

Moore's Road

by Eoin Devereux

Three narrow chimney stacks
 Watched over Moore's Road
 The smallest of them
 Stunted, you said
 Because it started smoking,
 When it was young.

During a lunchtime swim
 A migrant salmon was caught
 By putting salt on its tail
 In the dusty world of the fitting shop
 Pheasants, rabbits, cooking apples
 Were often exchanged.

In Cooper Hill one foggy November Saturday,
 We climbed heaven-wards
 Into the steeple-high crane
 Anchored, on a pontoon
 It dredged grey mud
 From the river's edge
 For the making of Portland Cement
 The trick to climbing, you said
 Is to never look down.

Some years later
 When the Danish Bosses were long gone
 The factory offered a quarter of an acre
 To loyal workers
 For a token penny a year
 To find the place
 You entered through a gap
 In the bramble ditch on Moore's Road

Where endless potato drills were dug
 And weeded by our calloused townie hands

The secret to this, you said
 Is to work at a steady pace.

It was a strange place to be
 At the age of fifteen
 Caught between almost forgotten rural roots
 And the guff of punk bravado
 'Ashes to Ashes'
 Brought me to a different place
 Via the Pye transistor radio
 While stooped over mounds of wet
 late August mud
 Hand-picking potatoes

'He's a quare hawk', you said
 - Bowie - the Scary British Queen.

The allotments lasted only a few years
 They were ploughed over
 To make way for other kinds of plots
 A new cemetery
 To bury the expanding city's dead

And when the time came
 For you to finally leave the factory gates
 Not once did you look over your broad
 shoulders

The knack to surviving, you said
 Is to never look back.