

La La Land

I sat in the red velvet plush seat
of the restored French cinema
waiting to be disappointed
the arrogant self poised to pick at
dismiss disregard this throwback
I did none of those things
instead lolled into this colour laden
slow gentle wafting story with
languid and energetic song and dance
drifted with its sequences and
basked in the innocence of storyline
even its salt sugar tangy edged ending
caught me by delightful surprise

Fountain Pens

I have five of them
caressed in a box
by nine disposable rollerballs
I carry them like a mantra
so that pen to paper is retro
jars the brain into the action
of youth – writing old-fashioned

They are the medium range
of brands – stainless steel
blue and black ink – Quink
the one exception is in my hand,
decorative, coloured,
a work of art in itself
a second incarnation
the first lost in a misplaced bag

My return to them dates back
some years – an affect of writing poetry
I indulge my addiction
Searching pen emporia wherever I go
I look for the ideal nib
today broad, yesterday narrow
tomorrow new hi-tech
I abhor the high cost
trophy pens, search instead
the lower end for utility

There used to be
largescale fretting
whenever one got lost
I have lost some beauties
Now it's more sanguine
replace immediately
move on with the new

They make a difference
to the quality of my poems

After Hartnett

Bright in the sense
she always second guessed me,
always went her own way,

needy in the sense
she clung, hovered and demanded,
was unpredictable and nerve rackingly
stubborn in the face of authority,
she, nevertheless, had fierce drive.

But sentenced in the end
to the force and speed of life,
she vanished as dramatically
as she arrived, leaving
questions of her world
I could never understand.

I missed her since before she died.

She was my light in the fading grey.
She was my pillar in a falling world.
She was my hope in depression.
She was my short-loaned gift in a time of greed.

A Sudden Bend in the Road

A sight I have not seen for years
two dogs drive cattle along
marshaled to the side
kept out of harm
from passing cars
on the narrow winding *bóithrín* *
controlled with military precision
by the lean rapidly leaping canines
An mbeidh báisteach amárach
a dúirt sí ón ngluaistean
ní bheidh ar seisean.
bhfuel ní bheidh tú díomhaoin
tá a lán le déanamh
*is fíor é, slán go fóill***

We moved slowly past
the narrow line in tight
formation
I am back in *Baile Eagraise*
back in time
back to my own roots
a place I have missed
almost my whole life
back to the core of me
those *cúpla focal as Gaeilge****
rock me into the steadiness
of who I am
fear cathrach Gaelach
mo shaol go hiomlán i mBéarla
*is ganntanas é seo*****

**a small track of a road*
***Will it rain tomorrow*
she asked from the car
it won't he replied
well you won't be idle
there is a lot to do
that's true goodbye
****a few words of Irish*
*****a city Irishman*
reared entirely through English
and that's a loss