

K E V I N      H I G G I N S

*January*

*for Susan*

The ashtrays need emptying  
and the cat's been sick.  
The mice in the attic are giving out stink.  
As we watch our breath drift  
across the kitchen, central heating  
is a luxury as distant as trays  
of oysters at the Galway Races.  
The year struggles to its feet,  
like a lamb stranded in deep snow.  
Strange then to think, this evening in Siberia,  
that these are the good old days;  
I, the unknown "poet and critic",  
you, the next F. Scott Fitzgerald,  
up all night, putting the world to wrong;  
writing new versions of old songs.

*A Brief History of  
Those Who Made Their Point  
Politely and Then Went Home*

On this day of tear-gas in Seoul  
and windows broken at *Dickins & Jones*,  
I can't help wondering why a history  
of those, who made their point politely  
and then went home, has never been written.

Those who, in the heat of the moment,  
never dislodged a policeman's helmet,  
never blocked the traffic or held the country to ransom.  
Someone should ask them: "Was it all worth it?"

All those proud men and women, who never  
had the National Guard sent in against them;  
who left everything exactly as they found it,  
without adding as much as a scratch to the paintwork;  
who no-one bothered asking: "Are you or have you ever been?",  
because we all knew damn well they never ever were.