

Epistolary Poem and Others

Epistolary Poem

You were my first love.
Did you know that?
taboo - first
cousins shouldn't.

Born six weeks apart, grew up
in our multi-familied flat,
minded, napped,
prammed together.

You moved first, then us,
on opposite sides of
the city, with visiting rights.
I played in your playground.

You moved back.
Walking or cycling,
meeting here and there,
we played everyday.

Staying over,
sleeping in knickers and vest,
my heart would thump
through the night.

You grew a foot taller,
went all funny,
disappeared into
make-up and boys.

He got you before
I even knew.
I was lost,
lost and invisible.

They didn't like him, I was glad,
you persisted, caused a split,
married, left, but echoes keeping coming
through all the years.

In turn I did the same, peacefully.
We paralleled for a while.
We met at family events -
always with the same affect.

Your da died, your one ally.
I ached for you.
You stayed in a tough space
it seemed to me.

Then my ma died.
You told me how important
she had been for you.
I never knew.

Now we have reached an age,
connections are gentle
occasional sightings -
elder family events.

I don't know if
I ever said:
You were my first love,
the one not forgotten.

Christmann Family

After the Party

Eyes wide open, broad beamed faces
excited in their warm embraces

sense of being held draws to holding
I wrap me round each and owning

that sweet taste of invitation
expressed and with reciprocation

that in the heart of human bliss
being together never miss

a heartbeat of complete delight
of friends warm, caring and bright.

Change

Autumn has stolen by, winter is closing in,
the light in the kitchen is darker now.

The sky is grey, everywhere there is coloring and deadening of trees,
still air, a nip to kill the leaf, to curl and loosen its grip on the branch,
a carpet of brown and yellow in the park
that if I walked on would crinkle and crackle.

I, too, have been sliced by chill winds,
deaths, assaults, work pain, my own near fatality.

Yet even in the dying are seeds of life :

being welcomed into new groups,
the pleasure of the pen,
a welling up of life force,
end of treatment,
the begin again of work,
a deepening of love,
myriads of friends.

I feel the richness and effulgence
of this life cycle's conflicting place.

Janey

Painfully, she licks her cracked and broken lips
lost in the black cloud of need

glazed shaking and tied
focused in an unfocused haze -

a stitch in time points to
where the needle needs to go

head and body foetaled -
she plunges the juice between her toes

Portmarnock and Omaha Beaches

I visited
two beaches in one year
in two countries -
painfully

Dad survived one
a long time ago
we scattered you on the other -
recently

The one, havoc, desecration
still remembered all this time
the other, desolation -
indelibly

Deep tears on both sites
his broken life
her lingering loss -
impossibly

Ageing

falling off bits
bones grown porous
heart sluggish
muscles soft and weak
memory failing
learning blunted

fifty years of working life
preserved by science
survived
trials by fire
holding onto old friends
pleasured by new places