

94 Ranelagh Road Autumn 1947

His birth home - three
stories over basement -
up ten granite steps
to the front door

Victorian grandeur
- now a tenement -
stairs and landings
oil lamp lit at night

A country family
below stairs
would bring turf
- a lorry load

tipped over
wrought iron
spiked railings
onto the grass

The boy - aged three
in tiny dungarees
equipped with a
net shopping bag

traipsed turf
sod at a time
down the long
narrow garden -

in through the
darkened flat to
be well stacked
out in the yard

He steady marched
as the day went on
through the drizzle -
on important work

Later in the evening
- exhaustion then fever

Next day an ambulance
- his first near death

At Swim Two Men

boys really - grown together -
settled - away from their origins
- upped downed and evened
across a lifespan
today champagne lunch -
an easy chat of the past
- thoughts to others

A Man and his Forest

He joins Nature
to build a forest
Pine and Oak
six stories high
saplings seeded
on sandy soil

Sweet Chestnut
threaten a coup
though one is king
sprinkling of Cedar
imported Holly
hold their own

There is his side
to the bargain
clear briars here
fell trees there
shape vision lines
cull dead growth

mind winter floods
reshape ditch drains
pull hundred year old
stubborn stumps
build lanes to walk
make human space

A lifetime passion

An Unexpected Turn of Events

I was under your spell from the start
that was not in the plan of things

I knew that you would be around me
at times but I did not expect my heart

to flip turn and lose itself to your charms
was only meant to admire you in aloof

You have grown leaped jumped and roared
blinded me to any other thing I had

I refuse you nothing follow on command
drop my life for you - do geriatric carts

The very touch of you spins me
the clutch of you wins me

At any hour of any day the word
Grandad and I am your slave again

Old Hands

An old woman once told me
I should play violin because of
my long slender fingers
I never did

I had lots of additional lines
criss-crossing my palm because of
my peculiar skin texture
They have increased in number

Age spots sprinkled on the back of them
speak of my time here like rings on a tree trunk
for cancer reasons laser is suggested
It will not be done

Nowadays my fingers have a special call
a grandson clings to one per hand
he marches on to independence
A useful job

An abiding joy for forty years
their healing gift pressured
across aching backs and limbs
Removing knots

An overlapping precious ring
reminds of abundance received
across my age in lots of ways
Brings thanks