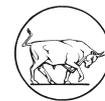


Medbh McGuckian

**THE CURRACH  
REQUIRES  
NO HARBOURS**



Gallery Books

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## Contents

Catherine's Blue	page 11
Galilee Porch	12
Colmo: Virgin of the Snow	13
St Gobnait Standing on a Beehive	14
Attention to Seasonality	15
Mappa Mundi	16
To Compress her Two Childhoods	18
Bleu de Paris	19
Eating Christmas	20
Consecrated Wafer	21
Angel of the Countenance	23
A Book of Rains	24
Wood-cunning	25
Kaddish	26
House without Eyebrows	27
Ironer with Backlight	28
Bright Star, I Say that Thou art Dust	29
The Good Wife Taught her Daughter	31
The Violet Maker	33
The Wrens of the Curragh	34
Page from the Nest-book	35
Thorn Piece	37
La Rosa de Santa Rosa	38
February House	39
My Must	40
Angelia	41
Rebecca-at-the-well Teapot	42
A Sovereign Medicine for the Greensickness	43
Anne Glyd, her Book, 1656	44
My Sister's Way to Make Mead	47
The Gorgon as Mistress of the Animals	48
The Footplate	50
Holy Saturday Judas	51
She Thinks She Sees Clarissa	53
Three-legged Angel	55

The Dependent Nature of Linen 56  
Mediaeval Scriptorium 58  
Orant Figure 60  
Landscape: Noon 62  
Florilegium 63  
Angel of the Bay 65  
The Currach Requires No Harbours 66  
Lemon with White Jug 67  
The Melusine 68  
Speed, Light and Woman 69  
Soul Candles 70  
Woman Forming the Handle of a Cane 71  
Regaining Control of the Night 72  
  
*Acknowledgements* 74

*for Sinéad and Leontia*

## *Galilee Porch*

The blind eye and the dazzled eye  
and the winged eye, a triplet of lights  
spell out three yellows, each with its own  
riddlesome price, in the twist of the day stair.

And, more distant miracles, a dense crowd  
of golden caterpillars with human faces  
has settled on a meadow supposed in Florence:  
spirits of stars blown out to sea

for fifteen nights at a time. She had rented  
a garden in which to paint the arduous seasons,  
looking beneath her, a sharp earthquake  
whose coasts had often been touched.

He crossed his wrists like a man with handcuffs on,  
or a raging crucifix, imagining her the deceived  
and barren, picturesque believer, one  
of those saints that have the gift of dreaming right.

## *Colmo: Virgin of the Snow*

As the year begins in Florence  
the stars north of the equator that never set  
push dying spacecraft further out  
like thinner back leaves.

The white roses do nothing to rescue it,  
becoming lowered eye, ivory ear,  
raised lips, then flowers again,  
the cooler white of a silk.

Only the two big clouds were planned  
so that both saints can stand,  
important, inner saints, aristocratic,  
and expensively dressed,

gold over powdered-shell gold,  
in the most protected part of the room.  
Given that some wood would  
have been lost, the wings of both angels

would have hung straighter.  
The edge of the inside wing  
of the more damaged angel  
must once have equalled the usual blue

shadow meandering across the lap  
of the other seated angel.  
The highlight on the 'M'  
confirms the presence of silver,

but a sixth nail is missing  
in the gap between her head and its element:  
the closeness of the nails to each other  
is like snowflakes.

## *A Book of Rains*

Sheer weather, weather that can be felt  
with the eyes, as snow-cover,  
selling spring, the first climax  
of the year.

Bending, turning, standing,  
walking with closed eyes,  
the pendent half-moon  
pupil in her eye

composes a path  
that does not stop unless  
forever, patches of her  
knowledge blasted away.

Where one would expect  
added red, or a hat  
of darkness, the line is traced  
in the trajectory of the blow

that was dealt. Having nothing  
at its disposal  
to not yield  
to the provocation,

the time of dying  
cannot give itself  
the other shore,  
the future that death gives

is not yet time,  
when his forsakenness  
draws near, under the force  
of the lips of the blow received.

## *Wood-cunning*

Only your eye, your silver eye,  
seems to have no sex, its deep look  
of dreamy greeting, the sense  
of a small bouquet  
in its weaker folds.

Your lips, a glass book,  
smell of the glass  
and beautiful women rest  
their weight in silver and gold  
on your acute youth.

The paths of your voice,  
plentiful and warm,  
make love a second begetting  
on a hill near the court, silver-footed  
as your preference for unrest.

But the vellum is so buckled  
in the apple of your throat,  
if your lips were to expire  
in a tight, dark strap  
tomorrow night,

the echo of having known you,  
chieftain-to-be and amateur poet,  
would travel together with every  
legal and official kissing  
like a spear barely missing a plait of hair.