

To Lady and to Tramp

You're in love again,
and it's your first time,
it should feel natural,
as soon as lips are locked
and bra unclasped

but there's hesitation
as you wrestle with
the question of
which version of yourself you will be
the lady or the tramp.

To lady is to be reserved
in return for respect,
reliable girlfriend,
revered version of his mother

To tramp is to bare all,
reveal kinky pockmarks
of a soul that is both
ease and disease,
empty and full,
like the girls in his dreams

Dare to bare the truth
that lies inside
the deep chamber,
only emerging when
teased out in the inky black
of a curtained room
on the sanctity of a blank sheet

Or be the fair maiden
seduced by convention
acceptable to the timid
if they wish to read the story

of man making love
or love making man
or poetry.

Distressed Acids

The Pope's in the pan
with the fish and chips -
two fresh cod
one smoked
a long ray
bucket of chips
and Pope John Paul XXIII

Someone should do something,
scoop him out
set him aside
let the oil drain off
in the tray with the
battered mushrooms
and the spice burger
that was cooked for an old man
who changed his mind and
took a salad burger instead

But no, he's still in there,
the fish is floating on the surface
along with the chips,
golden, ready to be
lifted and bagged
salted and vinegared
together or separate

What'll they do with the Pope?
Put him in a Snack Box
alongside a nice breast
of Southern Fry and a scoop of chips
for the way home?
It's a long way from Tallaght to the Vatican.

Amorous Avatar

My digital distraction has a name
he's real by all accounts

of the finest filth
Mr. three bubbles... *is typing*

confined to the cloud
and the screen

voice just once or twice
a recorded message sent

and still my heart skips a beat
when the phone beeps

a virtual attraction
spun from WhatsApp threads

our iOS 11 courtship
in native code

he touches his, I touch mine,
lightening digits

to share intent
of something or other

My avatar doesn't want to start a fire
with the breath of a kiss

Solar Dystrophy

Dry roasted
beneath a latin sun
skin poppy red
bubbling like grilled cheese
translucent sacs form
an aqueous armour
transform an arm
into an angry limb
roaring red
leaking liquid,
the scalding sun
bows towards the sea
dips it's head in reverence
to the defeated dermis,
a gracious gesture of solar dignity
that comes too late,
scorched and blazing
blood bashing
through temples
tadumtadump
sweat weeps, stings
the broken film
delicately tears apart
between mounds of sores,
a mere movement
enough to erupt one
spill its cocktail of contents
over the baked arm

Sun bleeds into the horizon
cold wine arrives

Pregnant Poet

For Doireann Ní Ghríofa

For nine months
I carried you
feeling the unfinished
weight of you,
longing to know
what you'd look like...
what I'd call you...

For nine months
I considered your beats -
your sounds,
had I overindulged...
not given enough...
you kicked me in parts
didn't move me in places,
it was me and you
we both grew

For nine months
your features defined
some organic
others clearly mine,
your lines took shape
you found your feet

And now
your little beating heart
lies on the page
and pulses loud

and in this moment of poetry
a poet is proud

Three Anns, Eavan and Doireann

Tolstoy measures eight inches
Joyce and Wilde seven each
Tobín a solid six
but Anne Enright takes a full twelve
Annie Proulx the same
bucked by a rogue Eavan Boland
migrant from her own spot
above with the bards
Doireann Ní G, Anne Marie Ní C,
neither of massive girth
yet reaching
miles
within

Boil Her

Floating high on a hill in Cork
above you, below you
buoyed with Bulmers bubbles
and the verve of a seven month wait
we looped and linked
sweat sheened shapeshifters
resistance – we had none,
a heatwave outside
melting within
ice, make up, you
said so much
that meant so little
how could it?
In the heat of the moment
I love yous
have no gravitas
like the weight
of your brand new marriage
Is she boiling too?

Reflection

Regrets gnaw,
your image in the mirror
begs for apology
as you batter teeth in paste and fume
to purge the sins
of sentiments spilled,
glum knots stick in the throat
rinds of shame and if-onlys
when he said he liked you
you weren't meant
to take it to heart