

Frank McGuinness

DULSE



Gallery Books

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in memory of Joan O'Hara

Blackrock Park

The swans have deserted.
They leave the pond for Tír-na-nÓg.
But age fetters them.
They eat their young.
Their feathers are red
ice cream, their wings hems.

When their young are eaten,
then they marry well.
They disperse, pure heathens
who feed on gems.
Born under the sign of the ram,
what tales have they to tell,
breathing through the lace of stays,
breathing through the skin of shark?

Lose your way through this maze
you wake and walk in Blackrock Park.

Beget that book in the Bible
where swans kiss and tell.

Emmaus

for Paul Bates

I believe in the disappearing act.
The breathing of stones — the stealth that is bread —
the resurrection of wine: Emmaus.

I believe in supping with Somalis —
Vikings playing ivory chess — a shy
electric guitar singing Beatles songs.

I believe second love is possible —
love ordering itself in restaurants,
love red as Mexico, as Emmaus.

I believe a diver connects ocean
to firmament in Winchester Cathedral —
the saving grace, the abiding rainbow.

I believe in not weeping when tears drown
the North Sea, the Baltic; every sea
separates self and soul from my love.

I believe the act of disappearing
may involve the breathing of stone, of bread.
My heart is that broken bread, broken stone.

Samurai

The railway line
a feast of ghosts,
Pound Lane Bridge their shell.

I carry milk
in a silver can
and make my bets.

The world will be spared,
Hiroshima won't happen,
if I reach home.

I meet Buncrana samurai —
who put that weapon
into their hard mitts?

Why are they flaying
a hunting gun
they raise and point

to take the eye out
of an electric light,
spilling yellow seed?

Shiny with milk,
my white hands smell
as Eros bleeds.

I cross the bridge.

The Sugar Daddy

Years before she was invented
my rich widow chewed toffee
cracking the brown slabs
into a strange confection —
her husband's broken promise
never to remarry.

How sour it would all turn,
sour as marsh water
hiding her disappeared,
our phantom son
by this errant master —
child that never was.

Wading through his grave
up to her strong oxsters
the mare of Flanders wept
tears of sticky substance
which her sugar daddy
lavished on his hounds.