

# Layers

## The Usual Drive Home

Now and then, when turning  
into our street, the car  
swerves like a dog caught on unseen ice.  
The smell of petrol hovers, lingering  
in the shadow-blue of the pavement.  
An echo of  
something you somehow can't  
accept.

Those times  
not quite awake but  
taking on the motions  
of life: playing, replaying - trying  
to remember the truth.

It prompts you to  
take the scenic route  
aimlessly exploring the lanes  
searching for freedom  
but failing to find it.  
Instead,  
the road  
demands  
descent.

**The Machair \***

Lumpy grassland surrounds  
me, enclosing each way  
I turn. There is no escape.  
A world of wildflowers –  
the machair. For the first time  
in years

I walk through deep puddles  
and marshes indifferent to  
wet socks, my boots slipping  
on mud. The grasses wave, bowing  
in unison to an unseen god.

Roofs of the village; walls of white  
topped with grey slate.  
Houses crouch  
like toads squatting, watching.  
This single-track road where I now stand

hemmed in by the fence. Wooden posts  
tacked with wire keep invisible  
sheep inside. Telegraph poles  
connect the silent homes,  
the only scent:  
peat smoke.

\*machair = fertile low-lying grassy plain found on part of northwest coastlines of Ireland and Scotland, in particular the Outer Hebrides.

### **Snow Covers the Walled Garden**

The walled garden shimmers  
with the silence of snow  
swept along by the hawthorn  
whose sharp claws hang in  
pinpoints like brown needles.  
Dogwood reaches skyward; its  
spindly threads of bronze  
a bouquet of crimson  
vertical and stiffened:  
sculptured thin copper wire.  
One tree with a glimmer of berry –  
a perfect sphere of glass, like  
crimson bulbs flickering in the shadows.  
Now the crisp scent of frost  
lingers in the air and  
holly grasps with gloss of green  
upon the garden chair.  
Snow falls once again  
engulfing the hawthorn –  
a canvas for a picture unborn.

## Meeting You

The click-clack of heeled boots on  
slick, wet pavement, stride towards  
the glowing lights where you wait.

Rugged blocks of gneiss\* loosen  
within me - rocks wrecked  
on a shore. The waves  
trying to claim me and pull me  
back into the silent  
abyss.

Then  
I see you there – I see you through  
the misted window:  
A statue of hope.

In that moment - I could have  
turned and  
walked away. The memory of the last one  
etched, branded - on my skin,  
on my soul.

You turned, smiling  
when you looked out. Yet,  
I knew I was still  
Invisible in the darkness of  
the outside.

\*gneiss = a metamorphic rock with a banded or foliated structure