Poetry Series

Bernard Kennedy

- 92 poems -

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Works:

Context Reality Poems.1988.
Leaves of Autumn: Poems (1998)
The Poet's Tower & Love Poems. (2000)
Berlin, Berlin, (2001)
online at www.mourne.net (guest poet)

a Christmas Beechwood

Over to the right,
through the wood oak doors,
the crib is set,
star, shepherds and wise
men who read the sky,
like a parchment of scripture.
Like lanterns the stained glass
looks on, another story told.
And gathered are the faithful,
Adeste, hats and brogues, ready new,
crisp sky and waiting-
the baby placed in crib,
the dramathurgy of church,
and mass begins and Christ
has come to Beechwood,
between baptistry and mortuary.

We gather from afar,
on camels of faith, drawn from
Brooklyn, Boston, Tralee,
home for Christmas-
and the crib is saying-
there is else,
and now, once more,
we have touched base
beneath centenary steeple
at Beechwood.

Bernard Kennedy

A Dawn Chorus

It starts now, at half past five,
a note, repeated, by chance its heard
out of silence of the mornings hollow
place of night drawn back,
purposeful, pensive, and passion
like a gentle trumpet,
anti-reveille.
just a soundnote, as if
the day is pushing back the nightime
duvet of sleeps slumbers silence.

Awake the dawn, repeating, yesterdays fugue
and dream awake. A summons from tree height,
belfry of arbor.
Come alive, come alive and awake
the dreamtime, timed, and
the gentle warming up,
natures conductor from the silence
begins to tempo the music of the
listener,
in the echo of last night new days dawn,
as if, a soundlike
aurora borealis.

Bernard Kennedy

A Green Meadow

Easter brings up for me that old
medieval hymn about
'now the green blade riseth,
out of the buried grain'.
And because its raining,
in Dublin, on this
Easter Day the grass continues green.
I noticed after a holiday in Crete,
amid the dry and parched land,
and reading Kazantzakis,
how green the fields were
as the plane circled over Lambay,
descending towards these green fields.

My father believed that bedroom walls
should have a green tint, if not all green
colored walls. It rested the eyes.
He like Spinoza was tired, I guess,
of grinding, as an Optician, the needed lens,
or reading prescriptions as a Chemist.
He needed green. Not as a green horn,
or green about the ears, or neophyte,
but on the eyes and what it did,
rested.
And meadows were play stations,
to roll in and laughter thrill the air,
below, in the green meadow, in the summers
evening, when heated from ball games,
naked swam in the river at that
greened meadows edge.

'out of the buried grain,
now the green blade riseth'.

Bernard Kennedy

A penchant for dreams

When he left the garden with his feminine
guide, from his rib, Adam tried his penchant
for dreams. Into the world from the forest,
past the clearing, that overlooks the city.
And dwelling there he dreamed of that garden,
from the city built from his dream,
awaiting the dream, no longer just manifest
but manifesto, a dream of longing. A clash
of dreams by comparison, a fancy filled wish.
Both of expectation, and waiting, but of yesteryear-
a dream interpretation.
The golden calf made promise but drained the energy,
to dream, and its wasteland product showed how hollow,
that was.
And Homer, his sea journey, no different from that
garden, through the clearing, in search for more,
was like the rainbows pot of gold, but a statuette calf.
And when he voted his dream arose again, but yet a dream,
and when its expression became fact the dream realized
that search was just that,
a search, the journey, the ever relentless desire,
the dream, awaiting latent content.

Desire, the spring coil of man,
purveyor of the golden search,
needing Ariadnes' thread,
first for Theseus but then Dionsyus,
through desires labyrinth,
caught in the dream in the maze.
Or like Sisyphus, climbing,
his Croagh Patrick.
Man the purveyor of this search,
with a penchant for dreams.
And only desire is the ball of wool
that threads the dream to satisfaction.

Bernard Kennedy

a sermon from the Altar

Does God frighten us as we gather
and wait on his word with faces sad and
expecting of sadness?
as we wait, Ite Missa est,
straight for the door,
as if a fire, of the Spirit
will transform us, too quick,
and not allow a
quickening. Fear and Trembling,
as we solely listen,
in nervous expectation.
Our religion is individual,
our prayers alone though gathered
in a building, of stone ruggedly standing
on our
mountainside,
quick to the door.
Our prayer
'keep us not to long O Lord'.
yet he answers
psalm wise,

'I waited, and waited on the Lord,
and he answered, he stooped down'.

he waited three days,
and at the right time is holy intervention,

'rush not away o Lord despite our holy speed,
do not be feared'.

Bernard Kennedy

A Sunday Poem

The church attendance slightly down,
the rugby match has drawn the crowd,
my walk in Herbert Park is done.
The papers need some reading,
surely all these magazines are passe?
 out suitable sections-
the green bin fills,
and from cafe shop on Morehampton
Road the bolognaise with spaghetti,
the ice cream tub, the biscuit,
and kitchen table Sunday lunch,
 settling down to snooze,
the papers in a pile beside the chair,
the garden can't be done today,
its sunday- a day of rest,
no servile work.
then twitter beeps best wishes
to leinster from an aussie.

Bernard Kennedy

A Winter Rose

The East wind chill had given sign,
the bright lucid sky had illustrated
that a change in landscape might occur.
And early morning, just at five,
I peered through curtains
sensing, with chill, a brightness
in the garden.
A whitened garden.
All a blanket of soft early snow,
untouched except for footsteps
of the urban fox,
as if prints in desert.
The bird bath frozen,
now a skating rink for thrush,
and sparrow,
at home the Robin.
The church tower,
a backdrop for film set or seasons
greetings?

Cleaning the inner pane
for better vantage point
I saw the rose shrub, once in
royal fullness
in summer flush,
then bright blue sky,
now, under moon,
still, that garden rose,
stands, red and imperial
In the early morning.
first winter snow, undisturbed.
a rose significant in its poise.

Bernard Kennedy

ambition

The trouble with the greasy pole is this,
its slippage demands, you stand,
on someone elses shoulder,
for balance,
and tightly must you hold
the ankles above and maybe the shoes.
The one above too does the same.
The position is precarious,
should slippage come, and grip
slip,
and then like Icarus
you slide.

The pole is not so good,
it is a greasy pole.

Bernard Kennedy

American Haiku

West 47 at morn
times square lit up with smiles
cop handcuff for pose

Bernard Kennedy

Another hymn to Christ

I watch the sweep towards Benbulbin,
from Ladies Brae,
of sheep hill, and cattle fold,
I listen to the wind that
at night can winter howl,
and summer can carpet, like a
bride and groom wedding view.

The climbers towards the hill,
the young trainee searching monks,
towards Horeb look,
that sweeps down towards
Drumcliffe.

For then I lift up,
mine eyes have seen,
hope and beauty,
faith and ballast,
and what I look towards now,
and forevermore,
can be Christ on water.

Advent waited to mature,
as waiting does,
like wine at Cana,
between sinner and saint,
and Mary's look of love,
and Christ waits on
the still soul.
Qui fecit caoelem et terrem.

Bernard Kennedy

Antigone: la lecon de Charcot

Cry out once more,
 Antigone cry out,
until the sentence is lifted,
the sentence that keeps the feminine,
in chains, subdued, unequal.
As you cross the sea cry out
for freedom, cry out for your
brother, Polynices, the unburied,
 held aloft, a wound needing
attention. It is Freud,
who speaks, 'the repressed
will always return'
Creon, imprisoned too, in a view,
a poultice of prudence
and its regrets.
 Be blind to him,
his advice, on continents,
where equality is left to rot,
cry out, it is your being,
of justice,
and where ever inequality
is prudent, tradition,
'what we have always done' cry out.
for fashion is the freshness of style,
and freshness grows, and calls,
'cry out'.
Your cry it makes us free.
Le theatre hysterique
La lecon de Charcot

Bernard Kennedy

as the frost lifts

the frost is lifting,
so crunching boot ground sounds
soften in the spring,
though fugue like
the air is a cold rhapsody
in dublin south morning.

Hope does not spring,
merely uncoils itself
warmed into joy.
yes, nature is never spent
except
where economic matters
cull the reservoir.

Bernard Kennedy

Autumn end

The hawthorn, and the Rowan berries
 are full on winter arms,
like summers vine, with color wine
to feed and cheer the cold gathering
of Autumn end.

Leaves, a whitened pallor,
others faded blush, wilt,
 in early evening shades.

The roots are resting,
the moon early to work,
the berries full of food
for birds and color hope
into the earthy hedged fields,
and slumbered garden,
gives a lustred glowing light,
the door to winters cave
lit up.

And nature sleeps,
beneath a winter colored duvet.
Simply ours to wait and see
from Autumns End the light.

Bernard Kennedy

Beechwood Centenary Steeple

As the tram lifts over Charlemont
going south, it comes to view.
The centenary steeple of Beechwood
church and gathering place,
of those who are looking.

Remaining to your left
it comes and goes into view
awaiting, and waiting,
that desire to see.

and within, windows bring into view
another scene, it too
in the distance,
and like the view from
Charlemont, it beckons,

and if the gentle bell rings within,
and mass begins,
with chasuble, book and candles,
another view is illustrated,
another illumination,

sursum corda,
habemus dominum.
dominum, non sum dignus,
we await.

Bernard Kennedy

Birthday Poem

I remember a young boy once envious
 cried out, on seeing his sisters
 birthday card,
'there's only one number on mine'.
A day we celebrate a life given.
When mother delivered and father
lit a cigar.
Like a fresh new morning,
words like future, write the page,
the world is my oyster.
And later, the birthday numbers double,
the doctor visits treble,
the gait, no longer running
up the rugby field, to score that
elusive try, slows down,
and reaction is paused, by caution,
like stepping on scree,
 at Croagh Patrick
the concentration, now
more focus, than canvas,
and poetry more haiku
 than romantic verse.
 And dreams are for sleeping.
A day- a birthday- recall.

birthday is to be,
and future is the waiting.
A happy birthday.

Bernard Kennedy

Brigit of Kildare

What does a woman want?
That was the question, like,
to be or not to be.
From where and quo vadis?
Feminine and masculine are
the given dispositions of definition.
Brigit, the doorway and candles,
and light, and sunrise and
the heart. These are your
tools while the masculine
will build.
The hedge, your boundary of
sanity and hermitage.
Spiritual heritage, and intuition.
What does the woman want?

Hildegard of Bingen,
pray for us.
Mechtilde of Magdeburg,
pray for us.
Julian of Norwich,
pray for us.
Hadwijch D'Anvers,
pray for us.
Brigid of Kildare,
pray for us.

Bernard Kennedy

Buttercup

Summer is brought
through this lemon zest
of colour-
reflected under the chin,
means, that you like
a flavour.
And in the meadows
of childhood,
and Laughter's happiness,
caught between
the embrace of trees,
at Glendalough,
we sit together.
Like buttercups
In the meadow of laughter,
A reflection upon my chin,
and smile and
laughter,
like a buttercup in
The summer meadow,
Your happiness,
reflects and refracts.

Bernard Kennedy

Canary with Cat

The Canary, yellow and small,
sang on the sill looking in,
through the window.
The Cat, looking up from the lawn,
manicured, both,
licked its whiskers,
and moved, slowly.

And then, upwards,
as if a boeing in
takeoff, the cat
towards the song,
from the lawn.

The bird saw the shadow
and moved higher to the treetop.
The cat, against the pane
was stunned
back to the manicured lawn.

From a higher top
the song still sang.

Bernard Kennedy

Christmas

A glimmer slowly seen,
and then, hope burned,
in the cold cavern.
and knowing slowly caught.

This is Christmas,
light and dark,
and darkness dims
and natures canvas
paints, the inner meaning,
born in a cave.
The first etch of redemption.

Bernard Kennedy

Christmas Eve

Simply to wait,
the shopping rush is done,
the parcels placed and Santa texted,
the tree lit up,
with baubles blue and red,
the icy path like stars
glisten towards the steepled
church.

The children to bed,
and Santa en route,
jingle all the way,
and, and
Jesus, in the crib
throughout the world,
in shopping centre windows,
malls and church.

He brings excitement of another
way to love, of
giving forgiving,
a touchstone,
glistening like a crystal,
to act as conduit,
of colors of our heart,
Our future comes
the wait in love,
J' est un autre.

Bernard Kennedy

Christmas Light

at the darkest, deadest, depressed
nature's hour,
holiness yeasted a light,
a glimmer, slowly seen,
and then hope burned,
and knowing slowly caught.

This is Christmas, light and dark,
and natures' canvas dims,
paints the inner meaning,
born in a cave.
The first etch of Redemtion.

Bernard Kennedy

Church in evening May

The evening comes down lately in May,
the church bell from the tower rings,
the train rattles through the lanes
of Dublin housing hedgerows.
The grounds are tidy, flagpoles white,
the fuschia flowers again,
the priestly Sunday job is done
this eremitical seal.

The morning bell like lauds again,
awake the slumbering souls.
And sainters for the triduum comes
the routine rush staccato
like,
of novena repetition.

The graveside down the road is full,
the coffins bakers dozen,
the wedding bells are ringing out,
the child his chrism head
is done,
and villagers are
 shriven.

Many the parson, manse and bell
is quiet in this age.
The footballers from College school
kick up against the wall, the ball,
in modern meditation.

The Beechwood Bell rings now again
since soldiers fell at Somme,
post office burned, and shots
were heard, just down the local road.

Centenary, look back, that time,
though customs change,
the bell is ringing onward.
For faith and faithless plod,
and ruminate in hope.

Bernard Kennedy

Compline at Sixty

Nunc Dimittus,
at last? I can recall
the evening tailed procession
with censor and incense,
most dead or compline of life.
In the evening we recall,
the brightness of the football field,
anxiety about Nicomachean ethic
and Plato Symposium,
Aquinas proofs,
and Freud's hidden things.
The hill gets climbed and
I have baptised and buried
and given travellers many tenpence,
and sang the Alleluia chorus of Handel
and waited,
and the waiting is
the metaphor
from compline to complan?

Bernard Kennedy

Conversion

Tall, fit and strong
the player stands.
Waiting.
The stadium, like
a grand cathedral,
hushed, heads bowed.
Other players wait and look,
a sacramental moment.

With his heel he makes
a space, . as meditation.
Then pacing back he waits,
around he looks,
the silent prayer is made,
the crowds are dazzled,
dazed.
And then.

He moves and kick lifts
the oval ball
over it goes.
Amen is said in cheers.
The colored vestments raised,
and unity is done
in public prayer.

The priest,
 is carried,
cheered around the aisles,
and fellow priests smiles,
satisfaction has ben gained
the previous losses
no longer ordained.

Bernard Kennedy

David as Fashion

In Firenza, the square there,
replicated he stands, as
a monument, to man-god-incarnation.
Let him speak, the sculptor said,
after chiselling away unwanted
marble. Let him speak.
Couture sculptor,
fashionistas, divine
made flesh, this Easter,
incarnate.
What fashion does is
making mystery real,
taking man from marble
tomb,
making beauty speak,
hush, don't speak.
you only need to look.
Its a divine thing.
Ah! fashion is David with clothes.

Bernard Kennedy

Dingle

From main roads through the pass
and there, beneath,
as if a mountain gate over
a valley, lake or bay
a golden road
to visit a past,
Peig, the Blaskets,
basket of another age
of literature,
all writers on the island,
an embryo,
of Ireland, vacated
to new lands.

Or round Slea head,
a bleak peak,
a romance with Ryan's
daughter.

A corner, fluid
of memory and romance,
Now we are too
sophisticated,
beyond the word
of linking
mountain and sea,
and honesty.
dingle beautiful town.

Bernard Kennedy

Dingle Haiku

Cumeenole strand view
I sit oceanic feel
ryans' daughter still.

Bernard Kennedy

Dom Marmion Bridge

When you leave the shopping centre,
as if from this Rodeo Drive,
from the car park, awaiting a spot to exit,
left or right, you might see,
a reference, a hint, catch a glimpse,
of the marker on the bridge,
which tells that he walked, strolled,
from the church house, around this then boreen,
 to Ballinteer, Dundrum village.
You may wonder who he was, what did he do.
in times bygone, this village yielded
 prayer and fields, and daisy chains
 by the river Slang, and butchers knew
 the meat required and the day
of fast the fish-
the bookshop waited with
what could be a long read,
 Mann, and Tolstoy, and
Soren Kirkegaard, and shoppers
 waited, to get their goods,
then evenings to tend the echiums,
 to the nearby sound of the stream,
for the river sound,
under the bridge, was a calling to boy fishers
from school at summertime.

He was to be a monk at Maredsous,
a Dublin Benedictine from the city,
in the quiet countryside.
and then into silence of prayer.

Here the tram and car drop shoppers in
to pray, into the new temple,
and register their obeisance
to fashion. Where the ring
of the till is the candle lighting,
and the twirl at the mirror,
the answered prayer.
Stop and think.
the mountain still looks down
upon the plaque-
Dom Marmion bridge.

Bernard Kennedy

Dublin Haiku

Beckett bridge empty
no crossing Nelson is dust
Liffey barge waiting

Bernard Kennedy

Dublin May Day

Driving over Butt Bridge
I see the statue, a Scotsman,
Labour-Ireland.
The Traffic, stalled by
Large Armageddon, Hail
and downpour in rain,
Labour-rain-Mayday!

Bernard Kennedy

Easter Day

The cavern of departure lounge,
with sadness and farewell.
The dark unconscious,
unresolved foundations of day.
Threads of Oedipus
and the leavetakings of life,
with Passover lintils of blood.

Then the Other side,
joys embraced, threads joined
a tapestry turned around.
A new beginning,
like computers ikon entry.

The daffodil and crocus show
its colour,
and into bloom
the essence to form,
and shadow into substance
Plato's cave all lit.

Like forgiving,
a letting go,
and out of death's chamber
into life.
On easter Dawn.

Bernard Kennedy

Easter Day in Dublin

The poor man sits begging,
in the archway between a Dublin
 car park and the via dolorosa
 to the shopping mall
 where whats now is in
 before it goes green bin.
Its transience faster than yesterday.
I had not a lot to give but stopped to talk.
He was twenty eight, a failed pharmacy student
who thought, drugs were cool. He packed life in
to stay cool and instead of dispensing he is
dispensed, as gingerly the race goes on.
The poor man at the pool of Bethseda awaits the
swirl in conversation, in acknowledgment
that he was born and baptised, confirmed and condemned.
'thanks for talking to me, sometimes i'm invisible.'
That he is here is resurrection for him,
his easter moment when whats dead is given life.
He was caught in the rush
but awaits the swirl of the water
by the angels hand that heals.
Easter day and Resurrection
not in another land and time,
but in the laneway,
between the car park
and the shopping mall.

Bernard Kennedy

Easter Haiku

The tomb is empty now
the stone is somehow rolled back
nothing of matter.

Bernard Kennedy

Epiphanos

They embraced, in forgiveness,
after years of civil war,
and putrid history,
as death drew near and injuries,
relevant no longer, stifled
the freedom of hope and greatness.
Regret became the toxic fume,
fumer, pere fume.
But still, a side carriage to the hate
forgiven?
Our ambivalence to freedom,
ties us against Resurrection,
Letting go the petit morte,
an advent to an
Epiphanos.

Bernard Kennedy

Forest Moon

We write in shadows lit by the moon,
Through the trees ancestors whisper,
in dreams, to free spirits.
outline of hills, spring trees,
lit by nature in early shadow.
Not yet awake mystic poet,
Lit by forest moon.

Bernard Kennedy

Goodbye Bohemia

It starts, back there, somewhere
In the childhood,
the Oedipal melange.
Where, I am always right.
And then it proceeds in search
of doctrines, always right.
Goodbye Bohemia and Weimar.

For those places are free,
and every view coheres to
shape Geography,
from freedom of thought,
to freedom of mind and person.

The Spirit is a private thing,
and privately attracts,
like mindedness.
There is a Society in freedom.

But moving on from being right
and Comrades being right,
and parties of the right
and left are right.
It then moves further down
that linear line, horizontal
linear line, of thought,
and everyone must be right with me.

That is where it starts.
A tyranny of control,
a closing of other views,
a political correctness,
we the people,
and then the implementation,
' its for your own good'.,
' for society's good',
'we all must agree on this'.
then you must say
Goodbye to Bohemia,
Goodbye to Weimar,
Goodbye.

Bernard Kennedy

Grand Central haiku

The old facade gone,
all things are made new again,
o New York New York

Bernard Kennedy

Gypsy Dance of love

We danced like gypsies in the heat of day,
and matched our colors bright and gay,
and music strings brought tears of love,
and bands of strolling players moved above,
our village tent.

Then when the music stops, and day
of love is done, and colors then are grey,
I will recall the gypsy dance and flame,
and call it back from lowered calming fire.

For we did dance and we did sing,
and we did love with every Spring,
as summer heat lit up the lovers field,
no winter snow will ice what we did feel.

I will recall the gypsy dance and fire,
and if your gone i will be sad and tire,
for in my heart and dreams you stay,
and we can dance the night away,
in dreams.

For true love never leaves the heart,
it is the guide to follow life's uneven chart,
though grey, I will recall the gypsy dance,
to fire my dreams,
the kiln of life,
now with an aged stance.

For we did dance and we did sing,
and we did love with every Spring,
as Summer heat lit up the lovers field,
no winter snow will ice what we did feel.

Bernard Kennedy

haiku for God

Within and Outwards
connect Divine bliss journey
over in to self.

Bernard Kennedy

Haiku ranelagh

The Beechwood steeple
upwards pointing cumulus.
A modern tram sleeks.

Bernard Kennedy

heading home

It has to be the warmest of feelings.
You have been away, and seen exciting scenes,
and eaten foods you never ate before,
and tasted delicacy.
And walked a stranger kind of street.
Then, near the end, of that nomadic path,
you know the tickets booked,
the train leaves prompt at nine,
and down you go,
with bags packed.

Like an exodus, others too, excited take their seats
and out pulls the train, goodbye that newer way.
Goodbye too the faces seen that journey on that path,
with maps and water and nomadic stare,
and home the heart is moved.

Bernard Kennedy

Herbert Park Cherry Blossoms

All poets write about their father,
and poetry is surely memory as it speaks
from the future of the event. I park my car
outside the house on Morehampton Road where
my mother grew up. Lately on this busy
road, suburban street, avenue,
it is the only space, a little way
from the shop. Serendipity, coincidence,
unconscious desire?
Chocolates, cheeses, puddings and wines,
the temptations at donnybrook fair.

I place my shopping in the boot and cross
to Herbert Park.
An avenue of cherry blossom this bright spring day-
children running with mammy and daddy,
the retired barrister on the park bench
contemplates his brief life awaiting sentence,
the young doctor, solicitor beginning,
as they stroll past tulips,
lovers hand in hand, tennis reappears,
and some with tablet sit, looking,
where her majesty opened the exhibition,
while feeding ducks, others contemplate.

In her young life did she stroll here too?

Bernard Kennedy

Homefullness

Perhaps, laterally,
it is hopefulness end,
the souls ambition,
the hearts desire-

to be, at home,
to have arrived.
The Magi- a journey
and our own.
resting, being, at home,
not just, or like,
analogic,
but 'this is it'.

No more, like,
the fashion window,
the list, the magazine,
ambition, no model.
But being here, at home,
Homefullness.

Bernard Kennedy

In honor of the Painter: Keating

I was a young altar boy,
at the rail, holding the paten,
the golden plate,
under the chin of communion
seekers-
an encounter, like Moses
with his beard, he knelt,
to God,
Domine non sum dignus,
 and received the
divine, I am who I am.
His eyes closed, beret folded
and reception, holy with bow-
his wall paintings, The Baptism,
the Resurrection, carefully implied
an Incarnation, and Aran paradise.
Then after reception back through
Ballyboden to his studio,
biblical and prophetic.

Bernard Kennedy

In Memory

Your coffin was carried
slowly through,
the door where, you had stood
many times greeting others.
Now we greeted you,
your remains, for you are gone.
Your friends cried because
it was true,
Goula was dead.

Actress, poet, whom Kennelly
read with joy, a painter,
wife and animal lover.
Leaving food for the fox in winter,
the stray cat through the open
kitchen window comes,
the dog runs to meet his sitter.

Your Civil Defence friends
gathered in honour
and joined your family
and friends for mass,
in your Church of fifty years.

You cannot be forgotten,
your old theatrical way,
picked from Anna, Big Maggie,
Phyllis, adept at directing plays.
Your stage friends.

And you danced the conga,
in the forties, and tangoed
in the fifties, out in Tanganyika,
and courtesy became you,
as you read aloud and
directed speech and bearing.

Now you do not need to dance,
now you do not need to paint,
for what it represents now exists,
for you and Noel.

No, you cannot be forgotten,
for those who, like the merchant
in search of treasure finds the field,
a jewel, from London
is always sought for.

Bernard Kennedy

Irish President At Windsor Bound

History, from so far back,
 has been bombs,
bullets, bickering, breaching revenge.
A peculiarity between cousins, Christian,
employer and employee.
The groundwork done by navvies,
undone by others from home.
Politicians taking time, appropiate time
though mingled with election theme.
Henry was invited though the story told was
Albion, came blustering in- untrue.
Our neighbour, bastion against starvation,
like letters from America. Our boys fodder,
for ninteen fourteen, unspoken, whispered
in Dublin, as bombs, bullets, breaching
revenge was the hours blood.

Then the women got involved, mothers of
our histories disappeared,
and Albions Woman, like Maeve,
sailed up the Liffey.

And now the President, no longer hating history,
but repairing, is invited, like the early Henry,
but by woman, and history now can calm itself.

Bernard Kennedy

Joseph

A dream of the father, and
now, in dream of Joseph
a new dream ' mind the woman,
and the child',
and Joseph listening,
in silence, hermitlike,
to the dream of dreams,
the mother and father of dreams,
takes care,
and the Son is born.
Listen to the dream
to whom the first born right
belonged.
Joseph, a dreamer.

Bernard Kennedy

July Morning

The summer morning
it rises to the sound
of dogs greeting day, in garden near,
and Fuschia waking in the morn
as Echium leaning high to wall
beneath the flushed red rose.
The quiet Monday street
as school now rests its
satchel, and calmer road,
allows the slow worker to
his stock exchange hope.
The chapel bell rings out
again its centenary sound,
the garden, cut grass
and tidied lawn,
with poppies peeping out from
under laburnums yellowed fingers.
And summer, waiting long
its entrance to the stage
to standing, tempered,
patient adoration.

Bernard Kennedy

Kristallnacht

In the dead of night
when the moon was high
and crystals were energized
from natures moon,
energy to give life.

But this energy was dark and black,
and midnights' hidden faces,
showing shameful deeds.
Masked by moonlight.

Secret evil always hides its face,
and dark, unsigned letters,
whispered conversations, balaclava.
And breaking glass with running steps.

Truth will always face the Sun,
and not need back lane path,
like thieves.
But call at front in day.

Shame upon you crystal sinners,
in your shame filled deeds
of darkness, empty hollows echo,
a dead tree, rotten bark.

Bernard Kennedy

Looking Out

from where? For Who?
Coming out? Of What?
If we view from the window
we see a limited and framed
view, as a picture or painting,
set in time.
The view is limited from there.
Get yourself up a high mountain
and see, the broad and full view,
not the detail but the landscape
full and fresh from
hill to coast.
It is from where you look
that determines
what you will see.

Bernard Kennedy

Looking Up

As if little birds with beaks,
poised for the worm,
we look, upwards,
for the words,
to uplift and jizz our world.
to be excited and thrilled?
To be entertained,
from outside.
At a concert, a lecture,
a listening out, looking up.

The Tree upward goes,
the salmon upstream,
the riverrun around the
blocking stone will
onward gush flows.

we are lulled and dulled as human
thought stops listening in
and hearing.

The within has the oil of balm,
the plant cure of essence.
And yet
Madame Tussaud has weaved her spell
and wax like,
with beaks poised for the worm
and infantilised we wait,
and buy, droned.

Bernard Kennedy

May Night

The evening comes down lately in May,
The Church bell from the tower it rings,
the train rattles past the distanced
 red bricked decency.
The flagpoles white
and red belled fuschia flowers again.
The priestly call this day is done.
My life is eremetically sealed.

And then the staircase,
sleep and dream,
and wait the morning bell
across the wall,
That sound bell shake the morning
 Echium Flower
from out its slumber.

No statues hopefully have moved,
no visions seen by pious rustic soul,
no messages received from distant parts.

The morning train it rattles through,
and carries friends to city hall,
and stock exchange, and law men,
to the four courts justice hall.
A routine tedium like a triduum
comes with this repetition
 and unanswered prayer search.

The graveyard down the road is full,
of Canons and their retinue,
and parsons lie asleep beneath the soil.
For what remains is expectation,
like cinders to the grate of faith.

Bernard Kennedy

Morning in North Sligo

Slowly back the mist cloud moves,
as if drawn, like a duvet,
from a sleepers dream.
Like a stage curtain in
a drama, opens a play.
The moving mists the day.
Birds, thrushes and starlings
play on air, swoop and dip,
like scouts in early summer river,
dammed up beside their summer tent.
The mountains, awaken the ferns,
purple colored pall.
Rocks as if giants spoons,
turned upside down.
Old pigeons coughing a sound
on branches of trees,
observing, just that.
The others swoop and dive
upon the air,
await another time,
when tents rolled up,
and curtain closes over,
and drama is complete,
the story acted out
of generations,
another night.

Bernard Kennedy

Morning Sun at Beechwood

When the sun is up in Spring,
step off the tram at Beechwood,
the stop after Ranelagh,
or Cowper from the other side,
and sit- inside
the steepled church.
Watch the light illuminate,
the stained glass,
and watch the story unfold,
The story of stories,
window by window,
left to right,
in colour, appropiate,
to our life,
and see the advice
written on the window pane,
redeeming Balshazzar's feast.

Then around above
the altar wall visit
with your eyes
how many Irish saints
have seen this
bright illumination
and in the side chapel
Joseph holds the child,
whose story has been
calmly seen from
over right,
with Mary and the Angel,
begun in bright
illumination,
as the Spring sun rises.
'And let it be done'.

Bernard Kennedy

Mortar And Pestle

My father was a Chemist,
and the Apothecary symbol was
a mortar and pestle.
Elements were ground together,
and a newer compound emerged, in
line with the scientific theory, that
'nothing created ceases to exist'.

Walking the mountain,
grinding up the hill,
the daily grind, of
tolerance and acceptance,
and self denial,
all produced a newer person,
a pearl of great price,
an oyster grind,
'two women grinding at the mill,
one taken, another left,
two men in bed, one...'
the daily grind.
Grinding teeth in rage,
or after a filling,
'grind your teeth to solidify'.

When I think of the mortar and
pestle, and life's grind,
and grinding, a farrier,
my great grandfather's
Limerick forge,
at Castlemahon.
I think of newer compound,
and Resurrection,
where nothing was lost.

Bernard Kennedy

New Year

The timing is made by us, mere mortals,
we like to label things-
hours, days, years,
with Chronos.

Ever new each dawn and flow
of time, purposeful.

It affects gait and posture,
and the designation merely
a label or changing brand.

Better to think Plotinus,
our own inner being,
is introduced to the yet
unwritten and unread,
the valley not yet built upon
or hilltop yet unclimbed,
but bringing feet of clay
to view, the picture
from the place we be.

A New year,
a new chapter page and story,
to be written with the ink
of loves understanding,
A happy new year.
Not Chronos now but Kairos.

Bernard Kennedy

Night

I love to hear the silence of the night.
That time, when distance draws so near,
and memories come, and far sounds,
undisturbed, so close.
For night is dark and only self is true.
A self whose rest and past, are
only breaths away.
Yet for some,
the night may haunt and fear,
its conscience time, when curtains
closed are drawn.
So too, ones inner self and past,
to joy or fright, the
inner spirits will.

It is a blessed thing this night.
Was it not night when Christ came home,
and balanced Judas evil deed.
And blessed night,
when monks now rise and pray,
and Nicodemus,
for lack of sleep,
came home.
The lady of the night came too,
her stumbling led her home.

In the darkness of the well
the Magi saw the stars in day,
and in the psyche dwells our heart.

O Blessed night,
for rolling back the stone,
the angels let in light,
and finished night.
Night no more.

The silence of the night is deeply rich,
and homeward bound, we rest,
and sound our hope
and lasting joy,
dwells here,
in shadows of the night.

Bernard Kennedy

Octobers' End

There are ghouls and witches,
there, in that place
and their.
For I have seen faces sharp,
and broomsticks,
inside church gates,
brazen against holy water.

For it is end Autumn,
mellow, and time of sadness,
and leaves, falling
and gathering, on the ground.

Into compost possibility,
colors not as bright,
although the Virginia creeper
blushes a last
smile of red,
and lets in the robin.

Into fog time,
and walking around the park,
and the bare trees with
sleeping root,
remembering.
wistful remembering,
before Santa-
and then Spring.

Bernard Kennedy

Oh! Tempora Mores

The foreign minister spoke
in hushed and saddened serious tones,
' these abuses will never again be condoned,
 by any government,
of any religion or ideology'

Never again?

And cotton is picked by two million
children as young as seven,
for three pence a kilo.

Never again?

and apples by migrants, no minimum wage,
no house, and laptops made
 at eighteen hours a day
 for thirty two pence an hour.

Never again?

oranges for juice- women at sixty hours
a week, below the miniumum wage,
and diamonds, with children at seven years,
Never again?

shirts sewn by forced labour,
coffee picked, as young as six
no school.

never again.

St.Amnesty, pray for us,
st. integrity, hear our prayer.
And Rimbaud to my heart speaks thus
an Illumination
''L'air sobre de cette aigre,
campagne alimente fort activement
mon atroce scepticisme'.

Bernard Kennedy

Old Blue Eyes

He was hungry for dinner at eight,
and swaggered onto music stage,
with audiences eager for song,
and presence of the confident master of
control,
in life and film and legend.
From black-haired youth to grey old man,
a colossus, who could
make it there and anywhere,
it was up to him.

Women's love filled that need
of affection, and
men the saloon chums,
song gathered eyes of
the blue sea of admiration
from sixty years,
through cinema and song.

When your awaited death,
broke on sky,
the tributes recalled,
everybody's years,
everybody's emotions and
romantic loves,
the heart of living,
fantasy and romance
were statued by you.

Your tuxedo approach to life
sealed those moments in
the acceptable world,
no longer private,
and thats life.

You were puppet, pauper,
and King of the Hill,
and living was underlined as
your way, and looking death
as a contract on you,
and you at the bar, to look
in the eye
The Grim Reaper.

Put away the calendar, the vinyl,
the magazines and fashion,
hang up the tuxedo,
sink the Daniels and Camel,
and start all over again.

The bar is now closed,
the concert hall empty,

the tributes all over.
So long Saloon Man,
adios amigo, ciao.

Hollywood, bow,
 take down your sign,
and Blue Eyes,
shine,
in the Big Casino.

Bernard Kennedy

Old Faithful Dog

I never thought him dead.
Only running in the park,
and sitting stretched by fire,
or with his paw,
pushing the dish,
' more water now'.

And barking, for post,
and visitor, and exits,
from his home domain,
and up the stairs at ten,
and down again at six.

A rhythm of memories
and habits.
Until his back legs gave,
and the vets scanning eyes
' he has had a good and happy life'.
And my heart sank.

I held him as he passed,
and watched him go,
to another field or park.
This time without a leash.

I can still sense him here,
in the house,
on the staircase just past ten,
and at the duvets' edge.

Luther was the collies name.

Bernard Kennedy

On Reading Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain

Ascent of climb and taut limbs are required to slowly
scale this peak of literature.
Hans Castorp is your guide-a mouthpiece,
but the view, of hope and sickness,
of constant climb and.. well that is the view at last.
i read it first when eighteen years of age,
and taut limbs from rugby scrum run,
my brain readied with an aperitif,
Stendhal's Scarlet and Black,
whilst jersey was wine and gold.

when you climb a mountain-
Sugar Loaf, Dublin Sinai,
even Ararat, where Noah stopped, a feat is done.
Hold carefully this necessary tome.
In sickness and in health
till death doth depart.

Bernard Kennedy

On Religion

Am I sated with novena prayers
and massed each day in glory
recognition of the Saviours
triumph-
in latin am I incensed,
doused with peccata me?

And travelled to the heavenly shrine
and with clergy and cardinals dine
and sip the precious wine?

Have I Prodigal thoughts
and Samaritan care,
and with my brother
table share
of poor and gay
and badly clad
in admiration?

am I a popular pietist
or pieta hold to
others give.

this religious vow to make
that Christ in tabernacle,
of the broken face,
is held.

Bernard Kennedy

Out Of Nothing

All inventors have begun with an idea
conversed within,
and out of nothing,
cut its cloth like a fine tailor,
 it brings
a usefullness and form.
Like Edens pleasure garden from
the chaos came,
or on Mount Tabor
God speaks when downward
comes the cloud,
though fear expands.

The dark night,
the souls clarity
brings forth form.
And from the cave
the emptiness of nothing
brings the Resurrection.

Bernard Kennedy

Puscar the Cat

Wrapped in a gentle shawl of love
and placed under the apple tree
with flowers to your side
and an angel to guard
as your best friends,
your family, said farewell.
The breaking heart only an
echo of love known and given.

A Cat? No, a friend and pal,
always there, to elicit love,
and space, with a purr
your love and presence,
of living mindfulness.

Just yourself as miaow,
or purr, contentment in being,
with your marmalade coat,
your fox fur, patrolling your
estate and abode and observing,
like a philosopher,
essential being.

You were a teacher of love and waiting,
a cat? A philosopher surely, with
your knowing to eat, sleep, and be.
Now your miaow is a symphony,
your purr, a cantata,
your absence a presence and
reminder, to wait, and be,
rooted in the now of eternity.

Puscar- a teaching cat?
a philosopher.
'All creation waits with
eagerness for the kingdom'.
Purring, discerning, and
in mindfulness,
like a cat.

Bernard Kennedy

Rimbaud-tribute

in God talk epiclesis makes,
as dough to bread,
illuminations, for Rimbaud
a word-present all
now spoken,
a symptom of other,
and those lines
'Qu'est`mon neant, aupres de la stupeur
qui vous attend? '
and poetry-
the word made flesh,
the real exposed,
and.. resurrection?

Bernard Kennedy

Ring Out The Windsor Celtic Bells

Ring out those bells at Windsor now,
those Celtic bells, as was a
melancholic peal now raised to Easter Joy.
Ring three times and ring again,
the family sit at table, joyful, greeted by
the Queen.
Assembled as a mother does her troubled
sibling sad and now together raise
their glasses in friendship blood
and brood, no brooding, only purpose clear.

When Brian Boru sat here before and Henry blessed
his reign and made him friend,
the noisy fracas sound of history overthrew.
When Meagher pulled out the flag in France,
and waved aloft its charm, their foresight failed
through history glance, this Windsor charm
has started healing grace.

Ring loud those Celtic Easter bells at Windsor,
peal once and yet again.

And smile Boru though Clontarf finished you,
and Meagher from your Waterford Mall high throne,
the street where Edward passed and George did too,
their journey towards Lismore.
Now on Windsor street the Union flag and Irish,
blow, while from the tower,
the harp has stayed through angry days
but blowing fair today.
Ring loud those Celtic,
Easter, Windsor bells,
peal once and yet again.

Bernard Kennedy

Robin of Pyrocanta

A spring Robin, looking around,
red breast, sure, hop hop.
A look up, around, hop.
And towards the garden, centre,
wait, look.
Then it lifts its head as if for breath,
from a pool.
And looking as if a pendulum,
observing time.
Away then, with its crumb,
to the hedgeing safely.
Towards the berried shrub,
king of red berried bush,
red breasted robin
of pyrocanta, sing.

Bernard Kennedy

Romero

March 24 1980, it rings a bell?
As the bell sounded and chalice raised,
contained the Blood of Christ,
shots rang in El Salvador and
Romero was slain, dead, martyred.
He was warned. His Jesuit friend
Rutilio Grande was assassinated
a short time before, a prequel perhaps?
We think years later.
We will remember them
over Westminster door.

And as a Sequel in Salvador
Ignacio, Segundo, Ignacio,
Juan Ramon, Joaquin,
Amando, more Jesuit priestly blood,
but this time a woman Elba,
her daughter Celina.

Romero, testament to blood,
and speaking for the poor,
but mostly, like the others
taking seriously the Gospel
of Christ.
'Let it become for us the blood of Christ'.
'Fruit of the Vine,
and work of human hands.
On March 24, with a prequel
and sequel.

Bernard Kennedy

Sheets of slow rain in Sligo

Drifting, drifting towards Dunmoran,
Benbulbin and Knocknarea,
darkening the bay of Ballisodare,
the wind sweeps howling,
wetting and dousing,
the mountain carpet.
With incessant rain
and sheep languish on Ladies Brae
with Yeats asleep,
and Mebdh at rest
upon the hillock Knocknarea,
howling like a banshee.
The poets bare Benbulbin
waits, calmly,
as a ghost ship in the bay.
With such beginnings
Noah went to work.

Bernard Kennedy

Sheffield Steele

When I was a young boy the knickerbocker glory
had with it a long spoon to scoop the residue.
and later with bacon and cabbage and mashed potato,
in Dublin, or on St. Patrick's Day, and color of carrot,
I held tight the knife and fork,
with Sheffield on its side.

And later growing up at parties and dinners that name
was there too on the side. And then
having searched theology and philosophy I looked
for residue with a longer spoon and sought Freud and Lacan.
From Dublin Port, to Liverpool and then to Sheffield.
Western Bank, Red Brick, Firth Court, Octagon, Royal Hallasham, down Glossop Road.
Place names of memory and residue.

Now I see the parchment
'having fulfilled the requirement prescribed by Ordinances and after
due examination was admitted to the degree of Master of Arts in Psychoanalytic Studies'.
With Sheffield on the mast.

Bernard Kennedy

Sligo dream of Lorca

I dream of lorca
as the hills are lit by dawn.
The Sligo landscape into view,
the farmers wife with porridge
the breakfast makes.
The farmers early breakfasting
for sheep hills to be tended,
the cows awaken in the dawn,
the son in Boston breaks the
mother distant heart,
the field yields slow.

The outline of the trees,
seen at night as shadow,
into life will come at day,
as Lorca dies beneath the blows
as Christ three times he falls.

As he falls the frosted dawn,
the yearning pining of the sligo
hill comes into view beneath
the slow sun start.

I dream of Lorca as he falls beneath
the blow of ignorance, beneath
the meadow copse and field of Spain.
Though vines cry and grapes bleed.

And green is the land,
where to school by the gate he would have passed
to learning,
and the farmer eats the toast and egg,
the day is cast,
and into shape the dream emerges
from the falling down,
the falling down of Lorca,
in another place
brings in the light of day.

Bernard Kennedy

Sligo evening sky

Over Screen the soft pink duvet comes,
across the sky, the dog goes home
to his basket.
The Robin into hedge has gone
the hare his evening stroll is done,
there Benbulbin hides the setting sun.
And Aughris the calming bay,
with Screen, an Eremites hill
beneath the Easter bonnet
of Ladies Brae,
and the ghostly horse at
mountain lake.

My life is full of cups of tea gone cold,
a needy call the door it knocks,
the traveller lost for half a crown,
the worried soul sings out regret
and couple want to wed.

But in this saucer, underneath the Sligo sky,
hope is never done, and stoke the fire
of faith, for in the hollow bark
the moss will grow and
lichen soften the hardened bark.

Bernard Kennedy

Sligo Night Sky

Looking out to Screen sky,
in Sligo North,
a stage set of over sixty stars,
too many for the human eye
to count, infinity.
None are equidistant,
as if thrown like shiny coins
upon the dreamy path of love,
as if another milky way.
Behind the trees some peep,
as if from Christmas tree.
Like fairy lights on branches.
And night where dreams hint,
along the quiet and unconscious
mind,
beside the wise observant mountain moon,
the owl of night,
lit, as if a starry fresco in the
dome of prayer,
and out from there,
with golden edge,
the day comes from
the starry Sligo sky.

Bernard Kennedy

Soul's voice

When he was presented with Goethe prize
he said that the unconscious
predated his work,
in poetry.
The gathered whispers of
the overheard, the truth
of self from within
that inscape.
Where Cupid lived?
And Homer, Wordsworth,
' as I came down from Lebanon',
winding and wandering, slowly.
The voice of souls
self reflection,
poetry is as poet's are,
the souls singularity
spoken.
'The word is the thing',
made flesh
among us.
'La vierge pensee'.

Bernard Kennedy

Spring Again

The stretch in the evening, clock forward
 and the earlier light opened enjoy,
as brighter things and
strolling in the park the flowers
the play and the extra time and joy
inbuilt to unroll and enhance promote
the incipient dwell.

so seasons then i think reflect the
isness and thingness and the latent
dream that reveals the manifest and
explains
Resurrection in the heart of things?
so true, nature is never spent.
dont mind the big bang, the multiverse,
present ongoing is tense.

Bernard Kennedy

Spring Magnolia

I was told, as a young boy,
that the Magnolia is 'The prince
of Shrubs'-on Zion Road,
Rathgar.
The color princely, as a chalice cup
is princely, for supping from divine
presence, and vestment in vogue,
appreciation is in tune.

It enlightens the garden color
and corner, and in sympathy with spring
is winters' fugue.
Nature honors its chakra, sky invites
the worshipfull cup upwards,
supported by green arms aloft in
worship of the incoming warmth and growth in soil
and natures' things are peeping,
like a shy child around the corner,
or nosey neighbour from behind the lace,
or informant indicating like Judas the prey.

Surely divine things are therefore
always immanent, and always looking
upwards.
The Prince of Shrubs indeed.

Bernard Kennedy

St. Judes' Storm 2013

From Malin Head to Mizen Head
to Carnsore Point to the Irish sea:
gusting at knots.
Below the Island south to England,
St. Jude passes,
full of gust,
hopeless, and patron
of depression.
Amber warning-be prepared,
Yellow warning-be aware,
gusting and bending
the trees,
swirling seas and channel
crossing cancelled,
St. George's Sea gives way,
ferries grounded.
With care, the drivers
of cars, the driver of trains
stays stationed.
A day off, a day of rest,
maybe gusts of one hundred
best.
A high wind- turbine is blown down,
at Higher Rixdale farm in Devon.

In my garden in Dublin South,
I mow the lawn and use the secateurs
and admire the flush of climbers,
the Virginia creeper has shed its red
and the mauve rose stands tall,
towards the church tower,
three days to All Souls.
And after the storm,
all is calm all is bright.

Bernard Kennedy

Summer July Compline

The garden done,
the roses clipped and hyrangeas,
 echium, wallflowers,
poenies, devils' poker,
 south African pampas, and dianus tasmanicus watered.
To the garden seat and virginia clad, green coat
pagoda, and Merton like sit.
On the turret sits the church pidgeon, tail to cross
and eastern focus in its prayer.
it prefers the altar tridentine, and
faces east its prayer.
Taut, stares towards Ringsend and outward
Howth Bound, and channel sea,
as our forefathers in the years of leaving,
back again.
The church at Beechwood stood up, rising,
Word War one with Douglas and Ledwidge.
Proudly sits the Pidgeon tempered evening
summer sun after
long rainy years await,
and hope agrowing,
like the garden
centenary celebration compline.

Bernard Kennedy

The Bank Holiday

We have made a God of money,
and pitched our prayers in
his regard, a novena of lotto
numbers, as incense,
to turn his head, or
candles,
to catch his eye, or
magazines to whet the wish,
this shoe, that bag, that cream
for eternal youth, the place to live,
a gated monastery of moneyed rule,
an economy of salvation.
all in his gift.

Set aside, lets earth yield best,
lie fallow earth to breathe,
and sunday, lower case now,
to chill,
and the bank holiday,
to do the things most needed,
with better guaranteed return,
to sit with self, a day of rest,
and set aside.

Bernard Kennedy

The Bird Swoops

It is incumbent on the bird,
sum and esse,
to swoop and search,
for crust and crumb,
and lodging in a rented tree,
sit upon the branch,
its beak poised and rested.
In the forest it will sing,
over the garden it will swoop and
swirling, duck and dive,
and flap its wings
 upon the water trough,
its bathing done.

We too, its apex
of created line,
will duck and dive
for crusted crumb
and flapping wings
make our way
to the leafy armchair
on the forest bough
our rented lodging.

Bernard Kennedy

The Grim Reaper

Is that the grim reaper that I see,
below, in the far field,
resting with scythe and whetstone,
resting with indecision.

The far field,
where swimming in the stream
with fellow vagrant school day
travellers, or football
until called in for night,
with coats as goal posts,
beneath the chestnut tree
that yielded conkers.

the fields where cows came home
and sheep from nearby hills looked
down, as courting by the stream
brought future joy.
Down by the riverside,
and song was sung,
and strolls of love,
concern and worried brow,
were made too.

Is that the grim reaper that I see,
below, in that far field,
resting with scythe and whetstone,
in his indecision.

Bernard Kennedy

The Gypsy camp fire

as I age i plumb the past, held
together in memory, in recall.
although how accurate that is i don't know- as
a mechanism, of fact, embroidered with
todays' emotions and need,
with association of thoughts, or smells,
of today, that fish it upwards,
like a wriggling thing.

i recall, set alight by the smell of
burning wood, a log, or turf,
the gypsy camp, some weeks flattened grass
and absence, another,
a canvas tent, a caravan, a horse,
a woman, with babe in arms peeping outwards,
the flap open and held back with twine from
a thrown away parcel from America.
a nativity scene in summer.
a man, dark and sultry, unknown, cigarette in mouth,
scraping the fire to light from ashes with a stick.
a horse stands beside the colored caravan,
resting, chewing grass.

walking with my young father past the corner of the country
road where the memory stalls. He sings' were here today
tomorrow away,
no trace we leave behind'
The camp fire, the smell, of burning twigs and open road.
and afterwards we take an ice cream, the walk done,
and he sings ' don't fence me in'.

Bernard Kennedy

The Holy Name

(written on the Feast of The Holy Name)

God asked man to name each,
one by one-
in naming, nom de pere, et fils,
what is your name?
another way of asking
'where do you come from? '.

Its different from nick name,

but in the burning bush
the name came,
eternal, ongoing,
IHS- and his name shall be,
called.

The naming, intimate,
the inner self determined
and calling the name.
An introduction.

Bernard Kennedy

The Manse Gate

At a wave of his hand, with his eye on the traffic,
Underneath his yellow helmet head,
the bulldozer, lifting its beak
Came down upon the old Manse gate,
And in a second, with its pillars
And walls, were rubble for the road,
foundation.
Contributing to its raiso d'etre, passe.

you leave Marlay Park, on the Grange Road side,
the exit gate, facing what was a Manse,
you could have seen it,
a status of Gentry.

Those walls kept in an ethos,
those gate let in a class,
of carriages and conversation.

To a long, winding, Elms driveway,
the Manse well gone.

And now the gates too,
at the dropp of a hand, the wave,
of a young man, helmetted in yellow,
And a cigarette swinging in the spare hand,
as the clear road allows the beak of progress
move away a century of style.

Then he looks to wave me on,
And holding in his hand, pulling on the
smoke,
nods the beak towards the wall,
the highways now ready for foundation.
History is history at a glance.

Bernard Kennedy

The Mountain range looks nobly down

I was struck by the headline of the famous actor
speaking personally- ' I wish I could believe,
that I will meet him again in a place called
paradise'.
I was not struck physically, I mean that
as metaphor,
 analogic discourse,
symbolically,
parabolic.
Trying to emphasise what is inherent to knowing,
like a scientist with an initial theory,
a gardener, who plods around his garden,
in wellingtons planting for spring,
The mountaineer at base camp,
or better still, the mother getting
the country bus to visit her son
in a Dublin prison thrice weekly,
the fathers tears holding his son for baptism,
like Joseph and the Saviour.
Structure and proof, and courts of
law are human things, racheted by opinion,
custom and practice, headlines.
Loving is a different thing,
like grace.
We lift up our eyes,
to the mountains,
Horeb, Sinai, the Calvary Hill,
the Sugar loaf and wishing
to climb, the view is widened out.
The Mountains looking nobly down,
lift up the view and wishing, faith,
achieve the bond of climbing.

Bernard Kennedy

The Night Visitor

Three times the knock it came to me
and opening up the door
I saw no person standing there
for help or succour plea.

I sat back down to lift the book
and Donne his Epicedes,
beside the embers I had sat,
three times again the sound.

My heart it stilled,
my mind it froze,
for no wind blew the cottage sky,
alone but lit by moon.

The sound again did slowly make,
was someone dead or gone?
for I with book and embers stood
afraid and now alone.

I moved and to the knock at once,
a soul upon my door,
for only wood could make that sound,
that I could hear again.

I slowly lifted up the latch,
and fearly opened up,
the door it let the ember glow
outside into the path.

I looked to see into the dark,
and there an Angel girl,
of long black hair,
and handsome form
did stand and beckon on.

Out into forest I was brought,
with hand and heart entwined.
We danced by pines,
and kissed by stars,
a garland she did make.

And oh! what night of reveries,
and oh! what night of care,
my youth returned again to make,
our love upon the carpet moss
alone lit by the moon.

And when awoke, I saw was gone,
the angel girl and joy,
I thought that I had dreamed
the scene beneath the single star.

But standing up I made my way
the cottage open door,
the fireside chair alone it kept
the poems for resting there.

And in the morning by the sun,
a light on pathway shone.
A garland made of pines and cones
lay there upon the step.

Let us not laugh at reveries
of love the heart can make,
the angel girl, she beckons
on to mossy carpet heart,
as lit by forest moon.

Bernard Kennedy

the Walker

I met my father, on
the hill of the road,
at kilmashogue.
he was striding down from
his mountain walk
and I ascending.

his sunday stroll
and he was fit then
'take it easy, I will see you later'.
I recall now, his own age,
that same turn and stride,
as I showed him into his sick bed,
and then his resting place.

on that turn, at kilmashogue,
Just there, at the mill ruin,
the new Columba gate,
life goes fast
and generations pass.

'take it easy,
I'll see you later'

Bernard Kennedy

They prepared her funeral

They sat at table,
as before.
All adult now.
Engaged with laptops,
' funeral readings, poems for..a death'.
' She liked Vivaldi, and John O'Donohue,
and che gelida manina,
and Pie Jesus'
Their father cried,
silently, in the bedroom.
The christmas Tree,
 all lit seemed dull.
Their Mother had just died,
without an explanation,
nor an expectation.
The presents were named,
and wrapped,
the christmas tree,
with presents beneath,
seemed, well,
silent.

Bernard Kennedy

Thomas Merton

Mertonian can mean silence
and hermitage, and hermit like
trust, in,
waiting, knowing we are carried
purposively.
In silence his deepest conversation
with self and Other,
was put into grammar construction.
The loudness of the world's shop window,
and the embers of the evening,
hermitage stove, contrast
as storm and calm.

In his hermitage, the story
mountain, and to elect for
silence. Sinai, Tabor, or Horeb
all built in silence,
the inner dynamo.

Bernard Kennedy

Traveller from afar

I met a traveller from an antique land,
and saw beneath that turbaned head
not a visitor but brother too,
though lineage was but black and white.

What was far away, and camels feet away,
and ships sails away, pirated too away.
Yet walking on my street his street,
and close to his ribs held a Dublin girl,
close to his ribs.
As if God's hand had knit the joints of Adam's
bone and joined again in one.
She laughed and threw her happy head,
and smiled and kissed his darkened brow,
his blackened brow,
as mahogany is dark.
And it was love.

He held her close and matching hair
his skin was foreign shining joy,
and Oh! I thought how near we were
to fields that once were far.
And also thought how blood might fight
the girl from Dublin's laughing street.

And how religion too might stop
in God's own secret talk this love.
Although the Magi far had come
from foreign antique lands
And darkened skin was Melchior
and darkened too that world.
Yet in that dark the star did shine
and laughter shone their too.

I watched them sweep in through the door
and sit and ice cream share,
and short of coins, their love did rest
upon one spoon of love.
And kiss black lips,
and brightened eyes
this foreign vision here.

Bernard Kennedy

Whats wrong my love

The bills come in, those reminders,
in their window envelope,
2 tell us, i dwell here too.
Upon the hall floor,
caught under the mat.
'That postcards nice, Marbellla, again? '
' and whats this ' confidential'.
A warning from the bank,
a new pizza parlour,
window cleaning done,
extension possible,
old coins for free, with every purchase,
A holiday draw for every carpet,
curtain bought, a chance to be
a millionaire', again.
But wait, softly on the floor,
whats this, A Valentine?
A light shines now behind the door,
and other letters into vapors go.

Bernard Kennedy