

Fire-Watcher

The narrow-gauge is gone:
buckets hang from the sky
on rusted pulleys

mud tracks lead through trees
to tumbled stones,

and dog nails litter the forest floor.

I am an iron man in red skin,
I'll eat and drink this strange earth too.

Up here on the watch-tower
I search out fire among the mines,

and Rathlin looks like a girl
sleeping on a restless sea.

For men whose eyes are blind to separation,
I listen to the wind alone
far above water, plantation, Belfast skyline:

the squeal of wagons long gone to scrap.

You iron buckets,
let me ride you one last time
crashing through the dripping pine-tops

like the white horse foaming
over Ess-na-Larach

down to the disused Red Bay pier
and the history that is me.