

A Poem from Scotland.

Blinded by daybreak.
Trees, limbs and all,
Break up the skyline,
Gulls rise and fall.

Swans sleepy backwards,
By the edge of the loch,
Eyes barley open,
At 7 o'clock,

Erin go braugh,
Wild swans at school,
This ones not moving,
In green shade so cool,

Iron Bru rambles,
On wet gravel shores,
In search of the day's lift,
It's found,
Opens doors.

Leafy through little,
A thought for the day,
Thumbing the pages,
It's better this way.

Torn cover jackets,
From multiple use,
Each day a new one,
Curved shores, shiny blue,

Over the Sandy Fjord,
He watches the news.
Down, oily pits with wrenches,
He paid all his dues.

My blazer was backwards,
When the juice was let loose,
I could be stumbling my way round,
About this wee hoose,

Instead by the Lomond,
I make a small loop,
Before waking him for dinner,
And helping with shoes.

Arborescent

Underneath
Where the pine needles lie
Nestled and brown
I recall enchanted
Forests
Dark and mystic
Behind my grandmothers house.

Setting fire to my resentments
I tore down all her trees
Arborescent bogeymen
Have left me with no leaves.

Fucking Frockens

Fucking Frockens,
Stain my lips with their bittersweet
Almost a blueberry,
Purple heather begins its late July burst,
Amongst empty cans of Bulmer's, cigarette butts and cow shit,
Half a mile from my mother's grave.

Children running wild,
Race towards an impossible mountain,
Debating tales of Devils, hell fire and who would get the farthest.

Blue van rolls up,
Biker's talk of
Open borders
And who got there first.
A race to the finish
And how they missed the Tour de France.

Outside the perimeter America won't report,
Talking guns trumps Syria.

My Mothers Decorations:

My Mothers decorations,
Of use to me now.
Couches, rugs,
Patterned, floral and cream.
Reminding of cushion -shaped candies
And suites
The streets of her youth,
From Camden to Green.

Afraid of the city I stayed close behind,
The dirt of the footpaths,
The soles of my shoes.

Ah yes,
Once the subject of youthful disdain.
Pretty lozenges, leaves,
Naphthol red, bluish green,
Decorated the room,
While I drank in the rain.

Beaten down mountains,
Bonk, Nugget and Rush,
Amber cigarette glows,
Cupped, still and hush.

Now sit on that couch middle -aged
And reflect,
Comfort was earned,
Patterns pilfered,
Arabesque.

You see, sown in the weave of these curtains fine cloth.
Memories meaning is made,
In the things she left behind.

Brehon's Chair

Alighting the Sugarloaf
Bells at noon made us laugh.
There's more before six one
Our Catholic past.

A tizzy of daydreams.
And how would Cezanne?
Render that mountain?
Maroon grey and calm.

A clear line of sight.
From here to the cromlech.
Once ancient druids
Mystic high sect.

Dublin encroaching
Blocks magical views.
Planning permission
Vistas will loose.

Once in the valley.
Icebergs molass
Scalped poor Enniskerry.
The glacial past.

It's a matter of stones
And where they are placed
From Samhain to Souls Eve
Our old pagan ways.

Erratics and dolmens
Please let them be
Scattered on mountains
For young ones to see.

Here's to the judgement
A tomb once there was.
And me picking mushrooms
Beside Brehon's Chair.

Autumn Mountain Fires
(For my uncle, friend and mentor Barry Grace)

Dublin, your mauve blankets
Ever -changing grey
Brace again a clear dusk sky
Sliver crescent, undistinguished streetlights.
Houses cut from a rougher cloth.

Patterns painted
Sadness tinged memories
From Grand Canal
To Wicklow's edge.
A cold wind's blowin'
Our summer out of town.

This one's for you
The cobble streets
Winding narrow wayward stairs
The smell of hops
And autumn mountain fires
The whole lot
Take them and stay here
'til I get back.

Keep them close as songs
And your stories that made my heart.

Massy's Wood

You asked me to write something
So here's a song for you
Oh what a day it was
Ambling on with you
Climbing the hills
A rich mans woods today

Stumbling through horse manure,
Vile voodoo panda bears
Pointed them out to me
Though I grew up there
So many trees
In secret woods today.

We spent a lifetime
On great white telephones
A kindred soul
Showing the young ones
Red wood swings
On hellfire hill today.

Not many friends
Like ones you grew up with
Trawling for things
Monkeys and Dutch wizards
Told us
Not to burn things
Our Independence Day.

Youth almost burnt down
All of our standing trees
You built a rock
Always supported me
Thank you my friend
For Massy's Wood today.

For Jack Kane

A stonemason on O'Connell's street
Happened once by chance to meet
His sweetheart from Californ IA.
Told me pausing pensive of return
To Gods country for warmth and sun.
And how he visited Alcatraz
T'was murder there and hellish pain
Like the divels elbow, Glencullen's rain.

A lovely boy that young one is
Like my brother yes he is
And how I saw in the old mans eyes
Gentle kindness, the years made wise.
A small old cottage on Glen Cabin Lane
Born in a stable, his mothers pain.
I wish I'd known him years ago
When topsoil was turned on fields below.
And my parent's deep foundations laid
His face lit up each time he sayed
It's great to see you Bartle Lad.

Storyland

Tales are becoming
In your eyes
As I tell you of storyland
Where fables for young ones
Await endless imaginings
stories are made
A father's need at bedtime.

What of the bond
Between you and I
A most precious thing.

You wanted to write so we wrote your name
You wanted to play so we played your games.
You wanted to dance till the music stopped
Staying still as a statue
'til we broke down laughing
Never wanting to stop.

Filling your day
Moving as fast as you
Till then I can't
And we break down laughing.

What are my dreams?
Tell me when I get there.

I try so many things
Make colors run red on the cloth like a sunset
Yet nothing comes close to the joy that we feel
When you ask me to lay with you
And tell you again about storyland.

Bull Under Milk Wood:
For Brian (Bull) Hannigan

Bull, under milk wood
Talks of mushrooms and whiskey
Old modern times, oh so bold, sleepy, dreamy.
Now alls been and gone those summer days were so easy
Time spent with friends, cafe lights Dublin City.

We live in world
We don't care for paper
Or physical things
That end up on shelves
Then gathering dust
Old cloth and gel.

Set down in the rain
For just to see
What happens to pigment
When I let go of me.

Mattering most
When it is done
This ones barely dry
Start another one.

Then are the things
That end up on walls
With bright lights and stickers
For people to pause

It's written in ink
For you to see
My time making pictures
Is not just for me.

Upon Arrival:

Packed up some things,
And now I am here,
The rasp of weed eaters,
One hundred degrees,
She's chopping down gardens,
Not cared for to begin with.

The sweet earthy smells,
Of warm summer times,
Longed for in winter,
Blue tinted skies,
Tripping through bushes,
Oh how we went.
Gathering things,
Precious times with you spent.

Children run wild,
It's Augusts near end,
Their last days in swim shorts,
With brown mud stained knees,

I should've packed up your things,
Before I went,
Tripping back here,
The place that I left you,
But I just couldn't do it,
Your winter coats stayed,
On old wooden hangers,
Bedside summer dresses,
And flowers with your smile,
Your glasses beside,
Your toothbrush, your washcloth,
Are all we have now.

So there's no need to move,
The things that remind,
Of your loving ways,
That you left behind.

But oh how I cherished,
Each thing that you did,
Upon my arrival,
From Maryland's haze,
Your sweet gentle kindness,
A mother's deep love.

Unaware of the Stones:

A crowded hot August day,
By Kilgore Falls,
Minnows swim in the shallows,
Unaware of the stones,
Cast by the beast of the East,
The target,
A small hole,
Carved in woods hollow memory.

Smell of sun cream,
Hip hops,
Cigarettes,
And dirty beach towels.

They hastened to swim,
I sit on a log,
Thumbing thoughts of the day,
In search of profound allegory,
And how crowded rivers,
A sticky day spent,
With throngs of people,
In search of quiet solitude,
Now their secret is spoiled.
The best of the West.

Through sweltering heat
Early this morning
A pink painted flower
Reminds me of hope
A bright incarnation
Sprayed on the wall
The gesture so humble.
Now part of the stone
Considered grafittiy
Above lazy rivers
The cool mountain stream
Awakens jet lagged senses.

But what darned memory
Prompted me to write
Of teeming rivers in summer time?
Was it the ripples of light above moleskin rocks?
Tattered signs in corn fields that we passed on the way?
No none of these things
And all thee above

Time spent in summer with three people I love.

My Grandfathers House

Then came a dream of my Grandfathers house,
With its dark brown tobacco stained textured wallpapered walls.
Witness to countless family memories,
Good and some bad.
And how he'd play piano until his fingers could no longer,
Stiff with old age.
And then sat in his chair,
Packing pipe with pungent leaves from a tartan pouch,
In between smoking stinking John Player Blue,
Watching the BBC News.

Visits at lunchtime,
Australian soaps and how granny couldn't even boil an egg.
A house with some sadness.
Memories past.
He's no longer there to visit and neither is she,
But the old house holds their essence as it sits on Nutgrove Avenue,
Watching the cars go by.

The dream went on.
I drove home in snow although it was summertime.
The enjoyable nonsense of nighttime imaginings.
Drunk off the road.
Can't tell grass from concrete or dirt from asphalt,
I drive off the road.
Prompting old memories,
Of what I did then.

But back to that wall.
A big part of the dream ,
Not quite a vision,
Although I imagined wallpaper ,
Pealed to reveal blue mold on plaster.
The layers of consciousness.
Embedded in stone and sticky, gummy wallpaper paste.
They saw my mother as a child and her mother too,
And how she left her so soon,
Leaving her to fend,
In that small house,
In Churchtown,
Where they grew up.

Thoughts about Autumn

Until Autumn comes,
Her dry colored leaves,
Cling determinedly to branches.
Her smell smokyed fires on evenings last stretches.
Her short cooler days need almost a blanket,
To wrap us and snap us right cool to our senses.
Her high reaching skies with white whisky moonshine.
Shorn fallow corn fields and high feathered nestlings.
Storing up squirrels and barn ridden vultures,
Shitting from rafters,
dining on carcass.
To stay plenty full up for cold dreary winter.

It's not until autumn that crickets stop chirping.
And frogs leapy skipy from toadstools to black pools.
And quiet fills the land that once birdies excess.
Chirpy and cheeping and flocking and fucking.
It's not til harvest moon's above our small fire pit.
And marshmallows toasting on young children's long spits.
Then only then will we come to our senses.
Another years gone let's stop building fences.
Tired of the difference
Look for the same
We're all hunkered down on this ball in the rain.

More about Mountains:

Piled high is the cotton weaved purple and green,
Torn with frayed edges, threads bared all to see.
Woven and weaven a stitch back together,
Down hemlock mountains,
Between ferns and the metal,
Of half burnt out cars,
Left up hills in the midnight.
The Dubliner boys afraid of some daylight.
Crashed out and burnt out behind barbed wire fences.
The threat of the violence,
Burnt rubber stench.

Below orange city lights gleam from afar,
The town got all splattered,
Warmed with hues from the gaslights.
It's never you know who goes up there at nighttime.
Then squandering daylight on couches in bedsits.
Packing up bowls, mainlining and cracked out.
Gangs and the rent boys all cover their faces,
To pour out their rages a dusking in twilight,
Drunken blackguards fray out their tempers.
Above River Liffey, filled with God awful funk,
But where is her source from the rocks to sea?
Tucked up in here 'tween Tonduff and Kippure,
She starts as a trickle but boy she gets rough,
Gathering tales, midnight lads on the way,
Before pouring her heart out into Dublin Bay.

Ronan

That field was covered in snow,
There's a photo from years ago,
When you were just a baby,
Long before I knew,
How to be your father,
The way you needed me to.

Always felt someone behind me,
Though it was only me and you.
Now you tell me daddy,
We're only traveling through.
You've got so much in front of you,
If only we all knew,
How to love the moment
What a joy to be you.

A River Poem

Broken sticks and branches,
Hobbling over stones.
Hot like coals on bare feet,
Your pain I'll never know.

A dip into the river,
Just to cool them off.
Floating poems imagined,
Written just because.

No damage to the waterways,
Ochre soaked on green.
Using just earths pigment,
Words not penned by me.

What would you say if you had no home?
Or just no rights at all?
A refuge, a freedom fighter,
God knows you've heard them all.
You lead a bare and simple life, here in Baltimore
Let's hear your poems a spoken from a lake trout corner store.

From the grim streets of anywhere,
The problems are the same.
Who am I to tell you? I don't even know your name.
Now lets send them down the Gunpowder,
Is that what people need?

We'll do it when the leaves are brown,
But not yet covered in snow.
Write down all your troubles,
Then release and let them go.

My Father's Work Shed:

Shelves, dust and cobwebs,
On old magazines,
Flowers sprouting patterns,
Opaque, yellow screens.
Paint hardened brushes caked in shellac,
These are the memories of my father's work shed.

A place of curiosity for a young child,
Familiar, yet completely unknown,
I would go there alone,
Climbing wide wooden rafters,
Searching that place,
Angle grinders and sanders,
The tools of his trade,

Never clean or bright,
With the strong citrus smell of Fast Orange,
For removing stubborn oil stains from his hands,
Or gelatinous green Swarfeega smelling as toxic as the filth it took off.
Working hard on his dreams,
Lorries, Rally Cars and anything with wheels.

Up the back an old Deutz digger that never starts,
We beg him everyday, start the Deutz! start the Deutz!
To no end.
Until a thunderous rumble, like the wall falling down in the back yard,
Announces it's engine running and we race up and ride with him.
The simple pleasures of young children,
Immune from the toils of his world,
We dig only for fun.

In the rally car,
Aged two,
Frightened by the sound,
Or a roaring mini cooper engine,
He torments me,
I scream,
Don't rev though!
Don't rev!
But he does.

Home from work frustrated,
I embrace him,
He shakes me from his leg,
Too busy, too anxious for childish things.
I console myself by laughing at the STP sticker on the lid of the dustbin,
Mr. Bellyman I call it, peeled and covered in sticky foodwaste.
Uncovering layer on top of layer,
Replaced every year with the same label.

As a child his passion for work an obsession
To understand obsession
You have to get your own
And then labor at it
Every day
Forgetting everything else that matters in life,
Even the people who love you.

But who am I to say?
To distinguish,
What should matter to a man I love regardless.
I have my obsessions.
What will my children write about me?

Eoin

A deep surrender,
Followed by calm,
Ending agitations,
Caused by years of holding on.

My young child,
Frightened by storms,
You'll not get swept away,
By high tides or hurricanes,
Hold on tight,
I've got you.

All of the hurdles
And obstacles,
In life that you face,
Meet them with grace.

In you,
I am trying to sow,
A hardy and tenacious seed,
For when I am not there.

But you have to nurture it to see it grow,
I can only plant it,
Water it, feed it,
And trust the rest to you.

My child treasure what you have.
Take with you what I give,
And add your own.

A sliver of sunlight through your shutters might be all you need.
On that cold winters day,
The sun still seems warm through your window.
Embrace it,
Then go out
And give back,
Tenfold.

That's how to take care of,
The goodness inside you,
In your warm eyes,
Then your loving kindness,
Never will fade.

For my Wife Meaghan

From Malen head to Mizzen,
A damp cooling drizzle,
Low racing clouds
Scrape Tiberadden.

Inside our garden,
Oh what a view,
The edge of Howth's head,
Glistening morning dew.
The pipes of Poolbeg,
Tower over the sea,
That one time you visited,
You went there with me.

There's one magpie, two now
Picking out gizzards.
Our good luck
In Ticknock
Had you falling in ditches

Then holed up in Rathmines
A lowly air mattress.
14 over Rainbow.
Picking up children
Nicknames like Len.
Little we knew
What lay ahead of us then.

Now home is here,
We're just visitors there,
Warm sun on Saturday ,
Our skies are all blue,
17 years, two children,
What became of me and you.

That Old Piece of Paper:

Torn and forlorn,
A heavy roll of paper,
Has been there for years,
Just sat in the corner,
In the damp and the darkness,
Of my sisters horse stable,
Gathering stains, dust and mildew,
Amorphous blobs.
Between me and you.

There's potential pictures,
In that parchment for sure.
I would ask her to send it,
But I would rather go back,
See if it holds up,
To my memories lack.

Dare I unroll it?
For just to see,
The hidden paintings,
Of old family dreams.

Let's take out a camera
To slowly reveal,
The effects of time,
On tired tattered reams.

That 16 mm projector,
Inspired many things,
From moths on the ceiling
To coffee cup rings

Regarding the paper
I have to ask
What was it witness to?
Since 20 years passed?

Sparkle the horse
Olive mountain fields
Hard working Hairo
In muck raking leaves.

All of this happened before the fall,
The long stint in hospital,
Confused and all,

Imagining piped airplane sounds in my room.

I know it sounds crazy
But what if it's all?
On that old piece of paper
Leaned up against the wall.

**I See you at Sunset
For my mother Phyllis O'Reilly
on her birthday September 10th 2016**

Sombre spurned memories,
The sun dips low,
A gentle melancholy returns.
Sweet smoky fires,
The skies drama,
never failing to humble,
A man who plays with colors on cloth.
But my what a tale,
The setting sun tells,
As the west accepts her graciously.

Since you left me,
I see you at sunset,
Your beauty extending
Wide into the heavens,
I'll say goodbye to you,
At each day's close,
Until my time comes.

A love stretched,
Over yellow, orange and red,
A splendid gloaming,
Connects us.

Where else could your heart end up?
Except in majestic azure,
Reminding me,
that I am small,
Carried by your strength,
Celestial fires,
Make ribbons of clouds
And chemtrails indiscriminate.

So much you've added,
To the evening sky,
Since returning to your source,
Your face before you were born.

Finished

Finished is ludicrous,
A lucid idea,
Floating ethereal,
Midnight's for dreams,
And toast dripping butter
Down the side of my sleeve.
The stains,
The remains,
The bits on the floor.

Nothing's an accident,
To me anymore.
Start day,
Surrender,
See what it brings,
Meetings and friends,
Beside other things,
Endless combines,
No need to stop,
Except it's near daybreak
And I have to get up.

Orange Lives with Green

Orange lives with green,
The coldest winter I've ever seen.
Not this one the one before,
Sat behind the garage door.
Time spent left out in the cold.
Smoking Marlboro,
Getting old.

This one saw a freeze and thaw
A cycle you know no one knows
Just the whims of old jack frost
Spitting
Spiteful
Gentle's lost
His screen is frozen,
Just because.

Might I try to orchestrate?
The worlds not theatre,
Just in case.
You see me force you play your part,
Stop my writing,
Remind me then,
I'm not ever knowing when
Peace and violence, which will end?

Greens not only what I've seen,
A white snow blanket lay between,
My vivid orange janus door,
Pour ice crystals, frozen form,
I hope they thaw and stay between,
My new cut cotton frazzled seam,
Where frozen orange lives with green.

Fractles!
And what midas touch?
Turned all golden green and such
Was it January's setting sun?
Her weak lemon,
Her hopeful son.
Who thought just maybe there's a chance,
Our green and orange pigments dance.

Large, Empty Room.

As I sit in this large, empty room waiting,
The eerie sound of the coffee maker reminds me,
Of a gale force ten wind lashing against the west-facing window of the house I
grew up in.
We would sit there at night huddled, the whole family and watch the TV.
The rain pelted
We watched a horror movie once
The Tennis Court,
I think it scared my sister for life!

But rather than reminisce,
How about where I am now?
On a Friday evening,
Getting ready to drink coffee with friends,
With my past way behind me,
I move forward,
Each day unique,
Never the same,
I lead a rich life,
In the company of many.

Seen Sewn

You've seen that I've sewn
Cotton on linen
Giving me time to think
A whole days reflection
Desire's in my head
Not just the impulse.

Something to do with a needle and thread
A spool
Then a pinprick!
Blood stains the back of my linen.
Hardly worth a mention
It was ever so slight

If only that were the case for others
Shot down with their hands up
I count my privileges
As I sit here and make.

Patio Slabs

How patio slabs look
On cold rainy days
Soaked stones absorb much
Heavy and gray

Once children colored
Their chalk yellow too
A childish type palette
I think they had blue

Proud eyes a smiling
Their art photographed
Sean Scully's daycare
On reddish earth slabs.

Today a pale green light
Enveloping all
Flattened and subdued
Old memories recalled.

A feeling unsettling
I try not to name
As I gaze out the sliding door
At patio rain.

A suggested absence
On canvas paint stained
No beginning or ending
Dreary and same.

So drop the pretenses
Of bright sunny days
Take all the old hurt
The bottled up pain

Pour out old paint tubes
Set them down in the rain.

Frozen Glass Pendants

Deep in the Methyl
Glass fused at high heat
Crusted and frosted
A Christmas gift treat

Oh how you labor
September's sad days
Cuttled and coddled
Disintegrate chains

Cast off in the kiln fires
Of school children's dreams,
What strange kind of alchemy?
Inspiring such things.

Like the wonderful science
Minerals meld
Stratified colors
Carbon black shells

You once took a photo
Of cold winter steam
Rising at daybreak
Beneath sturdy trees

Frost clung to the window
Of your morning commute
You paused for a moment
And captured it still
Mondays ice frozen
Pixels bent to your will.

Now your glass pendants
With you they conspire
To represent beauty
In the warmth of your fire.

Sown in the Seasons

Sown in the seasons,
Born of the rain,
Trials tribulations,
Packed up again.

It's near mid October,
And I have to ask,
What should we make of,
Our dark checkered past?

Hunting and gathering,
Sure that was a start,
Then tilling and ploughing,
Master the earth.

Fear and instinct,
They drove us,
To conquer new lands,
Invading natives,
Scattering germs,

Seeds of disquiet still with us today,
Sown in the Seasons,
Born of his rein,
Surely he'll step down I say to myself,
Not 'til it's over,
No quiet, no stealth.

It's all a distraction,
We're too passive to see,
I'll give you two choices,
It's him or its me!

Then in November,
Oh what a joy,
Democracies spoken,
A Trumped up little boy.

I Dreamt of You

I dreamt of you again last night,
And how you lost that fatal fight,
The cancer was from whence I came,
You battled bravely hid your pain,
But in the dream we were there,
I was leaving once again,
You packed for me, made sure I had,
Passports, tickets, papers in,
A leather satchel brown or black,
That last time I saw you,
Never back.

I dreamt of you and you were there.
Sick rocking in your chair,
How we hated saying goodbye,
I saw the sadness in your eyes,
I hid mine too they were in no state,
To comfort you, I was drinking late,
I awakened saddened, overwhelmed,
But happy just to see you again.

No Match

I'm no match for glimmering
Fields of corn a shimmering
I'm no match for sunlight neither
She gentle fades into the ether
Round bout now the ghosties season
Picked by hand for just one reason
To wind up frightful on front doors
With pumpkins lit and prick shaped gourds

Tinted orange yellows lean
Against the whitewashed pebbled screen
The woods not painted years ago
How's this gentle season change
To paper over heal the strain?
Before winters lash and biting rain
Brings us down to earth again.

Red Flowers

I am not at the centre of the world,
A Deleuzian of instinct,
Red flowers rattle the rhizomes.
Made in the machine of memory
A dark assemblage my soul set free.
Born on the plane of consistency
Torn and stained, smell of linseed
Troubled playgrounds of my youth
Years went by but still it's loose
Ground to bits it's substance still
Can't piece it back with just my will
See my lonely voice is not just my own
It picked up fragments from long ago
Put it back then we'll see
what it means to dust off our old playthings.
My island of misfit toys.

Tonight

Tonight
Our singers might be
Little children playing,
A bird in a tree
Ten thousand trixie bells
Or an old dog in pain.

Laughing lavish sounds maybe
Making sense to only me
Evening Aristophanes
Seeing sights a colder breeze

Dancing to our tribes we go
Sometimes fast, sometimes slow
Bring us back to infancy
Parade our old dependencies.

Awakening of something free
Tear down that old maple tree
A sign of lack in its red leaves
They settle lightly on the plane
Dried and rustle, make it rain.

So what's the purpose of this lament?
Days in comfort, we have spent
Just seems we've overstayed our time
Burning down our sacred shrines.

The fall of man, sure don't you know
Two hundred thousand years seemed slow
Knock us off our pedestal
We hunt with stone and make our kill.

Evenings come it's getting late
Another laughable debate
Tuck the young ones in again
Bon huit, bon huit, my gentle friends!

