

crucial to the author, it brought me back and forward all at once:

Roof it again. Batten down. Dig in.
Drink out of tin. Know the scullery cold.
A latch, a door-bar, forged tongs and a grate.

Touch the crossbeam, drive iron in a wall,
Hang a line to verify the plumb
From lintel, coping-stone and chimney breast.

Relocate the bedrock in the threshold.
Take squarings from the recessed gable pane.
Make your study the unregarded floor.

Sink every impulse like a bolt. Secure
The bastion of sensation. Do not waver
Into language. Do not waver in it.

ÚRLÁR



Seamus Heaney

for Liam O'Flynn

Hull and hawser. Fathom thrum. The rope
And anchor holding, mast-top
And boxed compass move with the gyroscope
Of the big music. Úrlár, meaning floor,
Steadies its foundation in the air.

Author's Note: "úrlár" is a term used in relation to the "floor" of sound in Scottish piping.