

Michelle O'Sullivan

**THE FLOWER  
AND THE  
FROZEN SEA**



Gallery Books

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*for Evelyn and Hugh*

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*Looked at once, it's a furrow.  
Looked at twice, it's a grave.*

## *Partial*

Waking, not to you  
but the wind shaking summer  
through the trees, pink shadows  
gold through the green.

And these blackbirds, dissatisfied,  
looking for fruit, flock  
and dip their dew-wet beaks —  
there is no sad singing.

One curtain is pulled aside,  
the other is still drawn.  
For the time being  
this is the light we're living by.

## *The Dwelling*

A motley crew, this silent stand of ash trees.  
And an innocent sky that calls to mind Leonardo  
running up a mountain to see how it could be so blue.  
What this bright air won't give — having worked the stars  
all night, a dredge-man emerging from amongst the dead;  
look closer at the stone-set walls, they might have been  
etched with diamonds.

The fox you didn't look for, a burst of sun-stare  
when you glance up, is a split second too slow:  
a concentration of red that's punctured, it darts  
discovered through the fields.  
This is home. Up close or arm's length, a sizeable  
fist that draws from something old to make the new.  
You cannot walk the land here, you must swim.

## *The Longing*

The single thing  
I try to harden  
is indifferent  
to my efforts.

An earth, in mini-  
ature, doing what  
it does with orbit;  
hill colours, reds,

unwired light  
that wants no quarrel.  
Acute and so aware —  
the faintest muff

of an echo  
and it echoes back,  
iron-silent as it goes  
about its work.

*From Moyview*

Shadows graze the small island  
and the shy heads of horses  
bending into the grassy slope;  
browns perforated by browns  
and a loose camouflage  
of oystershell and stone.

Horse and shadow move  
the way wind and lightfall  
come together and spill apart;  
these hills are solitary, ink-flushed:  
the sky's sheet ruddy with thumb-  
prints of blood-orange and edelweiss.



Sun-flames crumble the laneway,  
cinder-grey ochres swift  
and swarm and easily die out.

The river is stilled, careful to cast  
no shadow; mooncalm and soundless  
as underwater stone.



The stream is almost  
hidden by wood; wind-tattered  
pages of a book.

And in its sorrow  
it sheds its tears.  
Night is an old song.



The fire in Scurmore blows sideways.  
Splintered by rain, fistfuls of blue  
alight to lapse midair, unsudden  
cloudbanks obscure the moon,  
it's star-hazed and damp as smoke.

The gentle herd of beasts  
that were here an hour ago  
has moved cautiously to the river's bank.  
I sense their quiet  
beyond the fire that teems  
and move to drink where they drink.



December fields skirl seeds,  
pewter and glass kinds. Frost tips  
the mountain's cap and foot.

Days pass without a single trace  
of blue; there are salmon dreaming  
deep beneath the Moy.