

*Landscape with Teeth*

Cattle dusk-sculpted on a plinth of skyline.  
 Breast of a chaffinch a watered strawberry.  
 Inishturk a whale-shape on the glazed sea

Bog, clod, soggy, sod, plod. Nimbus  
 of light over boggy pasture; couchgrass  
 in flattened mats; blunt push of mushrooms

through loamy hush. Nests, passage graves,  
 crosses. Steam-clouds out of the cows'  
 rosy mouths. Soft furnaces of their body-bulk.

Three girls moving through a rainmist  
 under a huge blue umbrella, waiting for Monet  
 to paint them as they are on the headland:

grey swell of sea, horizon a pale lapis, sky  
 chequered with cloud, a pointillist silvering  
 shiver of rain. Their poppy-coloured laugh.

Indoors, a window ledge of books, that umber  
 Italian vase of meadowsweet and loosestrife,  
 a spray of fuchsia against the verdigris

and plumbblue bulges of Tully Mountain.  
 In the foreground one rusted sickle, a single  
 blip of sunlight setting fire to the tip.

But where do the real dreams come from  
 in their primary colours, with their small teeth  
 sharpened and their warm wet tongue?

## *Ghost Ship*

*after Dorothy Cross*

Three nights running I have been to see it,  
anchored in the winter harbour, waiting,  
disappearing into the dark and reappearing.

Tonight I want to be ferried out to it,  
to press my palms against its water lines  
and touch its sides before I go aboard.

I want to go below to the immaculate galley  
to undo the catches on its pristine cupboards,  
and slip into the private sleeping quarters

to touch the tucked neat berths of the dead,  
their metal lockers filled with personal effects,  
their snapshots of the living, our locks of hair,

and be rowed back home before first light  
with nothing to show for the night at sea  
or a word to say for myself, except the feel of it

persisting beneath me, and the tips of my fingers  
glowing in the darkness when I hold them up,  
where I touched it, where it won't wash off.