

So-and-So Seducing Statues

after Wallace Stevens

Her revolution was to lave the statues
With her body's love. They clambered down
Into the world of Dublin, 1962,

Those heroes who had stood there since the State
Was founded with a great display of blood.
They yawned and stretched and gazed about the street.

The girl who freed them then caught their attention.
For long years paralysed in that one stance
Upholding public values and grey skies

Suddenly they felt desire come surging back
Into their limbs. These men who had changed history
Were young again and held her in their arms.

Call this Projection A. Was she an *aísling*?
Would she inspire them to the ancient spillage
Of blood and brains across their homeland's concrete?

Now that she had them where she wanted them
She substituted erotics for heroics
And changed the story, changed it utterly.

Suppose that we call this Projection B.
These are a set of statues in themselves
Whose brassy gestures curry new belief

As much as those brass men once did before.
And who confides in sculpture, or trusts a voice
—Deploying, proposing, ordaining—

That arrogates all power to its tall I?
We say goodbye to that. Goodbye, and thanks.

The Afterlife

After I died, the roaches
all came calling to my
condo in the Elysian Fields
crying “Chawlie! Chawlie!

come out and tell us how come
you wrote the same poem
five-hundred times? Chawlie,
how much did the software cost?”

“Jeez, guys”,
I shouted from the wardrobe,
“Come in and have a beer,
& use the can if you want,

but leave this poor, dead
professor to sleep in peace”.
They wouldn’t listen, so
I called Superman.

But that grunt was too busy with his mascara
to attend to the troubles of the cosmos
or more pointedly mine.

Norm

I

The belt that will not slacken, pyjamas that untie

2

Before a live studio audience

3

Norm cooped 16,000 eggs in one omelette

4

No matter how thin you slice it it's still baloney

5

We were too deraciné ever to hook up an aerial

6

Where everybody knows your name

7

We had Rigoletto on the Bakelite

8

Piss off his wife, his _____.

9

What else is easier than it actually looks

10

Fractions of soot in the tufts of his ears

11

In ABC's *Cheers*, Norm drinks to

12

The Usual

Brinkmanship

after Ladislav Skála

I lie somewhat alone in bed
on this a mild October evening.
Outside along the street the tread
of tourists slowing and then leaving
the small square in front of the house.
On roofs and walls a golden haze.
The ebb and flow of noises dense
and low—a humming in the distance.
Everything on the brink—the floor
is tilting gently underneath me
as I breathe and the joists breathe easy.
I look down at my stand before
the sweet persuasions begin
and check just what it might be in.