

## *Emptiness*

All we have left  
Is the manger and the straw  
And the bundle of cloth on the floor  
In a shabby room no one visits.

The child is gone;  
And, to the kings who have come from afar,  
All we offer is our emptiness.

## *Lunch*

Today at lunch,  
She asked me to set her fork  
Onto her chicken,

Indistinguishable now  
From the pale mound of potato mash.

She is disappointed with God  
Who has left her in such confusion.

## *Jetty*

The little jetty  
Ran out at an angle  
Below the bridge.

The spring tides  
Climbed granite walls  
To within inches of its crown.

Towards night, the boy,  
Forgetting cautions,  
Stepped out along its length

To stand,  
Each pore intent,  
Level with the threatening depths.

## *A Father*

He never understood parks—  
Laying vast acreage aside  
And hiring men to mow and trim the grass  
When cattle and sheep might graze it happily.

He could not comprehend travel  
When you had the Comeraghs to one side,  
The sea to the other  
And the wonders of the street at your door.

He abhorred debt, approved of strikes,  
Loved Irish, distrusted republicans.  
He rejoiced in fields brassy with cabbage,  
In new roads through stubborn hillsides.

He cherished ways by the tide,  
Boats in the ocean, cards at night,  
The hush around a song,  
The braonín before bed.