

TWO POEMS



Caitríona O'Reilly

MICHELANGELO, THE CROUCHING BOY

They hold such broken attitudes
that once were strong enough to hold
their own in gleaming city-states:
now the marble flows in them
like burst mercury, making them fragments
of a dance to ring the room;
damaged patriarchs and footloose caryatids.

Only a waist-high boy, the centrepiece,
gives nothing of himself away.
His shoulders, knees and uncreated hands
compose a vessel of shadows, from which
he'll grow to be himself again
and so endure, if never quite become:
stone boy contemplating stone.

PERDITA

I cannot feel found.
I filled your absence in me
with all the wrong things, father,
fardels, odd bits, knick-knacks,
waves in tendrils and trees like lobster-claws
and howling. Being chased.
There's a mesh of dark inside my head,
behind the face
purely my mother's—
like air shelled in light, a purple bubble,
the thin skin over a scream.