

Aspirations

You were a big part of my life
and I keep on
lighting the candles,
even if I don't believe.

In stress, I bless myself.
In distress, I say
one Our Father,
three Hail Marys
and a Glory Be,
even if I'm not convinced.

If I'm struck down
by a lorry, or a stroke,
and some good soul
thinks to minister First Aid,
with whispered aspirations
in my ear,
I know I'll be glad of it,
even if they're only winging it.

And if I'm conscious it's the end,
the devotions of a seven year old
will most likely issue out of me,
in synch with my dying breaths....

Jesus, Jesus, You have come.
Jesus, I am now your home.....
even **if** you don't exist.

Nature and Nurture

for Gillian

I could see her life in her newborn face,
my girl, with her androgynous spirit,
she smelled of her own earthiness.
Her anima latched onto my breast,
no bother to her, no frets, I laughed.
I would have no work to do with her.

Solid baby body, her birthed limbs
held the flesh of survival in the womb,
bigger than her brothers before her.
I could feel it off her, her humour,
her ability to lead, to nurture,
to curse warmly, to soothe us all.

The infant fist she would hold for life,
to hurl a sliotar, to feel the leather of it,
to mind the hammer for her grandfather.
She would want no princess dress,
not my Superman in pyjamas,
not my Transformer in disguise.

Small strong woman, moon woman,
dog loyal to her family, caretaker,
craftsman, cat whisperer, best recruit,
solving our struggles, soldiering for us,
chanting for us, dancing with us,
touching somewhere in the core of us.

And my notion she was here before,
walking the walls of the Fort,
looking out at her Cork, her accent
a part of older lives, her real respect
for their fight and their work
and her sound humanity for it all.

My little girl's dark eyes told me
of a kind of knowing in our bonding
and our mutual need of a back rub.
Her full lips, a piece of her heritage,
so very Irish, so fucking beautiful,
and none of it any of my doing

Our Guardian Angels

a pantoum for Cait in memoriam

We were wild and blessed and fed on fallen nuts,
when we played in the trees, overhanging the river.
How we didn't meet our deaths, I do not know.
We could have got pneumonia or been poisoned or drowned

when we played in the trees, overhanging the river.
We concocted perfumes and potions with rain water and weeds
and we could have got pneumonia or been poisoned or drowned.
We could have broken our necks or set fire to ourselves

concocting our perfumes and potions from rain water and weeds
and making torches with twine and melted candles, on sticks.
We could have broken our necks or set fire to ourselves,
or been sucked underwater, never to surface again,

with our makeshift torches and twine and melted candles, on sticks.
Thigh deep in the reeds on the slippery stones, we dipped our jam jars.
We could have been sucked underwater, never to surface again
never to survive; to grow to fear the thought

of lying deep in the reeds on the slippery stones, with our jam jars.
How we didn't meet our deaths, I do not know,
but we survived to grow. We never thought to fear
when we fed on fallen nuts and were wild and blessed.

Transcendence.

her hands were a pair of fire tongs
too loose for the lump of coal,
one of her feet tripped up in the skipping
and was always seven months old,
her elbow was some kind of racquet

doing her writing made her blink
her blink was a clock face made of slate
chalked out with shillings and ounces
and the sums she couldn't do
and her brain was the enormous turnip

but from under her own blanket
her toes became tinker bells all in a row
and her fingers moved with the swifts
and all about her were seashell whispers
and inside she felt the crackle of rice krispies

and her heart was a soft red purse
and in this she kept all her lullabies.

Inheritance

a cluster of petals, my mother's ring
on my right hand, my new twinkle effect:
my fingers twitch to make the light reflect
and pirouette with gossamer wings and
daisies, in an oh lee oh lie oh lulu
dance of prisms: and the rippled crushed silk
of the back of my hand forms a backdrop,
in peach and freckled milk to lift the sparkle,
the spectacle: and its beams laser me
and the thin gold band sculpts its groove in me
and her deep turquoise veins are embossed on
my skin forever: in eternity
she will reach for me to help find her hanky
and to put her ring back in its brown box.

On Dead and Dying

Dying is the plant that needs watering
and relocating to the bathroom,
or a window sill,
a more nourishing spot.

Dying is not Dead.

Dead is a rotting mouse back of the cooker.

Chalky Gods

you wouldn't make a daisy chain for the crucifix
hanging in my mother and father's bedroom
with the wounds uncovered it felt cold

you wouldn't make a daisy chain for the big red statue
on the turn of the stairs going up and coming down
with his hands and heart exposed

you wouldn't want to make a daisy chain for them
the chalky gods that were wedding presents
not really for adoration in our house

but I did make a daisy chain for one
who stood there in the low light outside our room
a little Our Lady

I made a secret daisy chain
and placed it carefully around her tilted head
and hooked it over her prayer hands and onto her feet

I made a daisy chain for her
and because I couldn't put a candle
I put a seashell there I knew she'd like

If I was the One who made the World

a pantoum

If I was the One who made the world,
I'd be hiding out on the Skellig rock, doing penance with the puffins,
salvaging what little could be salvaged, to make amends,
rowing my coracle over and back, to link up to the Net, incognito, keeping an eye on things.

I'd be hiding out on the Skellig rock, letting on I'm doing penance with the puffins,
in denial, looking to make a scapegoat of God, or Gaia,
rowing my coracle over and back, to link up to the Net, incognito, keeping an eye on things.
If the gannets let slip that I was The Creator, I'd be

in denial, looking to make a scapegoat of Brigid, or Brahman.
Yet wishing to be remembered for a spread of bluebells in a quiet wood.
If the gannets let slip that I was The Creator, I'd be

cursing my own infinity.
Wishing to be remembered for a spread of seashells in a quiet cove,
while fathoms beyond, I'd be calling out loud to an echo in the cliffs,
cursing my own infinity,

hoping for clemency.
Fathoms beyond, I would be found calling out loud to an echo in the cliffs,
having salvaged what could be salvaged, to make amends,
hoping for clemency,
if I was the One who made the world.