

kitty bredin

by desmond o'grady

Both aware of it
we put no words
nor rash act on it.

Especially you —
part of my straight start
in Arthur's sitting room with blue

wallpaper and stuffed birds
on the table in their flower
glass bower

size of a high hat.
Haughty as a model gilly, flat
witted as a wrinkle, I tried to stuff

light into each feathered eye,
flowers into each winged fly -
bitten blossom while

you looked on from behind
your chewed, cocked fag-holder —
clouty in brown tweed. Older,

knowing Father
before Mother, you saw
me as a grown-up, a glass dobber

More than any other
you watched my growth, like a tumour,
whorl its bole. Later —

over that one —
we killed our time drinking Eamon
Gleeson's black pints. No change! I

think one fight in all
we've had between us —
and that a natural need for crisis.

Otherwise fastidiously
wherewithals, we side
off lefty lefty.

Since then — whether the far
side of thin whistles and banjos,
the time spent watching what goes;

or the image at alien airports waiting,
waiting at bars nor a brass farthing
to drink your name;

or sleeping it off
on the bench of some station
and never a train getting in —

it's all the same fierce fire
for the pair of us
banked down in our common ash;

the same old raw
wound won't knit
and both of us surviving it.

You well see — beyond the mouth
of it, as from the other
side of our mad minds' mirror,

under the skin and the rogue
ninny nights in Gillogue —
the dark serpentine

thing, like a poisoned vein,
heading straight for the target area.
You've got its measure.

We're all from the same scrapiron shop,
and it's a regular downhill run
to the final, full, stop.