a side street where I had lodged
very nearly a century ago;
it is a hotel now
with small well equipped bedrooms;
on the wall outside the front door
There is a plaque with his name
and the appropriate date

And sleeping in the lovely night
I have had vivid dreams,
the first of a strong featured middle aged woman
wearing a shawl and a tall hat
rather like one that I had not before
There was by old Welsh country-women

27. IX

84

167

In the dark boy John Lacey
scattered
spelt in the letters very thick
the hotel clerks

and the flowers in the book -
The deer's head is by marked by edges
of yellow & red

He will be a boy
The London's I can mark bells to a few
beachside
child play & such
of the hand with a 15 day leaves
a white line down every
and the paper behind the sign.
It can be such as the
is not that I can see.



Blue Circle Cement
Cement products
Blue Circle Enterprises
Building and industrial products
Northern Ireland Region
Telephone Belfast 746416

he appeared, well muffled, carrying
a small tray in his arms

27.1X.82

Cflee
RTI + Copper Plate [20]
have new house letter
papers Lonsbury-mes.

is lodged

2 The third dream

I was at home but not in my house

I had seen before

my father a middle-aged man

was going to letters for the letter reading

the branch agent the man the
Commissioner

of a copper plate - Jackson's size

with words engraved on it. The

artist was charged £20 for it. We

discussed this with the other people.

There was an elderly TV

the artist a tall young man with a coat

and his wife - James the snail

I suggested to my father

that they should require (to be done)

man

19.1.84

167

Now an elderly person
living in a genteel old Peabody Home,
he bears the other residents
reading them the successive drafts
of the letter he is going to send
to the Head Office of the Company
which had employed him for years,
explaining why they still must need
his experience and expertise.

Seventy years ago I know him
the only son of the double house
opposite our terrace,
a blond foot, seldom seen hitting
the fringes of our rough lawn.

That week of frost and snow
separated slides
and shot on tin trays
down the steepness of our side streets

Then the morning the thaw set in
he appeared, well muffled, carrying
a small tray in his arms

embowered with clean slats of wood
and shod with bright strips of metal.

But it was too late. It groked and ground
on the coarse and surface
sluving repeatedly against the slatky kerb.
So disconsolately he picked it up
and carried it home.

YOU ARE INVITED

to attend the private view of this
exhibition on Wednesday 19th
January 1983, 7.00-8.30 p.m.
Wines

The exhibition shows work by:—

Albuquerque, Alexander, Allen, Baldessari,
Burden, Christo, Dill, Downsbrough, Drozd,
Eversley, Fine, Flick, Francis, Goode,
Gostomski, Graham, Huebler, Jackson, the
Janicki Brothers, Jurkiewicz, Kamoi, Kantor,
Kasten, Krasinski, Levine, Lobodzinski, Lloyd,
McCafferty, Moses, Orr, Osinski, Pashgian,
Rabinowitch, Rankaitis, Shapiro, Sharis,
Shelton, Shire, Smith, Sommer, Strangret,
Starzewski, Stazewski, Targowski, Todd,
Valentine, Vangelisti, Weiner and Winiarski.

All the works have been freely exchanged by
the artists in a dialogue transcending
geographical and political boundaries.

The exhibition is organized in association with
ARC, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

Open to the public 20 January-20 February
1983.

UNIVERSITY
MUSEUM
Botanic Gardens, Belfast
BT9 5AB

'AN ARTISTIC CONVERSATION, 1931-1982: POLAND/USA'

THE DRUM AND THE SONG

By JOHN HEWITT

HERE in this Irish room
the man from Malabar
sits crosslegged on the floor
and beats his little drum:
though no drum's here to beat
his mimicry is such
that we imagine it
as true for sight as touch.

To that accompaniment
he lifts a wavering song,
meandering along,
on some heart's errand sent,
a narrow jungle track,
a six-note village mode,
swaying and falling back
as the dark fingers bid.

And somewhere on the rim
of that strange alien cry
a cadence makes its way,
an old song wanders home
to summon to the thought
a country crossroads fair—
a strain some singer caught
out of the misty air.

Lord Roberts

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15.V.84

169

MP4

"Waste News"

These were published by Stella West Smith's American News
 Agency. This structure is very new,
 and has been destroyed - after 24 LRC since 1950
 B. Tell 1953, with a view 1974 - at R. A. Rose 1984
 The best structure is now with Pat Smith - it was on
 last year too.

19.1.84

1. Alameda Stage Lane

Twenty years ago the very
 2. The double door entrance - on terrace
 a blind path on the way from the house
 This was the way from the old kitchen
 through the loggia on the way
 down the steep side street

of the throwing the heavy set in
 to explore, come and look again.
 the 2nd floor, clean room as step
 with high steps of the
 But down to the 1st floor a good
 a through road to the
 and into the middle R. A.
 So discommodating to kick it up
 & down the hill.

now an elderly person
 living in a small Old Folks Home
 he loves the other residents
 and of the the excessive depth
 of the hill to us say to send
 to the street above the house
 the hill was beyond him.
 explaining the hill needed
 his experience & skill

8/173
 MR JOHN HEWITT
 11 STOCKMANS LANE BT9



I remember George Lane

19.1.84

Twenty years ago leaves the bay

↳ the dark blue ~~at~~ on terrace
a black pool in the sun of our room
↳ the yellow ~~sun~~ in the ~~at~~ looked
shades of ~~the~~ on ~~the~~
down the steep side sheet

now just

A Post Script

15.4.84

These stanzas surfaced thirty years ago
when time seemed ending into a better time,
the public voice of the ~~few~~ ~~street~~ ~~head~~
genetic as remembered ~~part~~ ~~time~~; ~~a second~~
and over my ~~comparable~~ ~~land~~
the place names ~~filled~~ like a childhood mine.
The years ~~occurred~~. On ~~sentimental~~ ~~islets~~,
by night and day ~~enveloped~~ ~~believed~~.
smelled, ~~brave~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~violence~~
a sticky ~~deity~~ ~~in~~ ~~revels~~,
as though on dark ~~dream~~ ~~circled~~ ~~conscience~~
looked like ~~benches~~ in some black ~~hand~~.
And now in ~~the~~ ~~renewal~~ they ~~remind~~,
Barnet, ~~Beaconsfield~~, ~~Darkley~~, ~~Prosser~~ ~~Weylen~~
with ~~back~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~city~~ ~~and~~ ~~down~~.
the grief of ~~him~~, the ~~late~~ ~~of~~ ~~man~~ ~~in~~ ~~us~~.
till the whole tarnished map is stained as iron
ready to read ~~as~~ ~~restored~~ ~~again~~.

BT 1953

Mark Red Cross Em

1950

With our promise

1951

Blackwell 1972

Richard 1954

12.5.84

There
with quick
most
the 1.

I turn my pockets out
and contemplate my gain
some well rubbed coins of thought,
a torn receipt for pain

on face that offered me
out of the instant of grace
the needs of poetry
some ~~words~~ ~~with~~ ~~shades~~ ~~of~~ ~~art~~
dim print or spoken word,
(a couple of blades that fit
like plumage on a bird)

the ~~cost~~ ~~of~~ ~~keys~~
the ~~claws~~ ~~of~~ ~~ring~~ ~~clawed~~
still ~~with~~ ~~grip~~ ~~as~~ ~~now~~
forget the ~~mysteries~~
a bird, the a ~~cont~~ ~~self~~ ~~regard~~ ~~cont~~
a ~~clash~~ ~~my~~ ~~9~~ ~~keys~~
I ~~forget~~ ~~to~~ ~~say~~ - ~~you~~ ~~said~~ ~~that~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~
I ~~was~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~mysteries~~
election

Such unsubstantial things
as you may doubt
that, dear & deeper things,
of old magic tell
that one may ~~climb~~ ~~me~~
accepting every when
as clouds across the sun
that for a moment dim
the light's intensity
but not the central glow
such mercy of ~~what~~ ~~me~~
as you shall ever know.
of an

2 cedar
of ~~the~~ ~~exquisite~~
I ~~stand~~ ~~in~~ ~~afford~~
by ~~your~~ ~~restless~~ ~~scowl~~
I ~~was~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~mysteries~~
election
and ~~can~~
how ~~to~~ ~~can~~ ~~care~~
of ~~the~~ ~~great~~ ~~black~~ ~~day~~
I ~~was~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~mysteries~~
I ~~was~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~mysteries~~

later come to this town, the 1 volume

ten years ago to my next school from

the ^{the} my good friend (his name is John),
I had seen my day through my eye

the way of friends, the last one

when we were studying the books we chose

the into the playing the extra general

with visits a long, from to all the town

as he changed the whole line of recognition

to - because of his excellent character

the effort to make the whole world

as the small number now children die of

the ^{some} ~~whole~~ world about smiled, embraced as kind

some had to stop possible decisions for

relating the rest of it.

an of course rather, as the other one

a little better. But I think we were

about a day in our calculation

(which related, the number of school

years - but I don't know)

and - outside the market edition

now a great section,

the people also have had much to do

with the help of the market of it

the young man also, there was my father.

John - the corner of the capital

the market both in books and in people

and if you see them, what they might be

and I don't know how to say it - but I think

Joe

Payman

Name

Sam

Ben

John - R. ...

Murphy

1976

12 - 192

1977

1 - 45

1978

55 - 787

1979

Jan 35: Feb 26: Mar 1: Apr 1: May 1: June 1, July 3: August 1

70 - 980

1980

2 - 30

1981

8 -

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