
You know you are in Limerick
Because the women walk straight
with crusading long thighs...
And besides
The name that stopped the train
said: Limerick.

Moreover
The tall man hunched by the fading shoe-shop
Stopped and stooped when you said:
'I did it, sir swam the channel like I said I would.'
'Did it - good gracious?'
'Yes, sir an' my photo's in the 'paper an all sir'
Around him atoms of dust-time haloed the sun
Beside him the houses are-gone
And behind him The Shannon gleamed, like
the last spent fish in a river bed
(as you always imagined it would)
And as he moved, he said:
'I must go in and get my shoes'
So you must be in Limerick

And you must be in Limerick
Because at the Railway Cavern in Dublin
With the train sighing to pull-out
A crow perched on a black bag of rubbish
And you thought of the Limerick gossips
Pecking the eyes of other people's lives
So you must be in Limerick now, 'cos
the woman in the shop across the way
From where you grew up
Has flecks of black plastic on her tongue
And eys like holes in a watery ditch

The young girls in the street
Have a curve on their faces that remind you
Of the chaps you went to school with
And you know that if you stopped one, to brush
the back of your hand on the curve of her face
To feel your own past, incarnate
She would not crush you to her wheaten cheek
Say: 'Touch, touch me, friend of my father...'
Rather
Do you fear to be arrested and beaten meek
By stout Confraternity Men
Which means you could well be-or unwell be-
in Limerick

Or maybe
You are not in Limerick at all, at all
For that tall thing in the park
is smaller now, than when you were a boy
(Its top careered against the sky)
So why try to work out
If the stout gate-keeper is any rotounder
Than the stumpy trees you were chased from
Sulphur, Saltpetre and charcoal burning
Leaves in the dark insides of trees
(That's all that bombs were made for, then.)
That hollowed-out man in the cardboard suit
Prods a stick at your primal past
And chants as he moves like a clockwork man
'Hallo Micheal, Hiya Anne'
Jangling the chain from the drinking fountain
Michael Mary Annie and John
Hobby-horse names in a merry can-can
Jingle the benches in the People's Park
Setting you dizzy as you try to remember
Who played with you around that stone God's finger
And chased your laughter through the long-grass alter
All that monument time ago
In wherc—whcn—how?
In Limerick?

