

Our father has built himself...

Our father has built himself a seat by the sea
from pallets, election posters, pro-life billboards,
hammered together and freighted with stones
so that it can withstand Atlantic storms.

He boils water in the wind surfers' kitchen
for the tea he brews in a mug that reads
Dad—Simply the best!, which leads us
to believe that someone has adopted him

and that it's only a matter of time
before we stop hearing his key in the door
and he starts to treat us as strangers with whom
he can really get down to some serious talking.

Until then we will have to satisfy ourselves
with snapshots of him in this place he chose
to make his mark with a permanent structure,
where only the sea visits and the old slogans

of "Choose Life" and "Vote Republican" caption him,
where the words of encouragement he shouts
to the wind surfers are borne away by the wind
when it fills their sails and they find themselves

being carried beyond earshot and the windbreak
of the bay, so far off-shore that they can take
his seat for a landmark and steer by it,
and he in turn can take them for his sons.

Listening Test

Madame Madeleine Garin will be recalling her feelings on the morning scores of tanks arrived at the hamlet where she was living with her family in the '30s in Haute Provence.

The material will be played through three times; first, at the normal speed of a news bulletin; then in segments with pauses, then through again, the same procedure as for people taking German.

Try to establish, as soon as you can, the number of siblings she mentions and where she comes, the day of the week and the time of day. (Remember the words I gave you for "twilight". She uses one).

The question relating to the number of eggs her mother's sister brings, and the final question about injuries sustained to her spine and legs are minor by comparison with the one in two parts—

why Madeleine could be considered (i) fortunate, (which, for higher level people, is the crucial one), and (ii) in another way, unfortunate?

Though you will, undoubtedly, be hearing things

you mightn't've heard in English before, stay calm. If no one has any questions we may as well begin. The next person you will hear will be Madame Garin. All you will need is a clean sheet of paper and a pen.

Birds Flanagan's

A hearse yields to a fire engine at Bird Flanagan's roundabout where we are halted, and so in time to see the undertaker's man lift a finger from the wheel to wave the engine driver on, to see men in the back pulling on canary-yellow jackets and trousers, slipping clasps of belts together, passing out axes and helmets, to hear the red engine's throttle open, the roar of horsepower, the polished limousine slipped, by a gloved hand, into neutral.

Metre congratulates Tom French on the award of the 2002 Forward Prize for Best First Collection to his *Touching the Bones*.