

Eamon Grennan

# THERE NOW



Gallery Books

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*for my friends in Renvyle*

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*'An hour  
soul-eclipsed. The next, an autumn light.'*  
— Paul Celan, 'All Souls'

*'They had happened into my dimension  
The moment I was arriving just there.'*  
— Ted Hughes, 'Roe-deer'

## *Listen*

When the one cow eyeing you with its sniper's spectral gaze  
hears louder than the Angelus bell the big *bó*-bawl  
of another cow down near the lake she ups her massy head  
wide-opens a cavernous mouth and bawls back  
and for a few huge cow-minutes these two antiphonal plain-  
chanters  
conduct a world-obliterating duet: a duologue affirming  
with each enormous diphthong their earthly unassailable  
real presence — their fully inhabited overflowing  
moment —  
and then it's night and only the small sky-high cry of one  
nightbird over lake-glimmer breaks the silence with its  
little lamenting whistle-cry repeating and repeating itself  
into vacancy and the mute eyelessness of space and there's  
nothing  
beyond that naked *nachtmusik* in the dead silent wide-shining  
fields  
of furze and rushes and bramble bushes of ever-thickening  
black.

## *Fresh Start*

Imagine you walk outdoors in a dream  
to discover all the old stone walls  
surrounding the cottage garden  
cleared of briars grass hedges — so stones  
drawn out of earth and carried and laid down  
to compose an enclosure or a meering fence  
are shining as if just now created  
and the whole place figuring a fresh start  
with fuchsia leaves and leaves of young ash  
and sycamore and mountain ash  
all just now come to life  
and sensing first a stir of air  
then suddenly shivering in the near-  
warm arms of the first felt breeze.

## *Oystercatchers in Flight*

Sea's stony greenblue shatters to white  
in a running swell under noonsky of cloudlight  
where on a foamed-over cropping of rock  
a band of oystercatchers faces all one way  
into a nor'wester so shafts of windlight  
ignite each orange beak in this abiding  
tribe of black till you clap and their risen black  
turns white as they veronica on wind and  
then away with them (shrill-pitched as frightened  
plovers only harsher more excited)  
and riding the stiff wind like eager lovers straining  
into its every last whim: its pulsing steady  
heart-push in every flesh-startling open-eyed  
long-extended deepening sea-breath.

## *Wormwork*

When a century of wriggling Lazarites  
    slick as slates after rain  
that were not dead but sleeping  
    in the muck they'd contrived  
over three seasons in the pitch-  
    dark recesses of timber planks  
stacked by the back door  
    felt (as you hauled the damp wood  
free of wall and wet) the sudden  
    riddling scald of light and lethal  
heat of it — was it any wonder they  
    and the grey tribe of woodlice  
(like bewildered villagers dispossessed  
    by civil war) headed for grass and  
the shelter of hedges or any friendly  
    accommodating shade where their  
nerves (they being all nerve) could  
    settle again in that mulched silence  
and resume like instruments of resurrection  
    their blind reiterated patient  
ever-turning earth-aerating lives?

## *Flower*

I'm thinking of those North African flowers  
    called *Belles de Nuit*: moonlight-loving  
rouge-magenta blooms the book says  
    are plants of sadness (*Herbes Tristes*)  
and elsewhere *Four O'Clock* or *Marvels*  
    of *Peru*: mouth-open harvesters  
of scents till dawn and then deep sleepers  
    in their richly petalled beds of shut-light  
all day long invisible among their  
    leaves dusk-coloured . . . pretending  
to be not there at all yet each concocting  
    inside its own night-luminescence  
simples to settle ills and cool fevers.