

LIGHT WITHOUT, LIGHT WITHIN: POEMS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

Giant's Causeway

Above the waves
of the Northern Irish coast,
a gentle ghost,
whom some may call God,
came to me and spoke.

This ever-present spirit wove
incantations in the salted air,
whispered to me dreams
of a honey-suckled home.

I listened, nestled myself down
into the clover and tall scutch grass,
wrapped in the comforts
of the momentary migrant,
an endless expanse of sea dividing me.

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Americans Abroad at a Bar in Dublin

In a packed bar, some jammer jaw
is filling my ear
with mindless yammering,
another American,
fresh blarney calcium
clinging to his beer slick lips.

He buys me a pint
and I'm obliged
to listen. It occurs to me
that this gobshite
just might have the gift
of gab after all.

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Waking U. p. in Knocklayde

The way this morning mist
wraps itself around each Rowan's hips
is like a glimpse of God kissing the Mother.

And the robins, and other garden birds,
plucking worms from the soil,
is sexual liberation and ineluctable
crucifixion entangled together
in a simple, violent act.

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До свидания
for Natascha

Barhopping in Belfast, last night in Ireland.
Three shots of Jameson and a farewell Guinness
with someone I doubt I'll ever see again.
Hands held over veneered plywood, we laughed
about how the Cold War was coming to an end,
tears held back with a little conscious effort.

Those difficult so-longs and Christmas gift
exchanges could no longer be put off.
Coldest walk to central station, anxious
waiting for the 20:30 train back to Coleraine.
Last embrace and then nothing left but to chain-
smoke my way back to Alone America.