

## After Hearing Carolan in a Restaurant

Odds are good not many  
In Tennessee  
Recognize this tune.  
A harpist somewhere  
Knew it well enough  
To keep the melody alive.

After all those years of blindness,  
It's no wonder you'd gone  
To St. Patrick's Purgatory.  
Torment and piety alike  
Brought many to that island cave.  
Even your lost Brigid, whose touch  
Immediately you recognized,  
As you helped her board the ferry.

I hope despite the years,  
And travels, she felt how  
You learned her face  
By heart. Even now,  
A stranger traces  
Her vanished features  
Into sound.

## East Wind

Old man, even you  
Tire of yourself and your  
Jawing. Like a mockingbird,  
You mastered many songs.

Yet for all your notes,  
You keep silence, too.

Every night  
Not among the voiceless dead  
Who somehow taught you,  
I have promised  
I, too, will sing.

What's a cracked note  
Or overlong story  
Among friends  
In this old factory?

Let the East wind blow.  
Snow can snow down  
Over your bones  
And everything else.

## Storm in Oklahoma

I give up, finally, with the frequency  
Of the lightning and my thoughts of you,  
Shed the humid closeness of the sleeping bag,  
Stand slowly, and exit the tent.

Those flashes could be  
As far away as Arkansas— no closer  
To you than that. The sky's playing  
Our metaphor you'd say— and I'd laugh.

I chuckle, now, because sorrow seems  
A waste of time and because I notice,  
When the world lights up around me,  
Three whitetail browsing in the clearing.

I wait in the rain  
Till one snorts its worry at my scent  
And they clatter into the woods,  
Only shadows when lightning comes.