

*The Circuit*

Oh ring, ring, open wide and let us out!

—ANNE FRANK

I. ANNE FRANK'S HOUSE

From the blacked-out upper windows we can see  
the gauzy 1940s, a barge parked  
in a neat canal, a girl going past on a bicycle.

Walls no longer hold their breath, they talk,  
flickering on each cleared-out floor, a further part  
of the looped story, while the tourist file unwinds  
to wander the dim levels.

Where I can find  
no trace of the irrepressible being whose kiss  
would crumple the walls, send ripples, sparks, connections  
down train tracks, shivery lines of canal water.

2. THE RIJKSMUSEUM: REMBRANDT SELF-PORTRAIT

She has joined us after all, dark-haired, one step  
ahead, as we shuffle past and graze with our eyes  
the curls' lit filaments, warm burrow of his gaze  
tailing us downstairs into the cooling sun.

3. SKATING RINK

Beneath the museum, a walkway, echoing arch  
of train-tunnel dimness, then unshuttered day, re-entry.  
At the edge of some acres of open grass, an eddy  
of swirling laughter and faces. I miss her glance  
again, but she'll come round again, her line  
woven freehand into those joyous orbits.

4. VAN GOGH MUSEUM

Each one a handprint, whorl of a furious decade.  
Tall, red leggings, black skirt, grey fleece jacket,  
white hair in a short ponytail, she's elegant  
and still as a stork, a witness looking in  
at apples, lemons, pears, a frothy platter  
of ochres, leafgolds airy as blown glass  
blazing and brimming its borders to spill and colour  
the flat wood frame

*sky-billowing, open wide*

a window for us to fly through, thumbed with light.

## *From Blackrock*

Here's to you, ghost, father alive or dead,  
your surname's reserved seat, your vast  
library of the unsaid;  
to your one image, slip of the past

in blurred grey and white;  
a soldier, sitting with my mother,  
your smile sleepy, hers bright  
as the ghostlight blowing your cover;

to the curse or gift you bestowed:  
abstraction, my soft spot for absences,  
cloud-watcher, sea-watcher, open to the slow  
shift of light, the waves' always present tenses;

to the given, darkening, Dublin Bay almost black  
except, nearby, where a wave splits a rock.