

Seán Lysaght

**THE MOUTH
OF A RIVER**



Gallery Books

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The New Rucksack

Wouldn't you think he'd relax at home
and not be bothering us with his excitement,
said the stones.

I can keep an eye on the pool
above the footbridge,
said the big block of quartz.

I can keep a secret,
said the rowan.
The grey crow comes to me in the evening.

As my word is my bond,
said the stonechat,
we'll be up there in the myrtle gossiping away.

I can see him from up here.
He's on his way again,
said the lark.

Wait till you see the new rucksack!
said willy wag in the car park.
He shouldered it like a priest
getting ready for Mass.

Lazy Beds

You come to deny the day I held you
as you cried with hunger.

Those Yankees you worked for
couldn't have coped with such grief,

not like me who has a use
for your ghost on its pallet of oat straw.

Even the wind
through the empty window

can't blow without these words.
And it's your starved ribs I need

to figure out those ridges
as you lie there in your longing,

as you arch in the spasm of love
when the eldest son enters.

Merlin at Tarsaghaunmore

This is where the wizard lives,
still being realized
to cleave a range over the heatherings of a morning,
a surprise out of the mist.
This is where the horizon keeps an old nimble jack
away from the chattering city,
so no one can repute him to a bad end,
and no industry can exile him any farther.

He needs nothing more than the posts
he nominates with his feet,
this wire, this river bank,
this facing of stones to accommodate his desert eye,
and these two foxholes on the far side,
the stops of a flute he plays
when he lifts the glittering river.

But could you find him if you looked?
There has to be another god to upstage,
a different day that starts with maps,
and just as you stop for a eucharist of sandwiches
suddenly Pipit, the redeemer, is gone —
and there he is, with the mountain on his shoulders!
He's carrying the valley's only song!

Casadh na Leice

Bend at the rock wall.
The widening eye of the moor,

its lid lifted
by the tail of a salmon.

Brave water horse of heroes
attempting to storm the poachers' town.

Death-lane that opens after rain
(the only way in)

and shuts again in dry weather —
cutting off the escape.

Waiting room of dark water
with the eggs of the ice age,

the bright body cloaked
in clouds and turf smoke.

A furious modesty
kicks in the rape of the net.

A stone axe to hand
finally strikes, and denies it.