

Poetry Series

Liam ó Comáin
- poems -

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Liam ó Comáin()

A Bird Upon A Cross

I noticed a bird
upon a cross
the verticle of
a naked cross
above my local
church

Was it surveying
the winter scene
or reflecting upon
life
it's origins and
destiny
and all that lies
between

Could it reflect
does it have what
we term 'intellect'
or has it purely instinct
and if so what does it
lack compared to us

Is it better off I wonder

Liam ó Comáin

A Bowler Hat And Sash

Things were not always O.K.
In that small market town
Where Orangeism reigned
And Catholic Irish were second.
Where I tried to understand a
People whose allegiance was
Not to our island home and whose
Image was encapsulated in a
Bowler hat with an orange sash.

Yet, I bear no ill will to those
Neighbours of the 40s,50s and 60s,
With their intimidating Lambeg drums
And sectarian vindictiveness... for
If anything it is love for we Irish are a
Product of our history- a river of two
Streams- planters from other lands
And descendents of a Celtic invasion
Synthesised into the Roe man and woman.

Thus imprinted in my consciousness
To the very roots of my being is a racial
Cocktail of historical importance; and
Beyond the reality of religious allegiance
And inspite of- life was good in that town
Where a dog leapt into history....

Liam ó Comáin

A Boy And A Girl

he left the pub
with his
girl friend
buying fish
and chips
along their way

upon finishing
their meal
in an entry
they kissed with
greased lips
and tongues

fondling each
others bodies
experiencing
the sensation
of arousal
and stimulation

permeating the
rubbish strewn
urine smelling entry
with groans of pleasure

Liam ó Comáin

A Brief Letter To Jesus

my saviour
i praise you and i thank you
for without you i am nothing
and can do nothing
may my love for you increase
and may i become increasingly aware
of your presence and power in my life

you were single minded in doing our father's will
please help me to do the same for the greater
honour and glory of our father
the holy spirit and yourself
and for the love of our blessed mother whose
' I am the servant of the it be done to me
as you say.'
was necessary for the salvation of our species

Liam ó Comáin

A Catholic Christmas

I dreamt of a Catholic Christmas
Just like the ones of my childhood
And youth with God as a child in
A manger while Mary and Joseph
And other works of creation bore
Witness to the source of all truth.

But personal experiences of our
Millennium is of a spiritual drought
(Paraphrasing a modern Pope)
Where Santa fills the place of Jesus
While secular ideas daily oppose
The essence of Christian hope.

But similar negatives has bedevilled
Humanity since the days of Adam
And Eve and I've no doubt like many
Before those present will wither and die
As humanity returns to God for without
Him we are all a-stray.

Thus once again I'll experience an
Authentic Catholic Christmas day.

Liam ó Comáin

A Childhood Dream

a child lost in the fear
and the insecurity of
sleeping time dreaming
of tumbling pennies
enclothed in tapioca
filling up his throat

you exuded the calm
of a pieta as you tip-
toed into my dream
bringing calm and
serenity in your wake
motivated by love for
your brown haired son

your soothing effusion
ebbed my fear and the
warmth of your cuddle
returned me to sleep
beneath a scattering
of orange and yellow
soft snow- like petals

Liam ó Comáin

A Child's Christmas

(A child's joy fills the heart with wonder)

Socks hanging
from brass
bedsteads
the aroma
of a mother's pudding

A turkey
defrocked by father
stuffed with bread
crumbs and sage

Parcels
tattooed with robins
beneath a scattering
of pine needles

The sense
of mystery
snow falling
a holy silence

In a child's christmas
long years ago

Liam ó Comáin

A Daisy Chain

in a land where simtex
was once a part of
common parlance
a child makes a daisy
chain like a rosary of
innocence unconcerned
about the midges
surrounding her auburn
head like a halo

a young child reflecting
contemplative acceptance
in persistent fumbling
movements to link icons
of humility

her presence a meditation
calling us out of the broken
behaviour of prejudices
and tribal resentments
to a genesis of reconciliation
and peace from the wreckage
of consciousness

Liam ó Comáin

A Derry Emigrant

Years ago I left as many did before
For work then was an absent word
In Derry's homes

In time I found a job
Travelling for hours to steel erect
Then back to an abode
Mingling with the stock of various races
Where until sleep thoughts of home
Were like icicles biting at my heart

Often like a bottle
Dropped into a well
Hope sunk in darkness
Returning and strolling
The Bog' was not to be

Sadly recalling faces
Like fingers missing from my hand
But an ocean flows between us now
Sundering fates beyond
The grasp of metaphor

For years I have watched
The seasons wane
Bearing the growth of age
Conjuring thoughts of home
Perhaps someone there remembers me....

Liam ó Comáin

A Ditch Daffodil

dark thought
in sunset
beckoning
to kneel
by an oak
in a coppice
with sadness
until each
passing moment
life's ebbing ordeal
received inspiration
from a ditch daffodil

Liam ó Comáin

A Few Coppers

They hung in a bunch
Men, women, young and old;
Over painted, dishevelled
and bold:

'Hey, boss, could you spare
a few coppers? '

'Hey, love, could you spare
a few coppers? '

A daily ritual to raise a few bob
Then off they went to 'biddy their
Gob' from the bottom of Waterloo Street.

Liam ó Comáin

A Few Derry Haiku

Water ebbing and
Flowing quietly on shingle
By the grey lough side.

Cold October wind
Causing a yellow candle
To flicker and die.

A spade in a plot
With robin on the handle
Ruffled and chirping.

Liam ó Comáin

A Flake Fall

flakes silently
falling

drifting behind
stone walls

pie-balding
turf stacks

quilting
pathways and
roads

ceasing gradually

Liam ó Comáin

A Forest Path

The sound
Of silence

Multiple
Shades
Of green
And other hue

An
Approaching mist
Above a forest path

Liam ó Comáin

A Holiday

An idle wave
unfurls on the beach
as I tread
the sunburnt hills.

In the distance
lies Mullaghmore
and little boats
shrouded in haze.

A seal bobs
above inlet waves
as sea birds trace
a dredger.

Rock falls in ridges
to the sea where
I unlock the door
of a holiday home.

Liam ó Comáin

A Human Being

'Life is good.'

'We've had
our ups
and downs...'

'I love you all.'

As he met
His family for
The last time.

For years
Suffering
In patience
For a cure
Then total
Acceptance
When death
Was inevitable

A daily communicant
Devoted to the Stations
Whose presence graced
The Cathedral for years,
A presence reflecting
The gentle Christ.

Personally
I never knew him but I wish I had.

Liam ó Comáin

A Lover Of The Night

wraith like movement
invaded my perception

the flight broke
the darkness of night
silent but visually
across the face
of the little wood

its call as eerie
as the lore stories
of the beanshees keen

from dusk to first light
woods and farmyards
are prowled
in wavering flight
entering the ghost lore
of the countryside

Liam ó Comáin

A New Canvas

A small round face
With dark pools
Forming,
A slight imprint
Of a crow's foot,
Time preparing
A new canvas.

Liam ó Comáin

A New Day

The morning ripened
with the smell of
mountain turf as the
first fire of the glen
reached for the sky.

A cock crowed
as the reek rose
into sun rays
and the bay
glistened a silver
platter from
the sun's touch.

From the pier
fishermen sailed
hoping for a good
catch as I braced
a breeze warming
to a new day.

Liam ó Comáin

A One Legged Stance

pale morning light
silhouettes
a crucified form
growing from
the centre of a field

a protector in the wake
of night rain fluttering
in a harsh wind

threatening
black forms
quarreling
upon the limbs
of nearby trees

a wild scene
symbolising
a coming abundance

Liam ó Comáin

A Painting

serenity
peace
engulfing
a harvest
landscape

two
peasants
stilled in
silent prayer

recalling
annunciation
incarnation

centuries old
tradition in
christian lands

captured
by an artist
for posterity

in earth
and harvest
colours

blending
the temporal
the eternal

in response
to the knelling
of an angelus
bell

Liam ó Comáin

A Poem For Therese

She moves in the silence
Of God's grace
The light of a bright noon
Upon her face

Through her streams
Of prayer stroll
Finding the Father within
Her soul

A willing sacrifice she makes
As from the cup she faithfully
Takes

Being
For all our sakes alone
Contemplating our journey home

Liam ó Comáin

A Poetess

sad creature of
the poetic craft
immersed in
inner pain
what can I say
about your art
reflecting
aspects of the insane

what attraction
you have for me
perceiving genius
in your verse
a flowering that
was yet to be
but alas you pursued a hearse

Liam ó Comáin

A Prayer Poem

My Lord, Jesus,
I praise you,
I thank you,
I adore you,
And I worship you.

You are my God
And my all.
Without you
I am nothing
And can do nothing.

May my love for you
Increase and may I
Become more aware
Of your presence
And power in my life.

As you were single
Minded in doing
Our Father's will
May the Holy Spirit
Co-operate with me
In doing the same.

For the greater
Honour and glory
Of Our Father,
The Holy Spirit
And Yourself, for the
Salvation of .

Liam ó Comáin

A Rugged Place

rock and heather
is the mantle
of this place
wild goats roam
its heights
grey dark clouds
entomb its sky
a desolate
donegal highland

a roof less school
stands to the left
of a corner within
sight of a few
huddled cottages

the alma mater
of previous
generations
now scattered
throughout the globe

a community
dispersed
leaving a few
to live out its demise

it is a rugged place

Liam ó Comáin

A Shared Secret

I wonder do you still
Raise the goal posts
On a saturday morning:
You did it all alone
Even the netting
Of the posts.
They all wondered
How you did it.
A mighty task for
A man in his early 70s.

I believe I know how you
Did it but I will keep it
A secret for if I'm wrong
We would not have a
Shared secret and that's
What I want us to have
Between father and son.

Liam ó Comáin

A Sharp Frost

Across the meadow
autumn frost gripped
the low stubble;
like a vice it held
its victim.

Hardening near by
top soil and preserving
foot marks like finger prints.

By a trough a freisian
prodded ice, in pursuit
of water, unaware of the
rising tempature as an ally.

Liam ó Comáin

A Slap Sapling

In a slap
A solitary sapling
Small sparse
Its branches vertical
To the clouds
A few horizontal

Minute buds evolving
Towards openness
A heart openness
Free and unforced
Unlike the opening
After Gethsemane

Beyond its form
Spring ploughed fields
Draught the shower
Of a northern wind
Impregnating the brown
Earth's womb

The land's life
Is in the sapling
All is one
(God is a God man)
The sapling's a cross
Shadowed in the mist
Of water droplets

Liam ó Comáin

A Somewhat Haiku For Michael

what is a haiku
just 5 7 5 syllables mike
born in japan man

Liam ó Comáin

A Specific Span

earthly life
apparently
continues
that is
the miracle
but regretfully
we do not

we are
allocated a
specific span
and like the
sun's rising
we fulfil

thus it is
important
to savour
each moment
to ensure that
we live life
to the full

Liam ó Comáin

A Spiritual Revolutionary

Father Louis / Thomas Merton

~

From a reformed background Thomas came
With a touch of artistic endeavour...
Converting to Catholicism he took the vows
As a member of the Cistercian order.

A-flamed with the love of Christ,
Fr. Louis offered his talents
To the service of Our Father,
And through the Grace of Our Spirit
Of Love offered mankind a spiritual trove.

A trove for mankind in need of direction
As our species traverse a spiritual desert
So dig deep in the depths of Thomas's soul
So as to gather what we require
For a solution - a world wide spiritual revolution!

Liam ó Comáin

A Stream Of Nature

A constant flow to where?
A lough or the sea...

A bearer of shadow and
A quencher of thirst

Homestead of fish
And other water life

Transporting what arrives
Of a certain weight

From the mould of nature
Imitating van Gogh....

Liam ó Comáin

A Strong Black Horse

Drawing turf I sat high
almost falling off as we
crossed the little
stream by the whins

Nor can I forget the
long haul perched
high upon straw
the envy of other
children tripping
home from school

And those times
galloping across
fields followed by
tail flicking cows

Fond memories
to keep in case
I lose my memory
of you, Father, but
there is no chance....

Liam ó Comáin

A Time To Listen

I felt age
upon
my person,
today.

As I
crossed
the vale
I saw an
open door
and entered
within.

On the fire
tea boiled
where I sat
to listen...

The craic
was good,
indeed
very good.

Liam ó Comáin

A Trace Of Silver

The winter's moon
lies within inches
of black hills, drawing
a trace of silver
along their summits.

Liam ó Comáin

A Van Gogh Morning

('To be or not to be...' - Shakespeare)

a canopy of light grey
with flecks of colour
orange red yellow
primarily yellow
like corn on the hills

a gift to reflect upon
ephemeral
but a canvas pertaining
to the mystery of being

later the morning wish
of my daughter
happy birthday daddy
took on a deeper
significance
it was a pleasure to be

Liam ó Comáin

A Winter's Morning

A curtain of cloud
hinders perception
of light rain yet nearby
roofs confirms.

An experience
of melancholy
or as a morning
a depressive
phase of time
with a crow
in the distance
and the nudity
of a prunis nearby.

A time of
or near death
for the sap is stilled
the seed is dead
the land is nude
and barren...

A wake?
yet it is advent
a time of promise
of new life
symbolised
by the image
of a god child
in a manger.

As if to confirm
rays of light
penetrates the cloud
as a wood pigeon
streaks across
within reach of
naked branches
while the wind shifts

to paint rain drops
across my window pane.

Liam ó Comáin

A Woman Of Resilience

(Derry By The Foyle)

A woman of resilience,
Remarkable resilience,
Reminiscent of the great
Cities of the world...

Proud of your sons and
Daughters who have
Carried you to other
Lands and who treasure
Their roots by the Foyle.

Your future as great
As the aeons of your past,
Your materials
The hearts and the minds
Of your children.
A fine mixture of Celtic,
Planter, and other stock-
The Derry man and woman.

Liam ó Comáin

A Woman Of The Land

a hazel stick
over animal shanks
dark features
with a frown
once a ballroom star
but a wife now grown

her wedding gift
a stubborn farm
with dreams buried
in reluctant soil

an optimist but
reality slowly dawned
with the growth of time

Liam ó Comáin

A Woman With Blue Jeans

a woman with blue jeans
hugging her figure
in the city of derry
i noticed last night

there upon reflection
i suddently remembered
as her eyes met mine
beneath orange light

she was the schoolgirl
whom I met at a ceili
within a dance hall
some 20 years before
i recall that night as if
it was yesterday for
on that occasion i bade
farewell at her door

i'd forgotten her name
but i know where she
came from- down by the
folly where i had my first kiss
yes she was the recipient
that auburn haired tomboy
was she colette or sheila
or was her name chris

on this occasion she
was back on a holiday
seeing the changes which
the troubles had wrought
but alas wedding gold
she wore on her finger
a barrier to much of
the local male thought

Liam ó Comáin

A Year's End

sap stilled
fields ill clad

lace blurs
perception-
an odd gull

time of
promise
of new life

starlings rise
in casted shadow

Liam ó Comáin

After The Night Before

Awakening early
recalling incidents
of the night before:
the pubs,
the friends,
the girls...

Dressed and out
into the darkness,
the impact of frost
revealing breath.

Crow startled!

Glints of sun
causing a
slackening
of stride...
increasing sounds
with increasing light.

In the rising landscape-
a frosty stubble...
so cold... as I recall
the night before....

Liam ó Comáin

Along A Road

strolling as if part
of the land
weaving dreams
as a blackbird
praised the dawn

by those dark hills
where the corncrake
called for years
and does no more

and a shadow falls
well beyond his stride

Liam ó Comáin

Along A Road In Monaghan

Strolling as if
part of the land
weaving dreams
as a pagan
praises the dawn.

Over those dark hills
where a corncrake
called for years
and does no more
his shadow falls
far from Raglan Road.

Liam ó Comáin

Altnagelvin Hospital

Sitting on the east bank of the Foyle
A blessing of life pouring healing
Into the bodies and the minds
Of children, women, and men -
A womb after the womb for many.

Generations have entered its doors
In the pursuit of healing, of life...
And many have departed unlike
Or in contrast to their arrival
But many have thanked, again and
Again, this womb after the womb.

Liam ó Comáin

An Irishman's Gratitude

Gratitude to the One
Who created and blessed the world
Through His Holy Spirit,
Adding colour to foliage and stone,
The sky and the sea...

For the scent of plants, the taste of fruit,
Our food and the good therein...
The chorus at dawn
In a pageantry of light and shade...
The sun's warmth,
The touch of hail, wind, rain and snow...
Our parents, our children, each other,
Our country...

Oh at this moment and forever
To our poet Father, the God of beauty and of love,
Who sent us the Word via the womb of Mary
Our eternal gratitude.

Liam ó Comáin

An Lon Dubh (The Blackbird)

A flash of wings
From the master
Of twilight-
The yellow beak
Of the hedgerows.

A melodious sound
From across the fields.
Territorial by nature.

A 'dik, dik, dik',
Prior to silence
As the pagan poet
Rests for the night.

Liam ó Comáin

Another Year Emerging

another year
has come
and gone

a new one
is emerging

so lets be happy
and shout for joy
just as we would
for the birth of a
baby girl or boy

for time stops not
for any person
adult or child
and inspite of
negatives it is
great to be alive

assured
of a future
of bliss
when we
pass on...
so a happy new
year to everyone!

Liam ó Comáin

April 25,1995

strolling with sun path
in ethereal blue

source sinking
through swath of ecru

swans in formation
initial the brow

a mini frock skips
through the ebbing sough

Liam ó Comáin

Art In Progress

red coloured
butterfly
passing
bluebell
and
hedge thorn
buttercup
and daisy
near a field
where
the voice
absent
until harvest
gives seed
time to yield

Liam ó Comáin

At Beach Halt

Lake water
Saddled with foam
Lapwing duplicated
Through shadow...
(Throw of the dice?
A 'big bang'?
No! no! no!)
As a rainbow forms

Liam ó Comáin

At Culmore

colour renewing daily
with variation of light
a touch of movement
and change
a restless master
of colour and technique

Liam ó Comáin

At Sunset

tints of sunshine
dusk a shimmer

owl seeking
field mice

moon rise
beyond oak

stars glitter
one shooting

death's a whimper
uncoloured like distemper

Liam ó Comáin

Awaiting

from
the cocoon
of winter
awaiting
the coming
spring
bearing
a shadow
which only
the sun
can melt
or the
appearance
of the
first snowdrop

Liam ó Comáin

Ballymagroarty

Like children
playing
hide and seek
birds respond
to each other
with chirps
in the june air.

A breeze disturbs
the opening leaves
of spindly trees
and the flora of
sub - urban hillsides.

A neighbour's dog
responds to the sound
of a passing bike
the latter unknown
in the days of Marianus.

What history is locked
in these hills
of Ballymagroarty?
the residue of a people
poor and simple
hunters of the deer
and tillers of the soil
witnesses to a ritual
of sun- worship
at nearby Aileach.

A place graced
by the presence
of Colm Cille
prior to his departure
for Iona.

Today a people
as Irish as the heather

on distant mountains
or the ancient walls
of Derry.

Now witnesses to
the all weather pitch
the supermarket
and the indoor
swimming pool...

Upon these thoughts
I reflect as I look at the
clear sky over Ballymac'
in the deanery of Templemore.

Liam ó Comáin

'Big Mary'

I recall one Easter long ago when you
Watched us play by the 'Back Burn',
A country woman of big frame
And open face, 'Big Mary' they called
You but I knew you as Mammy.

You were of the soil for you snedded
Turnips and gathered spuds on many
A Derry hill, and the fertility of those
Fields symbolised your own-
Mothering one girl and three boys.

Nothing was ever a bother to you
With neighbours calling at all hours
For a chat, a loan, or a hot scone...
Often I recall the occasion when Joe
'The tramp' arrived- that bright frosty
Morning when he entertained with a
Jaws harp and your spoons...
Treating him as if he was your lost kin.
Perhaps your action was a salve
For the ache within your heart...
However, since your departure
On your birthday I believe that you
Are with the 'ould man' and perhaps
You have met Johnny- that is my prayer.

As you know, Ma, the spring is my
Favourite season, and yearly I observe
The primroses which you gave me,
But they will never replace the flowers
Growing deep within- in a soil which is
Partly your soil- an eternal memorial to
A beloved mother and a loving friend.

Liam ó Comáin

Blackbird Piping

(In memory of Francis Ledwidge)

When I drive through Slane,
Alongside the Boyne,
I think of you because I also
Hear the blackbird piping,
Piping down the passage
Of the years like a wild
Poet of the hedgerow,
Calling me to join the
The bardic clan as you did years ago.

Like your fellow poet, Patrick
Kavanagh, you knew the coming
And the going of the seasons...
Which you have painted in your verse.

'The swallow
Crowding up the dawn in spring, '
'The truth of beauty in summer fields, '
'The leafy winds of autumn, ' and
'The heart like sod in winter rain.'

Yes, piping us through poetry to perceive life's beauty....

Liam ó Comáin

Blue Tits

bread crumbs scattered
to attract acrobats of the air
like the neighbours they
keep their distance
flying off as she brings water
friendliness appears to threaten

Liam ó Comáin

Broken Revolutionaries

A free Ireland
was the ideal,
the end
justifying the means.

Now living off
whose welfare
they had
pledged to serve.

Protection rackets,
drug dealing,
petty robberies...

Far removed
from the ideals
of liberty, equality,
and fraternity.

Liam ó Comáin

Burial

from
a moist eye
a trickling
tear

Liam ó Comáin

Burning Wood

wood smoke filtering
through hawthorn

voices of children
beneath ash trees

through a gap
I see them circling

fire casting shadows
in a breeze

Liam ó Comáin

By A Crucifix

oh my saviour
by this crucifix
as i contemplate
your passion
and death
upon calvary
i ask pardon
for my sins
and the grace
to bear
my cross
for you
as you carried
your cross
for me and
the whole of humanity

Liam ó Comáin

By Turbulent River Banks

lightning strokes
in a greyish glow

a sun glint
revealing
the wraith
of a rainbow

men poaching
by timber

as busy as
a kingfisher
from a nearby
willow

Liam ó Comáin

Carmel Within

You are there
within the silence
and the solitude
of my being.
To experience
communion
by the grace
of your Spirit
in the way of
your Son
is the be all
and the end all
of my existence.

Liam ó Comáin

Carved Initials

Remnants of initials
Within a heart
On bark broken
And weather worn.
Vaguely, a recall
Of carving...
Now, one name
Following another,
But none relating
To initials carved
In the days of youth.

Liam ó Comáin

Che

(Che Guevara O Loinsig, in part of his writings implied that we could change economic and social structures tomorrow but unless we succeed in changing the hearts of humanity all would be in vain)

A spirit rides
Across the plains
Flying
O'er the mountains
Che Che in the wind
With the majesty
Of chieftains

In body
He will not come
But the cause
We must follow
Freeing all mankind
And making
A better tomorrow

Fruit of the earth
For everyone
The essence of
His thought
So let's unite and build
A loving human planet

Liam ó Comáin

Child Hood

Bare footed in dirty puddles
The joy of childhood
Arose from their screams
And laughter...
Reversing six plus decades
Through the doors of memory
And imagination
I joined them for a moment

Liam ó Comáin

Christ's Mass

A fall of snow
across the fields
and roads

Trudging
responding
to a loud knell

Flakes along
the aisles
and pews

A mystical
occasion...

Our journey
home slowly erased

Liam ó Comáin

City Centre Mosaic

hawkers vend their goods
by ancient siege walls

youth lounge in groups
by immigrant sculpture

a tweed cap collects
pence and light drizzle

port gulls drawing
shadows over the city

Liam ó Comáin

Colm Cille

thoughts relate
to a currach
carrying a prince
into exile

a moist eye
looked back

a monk
to be known
wherever
belief took root

yet yearning
for oak groves
and little hills

a punishment
still bearing fruit

Liam ó Comáin

Contemplative

Peace dwells within
The marrow of my bones
And delight overpowers
My being as I experience
Solitude near to broken
Down barns.

The landscape fills the
Deepest caverns of my mind
As I contemplate the shining
Water under the willows
And savour the living
Sounds in the woods and fields.

It is a mysterious thing
The landscape - a mandala
Which draws me
To the centre of my person,
Where I experience God
And relish His presence.

All places of worship
Have their special 'centre'
But I find my sacred space
Via the landscape, where the
Tortured gestures of trees
Become part of my prayer.

Liam ó Comáin

Covering The Land

flakes
falling slow
through
naked
branches

night
soft
and
silent
almost still

a white
garnet
enclothing the fields

Liam ó Comáin

Craft

waves
scribble
and erase
traces of
moonlight

Liam ó Comáin

Creevagh

Narrow
Winding roads
Edged with sulic.

Fields enclosed
By wire
And thorn.

Horse, sheep,
And crow...

And far off
A flow into a lough
With An Grianan
In silhouette.

Liam ó Comáin

Cuckoo Cuckoo

The cuckoo sings
From the wood
Beyond the lake

At break of day
The migrants call
Pierced the air
Of blossoming may

And in evening stillness
Clear as a stream
Cuckoo! cuckoo!
It did sing

Now dark silences
The song of birds
A velvety dark....

Liam ó Comáin

Cultural Gap

Saturday evening and
persistent drumbeats
pervade my home
emanating from
my sons room
a cadence of modern
rock and a mental caffeine
disturbing the serenity
of my thoughts

A generation gap
as wide as Niagara
upholding a sub culture
with an unremitting beat
and incoherent vocalisation
the expended sound
accompanying the gyrations
of one ephemeral group
after another

Yet it is but a bead from the
rosary sub culture of the
generation game
formerly played by myself
to the sound of the Dylanian
'Mr. Tambourine Man'
with long side burns
and American blue jeans

To some an execrable
phenomenon generating
conflict between the young
and the aging but to others
a symbolic acknowledgement
of the handing over of the baton
in human evolution to point
Omega

Liam ó Comáin

Dance

bare hedges
dance the wind
as crows swirl
in flight

Liam ó Comáin

Death In Flight

The flock sped
back and forth,
spreading into
the distance,
and in turn
swooshing low
above the loft;
a daily ritual
prior to the
reception of a
mixture of grain.

Suddenly
it changed
its pattern
of flight,
rising higher
and higher
while circling
like a whirlwind.
Its erratic
behaviour
arising from the
presence of a
bird of prey.

The flock rose
as if to attack
its predator,
who in turn
rose higher
and higher,
rapidly flying
and then gliding;
a mesmerising
strategy which
scattered the flock
into ever widening
directions.

Thus the predator
with talons extending,
akin to the opening
undercarriage of
a plane, dived and
grasped its hapless
victim....

Liam ó Comáin

Derry Docks

sea birds
bob
and rise

men
unloading

gulls dive
and cry

a pallid sky

Liam ó Comáin

Derry Haiku (2)

Spiritual Growth

~

I feel as if I
Have not made the first step yet
But I am aware

Mandala

~

The landscape drew me
To where I experience peace
And relish presence

Liam ó Comáin

Disturbed Grass

Along a dried up stream
green rushes moved
in a gentle breeze.

A beech tree shadowed
the grass where the stream
once flowed.

Grass disturbed by a couple
sharing pleasure unaware
of another presence: then,
arousing the curiosity of a
wandering child....

Liam ó Comáin

Down The Fields

The sun spreads warmth
Over fields and hedges.

A stream almost dry
Where cows gather.

Frogs spawn looking like
Scrambled eggs gone sour.

And a yellow honeysuckle
Luring the bees....

Liam ó Comáin

Duke Street, Derry, '68

Might was waged
From batons
Boots and fists.

Who would
Have guessed
Their blows
Were blessings
In disguise.

Or that
Water cannon
Flushing wounds
Would help
The cause
For civil rights.

Liam ó Comáin

Dunree At Dusk

Barks from across
a slope

To the strand
a meadow

A sprawling grey
lapping solitude

Strolling
listening by the
shore

Light sprays a distance

Liam ó Comáin

Enagh Song

Beyond
Enagh Lough
a blackbird sings
as the sun rises
over the hills.

Through
a yellow beak
from
a budding thorn
it sings and sings
and trills and trills....

Liam ó Comáin

Ephemeral

Daffodil time
as the hour moves forward
april showers dilly- dallying
for lent
the woods and the fields
a cornucopia of bird song
and scrumptious the flow
in receipt from the hills

A smidgen of frost
we encountered at
daybreak
caught unawares
so a panic in name
but then perspicacity
helped to assure us
as we listened to the
paen and the verve
of spring

Now vernal growth
environmentally burgeon
replenishing woodlands
hedgerows and fields
across teeming waters
airborne migrants
scud in their flight
to floral yields

By the roe's turbid waters
young lambs gambol
as young lovers love in
the west atlantic wind
tis a time to rejoice in the
mystique of the season
but alas it is ephemeral
ephemeral like our kind

Liam ó Comáin

Ethnic Madness

womb nurtured
babes entering
the world of
bomb and bullet
ignorant of peace
for of peace
they lack experience

children of war
sucking thumbs
and rocking
in rhythm
innocent lives
flowing in the tide
of ethnic madness

Liam ó Comáin

Fahan

Shore puddles
reflecting colour
apiece

With steel grey
swell beneath
a yellow fleece

Stumbling along
a gull in
dusky light

And a curlew calls
to the settling night

Liam ó Comáin

Fair Roe Vale

Oh fair Roe Vale you are my Irish home
And you I love fair treasure of the north,
I long for you wherever I may roam
Oh Vale of Roe 'tis long since I went forth.

Oh from this land where in youth I've striven
I long to see your fields of golden corn,
To smell the turf from the hills near Dungiven
And to see again the town where I was born.

Oh I'll return when youth is in your fields
And when the river flows so songfully,
Then I will stay and to you I will yield
Oh! vale of Roe my heart longs hopefully.

Liam ó Comáin

Finery

the moon
bestowing
a silver finery
to the pates
of blackish hills

Liam ó Comáin

First Day At School

I recall that morning
Observing through curtains
Your little copper head,
First day off to school
Holding your mother's hand,
A step out into the world-
Too young to understand.

Tears fell down my cheeks
As I stood there reflecting,
Not long since your birth
And its joy filled commotion...

As your sister once said:
'I dont want to grow up! '
But then it would'nt be life.
For Prince our collie,
As you know, was once a pup.

Liam ó Comáin

For Leinad

Hold a referendum
And let the Irish people
Decide their future.

Hold it under the auspices
of the UN and the EU.

For no country has the right
To occupy the land
Of another against its will!

National self-determination
Is a right for other countries
Why not Ireland?

If justice is done and seen
To be done then freedom
Will produce peace and none
So called 'Evil' organisations required.

Liam ó Comáin

Frank And Edel

Frank, founder of
The Legion of Mary,
Who offered
The Immaculate
As the way...
Confirmed by
The missionary
Success of Edel...

Lovers of God
Who in Spirit
Became man
To ensure
Salvation for all.

Models of what
Others could be
Traversing the
Reality of life
By the grace of
The Christ who died for all.

Liam ó Comáin

From A Diary

8th June:
wind lashes
an oak
in the
foreground
of dark grey
clouds

an old crow
labours against
the gusts

winter like-
except
for the warmth
of a crazy wind

Liam ó Comáin

From The West

(i.m. mairtin ó direain)

drifting gulls
track a team
a mhairtin
wild primrose
clutter a ditch
sheets flutter
from the west
your land
a welcome
touch for men
on the bog

Liam ó Comáin

Glenlea (Killybegs, al, Ireland)

A one horn ram
prances from
my approach
through the
sodden grass

A rabbit
haunches
motionless to
my presence

Swallows dare
the touch
of breeze
driven seed

Beyond the pier
gurgling streams
race my footsteps

While the bay
reflects a gull in flight

Liam ó Comáin

God

a poet
whose
poetry
begins
and
ends
with silence

Liam ó Comáin

God With Us

(For Jean Vanier
and Juan de la Cruz)

The gentleness of Bethlehem
And the horror of Calvary
Emanated from God's love
For all of His creation
But especially humanity.

The flow of His Word,
The Word made flesh,
Is the flow of Love into
Our human hearts
For God is thee Lover.

In return we must be open
And believe in Jesus,
Trust in Him, and give Him
Space in our hearts
For the gift He bestows.

For that is what life's all
About: a walk with God in
And as part of Creation
On our way to where the
Word reigns forever.

Thus we must be centered
Upon Jesus, that is,
God centered, and in all
Things centered
Upon love for love is God.

Liam ó Comáin

Gort An Anama

Like fairy music a river lures
To a quiet woodland in a vale,
A place of joy in days of childhood-
Gort An Anama of the Gael.

“Oh Gort An Anama by the Roe
Tir Na Sorcha you were to me,
A source of spiritual riches which
Helped a troubled soul to see.

As I age I sense your presence,
The peaceful solitude of each path
Where more than once I sought renewal
Near to the foliage of your Rath.

Unravelling in those decades
Various problems in your domain
Strolling solitary by the Spring Well
Or resting by the Rock of Kane...”

Oh I will answer the Roe’s calling
To that quiet haven of the vale,
Drawing near the source of memories
In Gort An Anama of the Gael.

*Gort An Anama - Field or Garden of the soul.
Tir Na Sorcha - Land of Light.

Liam ó Comáin

Grianan Ailigh

Prior to Solomon
Raising the temple
Or Rome shadowing
The Tiber
An Grianan witnessed
Human sacrifice
And the installation
Of Kings.

Patrick and Colm Cille
Graced its ramparts
And to the sound
Of cannons from the
Walls of Derry
A silent witness.

A sentinel to the lives
Of a tribal society
And a peasant people
An Grianan's stones
If only they could speak
Could show us
The folly of human ways.

Liam ó Comáin

Gulls

sods of the shore
by an ebb and flow

mirrored surface
of sand
helping to discern

rising
without image
until the
background of hills

Liam ó Comáin

He Looks At Me

He looks at me
From the wrinkled face
The syndrome child
And the 'hopeless case'
I see Him now
In the vagrant's stare
And the painted girl
From a shadowy square
Yes if we look He is to be found
In you and me and in all mankind

Liam ó Comáin

Honey From Her Mouth

(In memory of my mother's aunt Rosie)

To be a poet in the ancient
Language flowing from the lips
Of my mother's aunt...then
As mysterious as a rath
But as she prayed the rosary
It was pure gold from her tongue.
Years around her lap enthralled
With stories from her lips,
Occasionally uttering a phrase,
But in spite of all the wonder
At the honey from her mouth
In my youth I lost a treasure...
For the language of a nation
Is worth more than any purse.

Liam ó Comáin

Human Destiny

within and as part
of creation
to become
transformed
through love
divine love
resulting in
a deified humanity

Liam ó Comáin

Human Need

Give me
the bread
of love
and I will
share it
with you
or even
the dough
from which
it is baked

Liam ó Comáin

I Praise You

I praise you Lord
As my Creator,
I praise you Lord
As my Redeemer,
I praise you Lord
As my Sanctifier,
Oh Blessed Trinity
I praise You-
Oh! Lord my God
I now praise You!

Liam ó Comáin

I Thirst

for aeons I called
yet many remained
unmoved
rejecting my thirst
to be loved

upon the wood
I renewed my call
but some
bore hearts of stone
giving all- my life
on that hill
almost alone

I must love
I am love
for their sakes
for them alone
I seek the love
of all
from the depths
of my heart
I thirst is my call

Liam ó Comáin

Icarian

the green shone beyond
the rainbow mountain
as you paddled the beach
breasting the warm
western rain

i saw you
through the dappled ether
as i rowed the mackeral sky
unaware of the fire within
your breast

you were in my thoughts
as i retreated beyond the
sun flowers running down
the boreen

like icarus nearing the beams
of golden heat beyond the mossy
thighs of benevenagh....

Liam ó Comáin

If Only I Could

a red flame
within my loins
spreads across
the plains
of being
a fire to be sated
in the azure
regions of your
mystery...

desire
unconsummated
a silent
if only i could
throughout my life

Liam ó Comáin

Immaculate Praise

I praise You Lord
As my Creator
I praise You Lord
As my Redeemer
I praise You Lord
As my Sanctifier
Oh Blessed Trinity
I praise You
Oh Lord my God
I now praise You
Through the Heart
Of Our Loving Mother
Whose 'yes' was
Necessary for salvation

Liam ó Comáin

Imprecation

fabaceous clouds
drift above erotic scenery
extraneous to the mind's eye
lilacs bloomed
in a blue vase
beyond the limbus
where the ligula
moved in rhythm

i was a limmer
but you did not mind
in fact this truth
added to your passion
but at times
i longed for a mae rest
to save me from
the maelstrom of
malformation

a vincentian madness

Liam ó Comáin

In A Nut Shell

I want to love You and I know that that
'Want' is Your gift to me.

I want to accept my poverty, my need,
My helplessness, for I am aware that
I need Your Son who alone brings You
And man together in Your Spirit.

To live His risen life is to accept my lot,
In all its bitterness, as he did,
And to surrender to You in it and through it.

Liam ó Comáin

In Pursuit Of Gold

in nine plus seconds
he flew over the red
surfaced metres
gaining a place
in the pursuit for gold
the dream final

as the gun cracked
out of the blocks he flew
reaching for the stars
but a tendon gave way
shattering years of
careful preparation

hope was broken
shattered and gone

Liam ó Comáin

In The Orchard Street Gallery

the sparkling stream
mirrored rose yellow
and pink blooms
draping as if
from a vase

the second
displayed
a vase
white as snow
with buds soft
and tender
expressing
a touch
of pleasure

the third
displayed soft
white skin
encircling dark
brownish eyes

yes art is necessary
for the human spirit

Liam ó Comáin

In The Sperrin Mountains

A hawk hangs
like the cross
beam of a crucifix
above the only
farmyard for miles.

Across heather
the smell of turf
is borne by a
summer's breeze.

An old photo
of my father's father
holding reins
upon a load
of Sperrin turf
his bearded face
similar to my own.

And my father
releasing pigeons
from where we
could see Lough
Neagh beyond.

Now wishing I
could reach out
and touch them
piercing the time
barrier from alongside
a peat bog in the Sperrins.

Liam ó Comáin

In Time Of Frost

icicles from
naked branches
frozen patterns
along the road

from thorn
a thrush rises
through rays
of alamode

cracking ice
firing stones
children exulting
in time of frost

in the nearby field
a young crow pecks
wandering as if lost

Liam ó Comáin

Ireland's Bloody Sunday

On the thirtieth of January
In nineteen and seventy two
Thirteen died in Derry City
As they marched for civil rights.

Sharing the protest of thousands
As they left the Bishop's Field
Marching to their city centre
With only their songs to wield.

But after a prevention
Near the end of William Street
British soldiers brutally fired
Above a maze of running feet.

And in the wake of orders
Thirteen citizens lay dead:
Gilmore, Young, McKinney,
McDaid, Wray, and Donaghy,
McKinney, McElhinney,
Nash and Duddy,
Doherty, McGuigan, and Kelly.
Later, from his wounds,
Johnny Johnstone passed away.
Another innocent victim
Of that bloody, bloody day....

Liam ó Comáin

It Is

a heideggerian move
towards nihilism
glowing across
the steps of care
anxiety guilt finitude
and death

an impasse
avoided via the
jaspersian reality
of transcendence
a move beyond
limit situations
of existence
terminating in
the non entity
of being
i act i act
a metaphysic
of hope
washing dostoyevsky
kafka eliot and beckett

Liam ó Comáin

It Is But A Memory

a memory of love
and friendship
in summers past

red cheeks
auburn curls
sparkling eyes

the cool
of evening and
the warmth of
holding hands

Liam ó Comáin

Killybegs

A boat dots the horizon
disappearing behind
a thigh of land
to re- emerge
crawling towards Killybegs.

The seascape is birdless
reflecting a greyish blue
as a windscreen reflects
sunshine from beyond Kilcar.

Slowly the horizon disappears
as the sea merges with the sky
where stars appear
like the blinking eyes
of a host of sidhe.

It's night time in Donegal.

Liam ó Comáin

Like Frost Melting

Life cannot be relived
And the passage of time
Cannot be stopped.

My circle of friends
Shrinks as one by one
Death takes them away.

Memories from my past
Are my companions now,
Fond memories I cherish.

Of childhood, youth, love,
Marriage, childbirth, health-
A mosaic of life.

Gone, never to be recaptured:
Life frost melting as the sun rises.

Liam ó Comáin

Limavady

I sometimes wonder should I cease
Returning to the place of my birth
For too many I knew are dead or
Scattered throughout other lands.

The old neighbourhood looks strange
And a new avenue stands near
Where the Circus Field was
The Marsh Field is covered with
Buildings and other old haunts are
Beyond recognition.

Even the river looks different
And as for the woods a country park
Brings negatives.

Old remembered customs are no more
And the faces are strange
Even the elderly appear to be strangers
But I do recognise a family or two in
The faces of the young.

To re- experience my youth even for one
Day would be a joy but I cannot allow it
To replace the joy of my present although
I look back in fondness to Limavady then.

Liam ó Comáin

Lullaby

O little fluffy head
Loving fruit of my womb
Here in your cradle
You gently lie at rest
May the Mother of God
Come and rock where
You lie and may the
Years ahead be a lullaby.

Liam ó Comáin

Machado

with reflective
manner
and a quiet
tone
he entered
my life

Liam ó Comáin

Maire Rua

Stocky and middle aged
with a tweed cap to shade
churning soil revealing
clods glinting

Smelling of oil
in a march field
mumbling an odd curse

A character
capable of matching
most males

Lover of the land
and adept at house work
but ill at ease without the horse

Liam ó Comáin

Make My Heart Yours

May I enter your heart
to study love there
to acquire love
for my heart so bare
for love is all
it is all we need
and you are the sower
of this saving mead

Liam ó Comáin

Malin Head

a stark end
combatting
wind and rain

conditioned
to the cries
of sea birds

a wild beauty
a rugged land
the head of Erin

Liam ó Comáin

Man At Day Break

stooped
beneath
a churn

crossing
strewn fields
threshing webs

returning
to fetch perhaps
again and again

Liam ó Comáin

Marie

'Daddy,
I love you very much':
This expression
Of a special girl
Confirms that
'God is love'.
For only God
Could inspire
Such a statement
In the devastation
Of a 'Remembrance Sunday'.

They will echo down
The future aeons
Of our country,
A signpost to
Reconciliation and peace.
A call to love,
A call to what is best
In our fallen nature,
A call to repentance
And forgiveness.

Yes, Marie,
Your departure
Is not in vain
For the Spirit
Which inspired you
Will melt the hearts of
Those who advocate
The inhumanity of violence.

Liam ó Comáin

Masky

his imagination
was vivid
he worked
when he had no work
he was a journalist
when he roamed the pubs
educated he was
but not a doctor of science
which he claimed to be
to his wife a confused
walter mitty
a dreamer of dreams
but a loving father
and a man of faith
unmarried in a world
of make believe

Liam ó Comáin

Medjugorje

a bell
breaking
silence
by a
blue cross
on a hill

Liam ó Comáin

Memories Of The Roeside

Scenes of a childhood,
Long years ago,
Surface in memory as vivid as snow:
The Mullagh, the Dogleap,
The Wet Wood and the Dry...
Memories of the Roeside
Bringing tears to each eye.

And where are the friends
Of those days before?
Do they share the fond memories
Which I have in store?
Do they think of the Marshfield,
The old Wireless Lane,
Nicholl's Brae, The Flat,
And the high Rock of Kane?

Do they recall the summers
By the Wee Rock at the Mill,
Or the sports in the Avenue
With many a thrill?
And what of the 'characters'-
Ah, too many to relate;
It being good fortune
To share partly their fate...

Oh these memories of childhood,
Of school- days, of youth,
I cling to like life, as precious as truth.
And to those still living, my friends of the Roe
I drink you a toast to times long ago.

Liam ó Comáin

Morning Rise

Quietly darkness takes leave
unveiling a pale blue with wisps
of cloud tinted pink hanging
motionless in the summer sky.

An atlantic bound jet reflects
a glancing sun like a minute
mirror moving slowly beyond
sight through a white formation.

As the soft morning light ignites
full throated song there's the
intense vibration of feathered
wings as the landscape exults.

An towards the east a moon,
fruit shaped, like an after image
stands like a sentinel to what
went before...

It is morning rise bearing a new day.

Liam ó Comáin

Mother And Son

the son whom
she had suckled
in a broken figure
carrying wood

Liam ó Comáin

Mother Nature

A glance of the sun
Key-holing through the branches
Of one of a duo of trees
With a ground mist hiding
A flock of sheep...

Mother nature is the artist!

Liam ó Comáin

Mountain Collie

around with stealth
a collie works
in response to the
call of the whistle

Liam ó Comáin

My Friend Is Jesus

My friend is Jesus
My friend is Jesus
For he loves me
And I love him

We walk the road
Of life together
From break of dawn
To break of dawn

Oh I love Jesus
My friend and saviour
Who died for all
On that leafless tree

And I will bring
A friend to Jesus
To walk with him
To walk with me

Liam ó Comáin

My Friend John

Pursuer of the Stag
On the mountain slopes
A master of mysticism
And the art of poetry
John of The Cross
Laboured to plant love
Within the minds
And the hearts
Of human kind
The love that is God
And I will follow
My friend John
For what he conveys
Is the food of life
Our Creator and Our Father
In fellowship with Jesus Christ
Our Saviour and His Spirit

Liam ó Comáin

My Furrow Is But One

over the years i followed
many furrows art politics
church ministry and sport

striving to discern where
ever my talent lay
was it philosophy
psychology or any sort

but alas i found no peace
as my life passed from day
to day no ending to my quest

later as life ebbed
just past the 60 mark
i realised my talent lay
with the prosodic art

my tool it is a biro
between four fingers
and a thumb
ploughing the field
of life
now my furrow is but one

Liam ó Comáin

My Greatest Thirst

no matter how long
or how deep
my ego to pleasure
clings my greatest
thirst is for God
my hope is to follow
Him whom he has sent
and with his Spirit
I consent to carry my
cross and follow him
to walk the pilgrimage
inspite of sin....

Liam ó Comáin

Mystical Wisdom

you want me to share your table
and i desire to respond
but the false layers within my
heart are a barrier to intimacy
like paul i experience myself
doing the opposite of what
i know to be true incapable
at times of overcoming
the pulls of my lower nature

in john of the cross you have
given me a sure guide to help
me ascend the mount for it is
a mountain the way of perfection
the way of humanisation
in the ascent he tells us of how
ardous the journey is and of what
we can do to become new men
and women
firstly we must be enamoured with
you in love

in loving you through faith you
grant us the grace
of experiencing the dark night
which is the way of union
and although i resist you
in my weakness you purify
me in the darkness
by faith alone i accept it
a process of interiorisation
is constantly in progress

the night shows that our problems
arises not from the external world
but from within ourselves
in order to build up ourselves we
must realise the purification of
our senses and our imperfections

john's image of the wood in the
fire implies that you change our
very being not just our behaviour

the wisdom of the ascent and the
dark night show that our very hearts
need to be changed and only you
and you alone can do this

Liam ó Comáin

Nature's Art

in pools of rain
stars lie mirrored
and a footfall
brings disarray

the full moon
lies in a river
simmering after
thrown wood

a ray's glint
upon a wind
screen flies
from my grasp

touches of wind
blown sally
brief hand
shakes by a hedge

Liam ó Comáin

Night Fall

As the sun departs the gestation
Of night concludes with a ruddy
Grey afterbirth in the western sky.
A welcome resting period for some
Descends upon the land as quietly
As a fox stalking its sheltering prey.

Beyond the fog enclosed fields
The power generated by humans
Provides light to the quiet streets
Of a hill side town and crows flock
To the heights of the tallest trees
As the fading light touches the
Outline of the receding hills.

In V formation some geese like
A ghostly chariot crosses the face
Of the un- developed moon as a
Blackbird utters clicks of alarm
Manoeuvring through branches
To roost in the darkening wood.

Liam ó Comáin

Old Age

Old age is a part
Of the 3rd phase:
1st the biological,
2nd the mental,
3rd the spiritual.
Three phases
Of human life
Which can
Permeate
Each other,
For example.
A child saint...
1st- conception
To about 20,
2nd- 20 to
About 40,
3rd- 40 to
60 plus.
The latter -
The flowering
Of the whole
Personality,
The phase
Of the spirit-
The real aim of life-
Opening to the eternal
Which is human destiny.
The period in which we
Are fully human.

Liam ó Comáin

On A Pub Wall

sparse grass
encircled
by stones

a child
with a donkey
beneath clouds
shadowing
the shore

where
a kite is flown

Liam ó Comáin

On Inch Island

bare hedges dancing
with the wind
as crows swirl in flight

sunset fireing a lough
as the peaks beyond
share last night's fall

Liam ó Comáin

On St. Brigid's Day (1st February)

On the day of Brigid
In accordance with tradition
Spring visits Ireland
To fulfil its yearly mission.
As I walk the roads
I feel the season's treasure
For youth is all around
And in my heart there's a measure.
Oh there's a touch of autumn
And winter too around
But spring appears in splendour
As farmers till the ground.
The wind is not as cold
And the rain is turning soft
As the gentle snowdropp leads the way
With blossoms white and soft.
Soon the swallows will arrive
To grace our scenery-
Oh my whole being is full of joy on this St Brigid's day!

Liam ó Comáin

On b's College Wall

Like Marilyn's dress
Your seed was lifted
By the wind,
I assume,
And left high
On the college wall.

A precarious site
For rooting
Growing and dying,
Yet you hang there
Wind beaten and minus
Your flower....

Liam ó Comáin

On The 6th Day Before Christmas

Hailstones batter the front street
As the wind roars over the rooftops,
There's a thin white carpet in the
Garden revealed by neon city lights,
And my thoughts relate to sleep
As I survey the winter storm.

From the east there are flashes of light
And thunder rattles the hemisphere
In moments of darkness;
Beyond this all is quiet for the populace
In the main are asleep as the clock strikes
3 am.

What mystery lies in the elements?
What power! what threat!
The age old gods of human history
Overthrown and superseded
By the son of a Jewish maiden
At whose commands the elements obey.

Liam ó Comáin

On The Cross

I see myself
On the Cross
In Jesus
Alas I helped
To place him
There...

Composed of
Spirit and
Of flesh
From the
Womb of
My mother
I see myself
Because of sin
Complicit in
His slaughter

Oh loving
Brother
Forgive me
For my part
In your
Death
Through
Crucifixion
And in you
May I oppose
The spiritual desert
Of mans making

Liam ó Comáin

One For Sorrow

In the wake
Of distress
A few pence
To spend
For secrets
Not to be shared

One a 'magpie'
A creator
Of nightmare
The other
An innocent child

Liam ó Comáin

Padraic

stonechats rivalling
meadow pipits
grey faced moon
drawing shadow

world of gaelic myth
and celtic heroism
birthing poems and
stories of little white
strands and gentle
iosagan

unable to foresee
the heart grown brutal

Liam ó Comáin

Physical Love

tenderly
you handled
my part
and placed it
in your trust
as gently
as the removal
of an egg
from beneath
a clocking bird

with forward
motion you
and I became
one as I
swayed like a
berthed boat
in a harbour
in unison with
expressions
of love

pupils
expanding
skin colouring
energy expending
with pleasureable
exhaustion
sharing
the genesis
of life and mystery...

your beauty
appeared
heightened
as I kissed
your breasts
and lay sharing
a sense of fulfilment

Liam ó Comáin

Pile Pain

haemorrhoids
an interesting
term
referring to the
dilatation of the
veins around the
anus

but in reality
a source of much
discomfort
whether at night
or during the day
via itching or pain

the latter can cause
one to curse or roar
or pray
especially during
bowel evacuation
or by re insertion

being aware from
experience and to
underline i would'nt
wish pile pain upon
a vampire

Liam ó Comáin

Ploughed

dark and light
brown patches
beneath dew
longing for seed

Liam ó Comáin

Political Interment

From the depths of sleep
Aroused by clamour,
Increasing prior to the
Opening of a door:
"Are you..."-from a list
With a hand on my shoulder-
"I arrest you by virtue
Of a Special Powers Order! "

Dragged to a Saracen
Hands tied behind
Pushed in with a sandbag
Over my head...
Pulled to the door
With legs out flying
Driven around
With a strong sense of dread.

Slowing up...truncheoned...
And forced into running
To be queried about details
They already possessed...

Later, at intervals, intense
Interrogation which they enjoyed
Immensely as a game or test...
Finally, without explanation or apology,
Released after too long at Britain's behest.

Liam ó Comáin

Puppy Love

In my teens
as I knelt in prayer
your presence drew
my attention
from the Tabernacle.

Your small auburn head
beneath a silk scarf
became my focus.

At Communion I followed
your walk, feeling a pull
within my breast,
and as you returned
I drank your beauty,
your innocence,
your presence...

I wonder where
you are now
as I peruse decades
prior to the winter
of my who
once distracted me
at the Eucharist.

Liam ó Comáin

Rain

Like the sperm
of the gods
gentle rain
enriched with
jasmine softened
the top soil.

Tinkling off
rusty tin
slanting
on its run
to the gutter.

Rain providing
liquid music
in the stillness
of the mountain noon.

Liam ó Comáin

Red In The Morning

The initial flush
raised hopes
fresh foliage
but it was deceiving

Contrary to instinct
birds dragged ritual
the air lacked the
thrust and the swerve

Frequent showers
red streaks at morning
an ill omen
not good for the lambing

Liam ó Comáin

Redemptive Reflections

Trees reflect the cross he bore
Rain the water from his side
Rocks recall an empty tomb
Darkness the day he died
Corn reflects his living bread
The down and out his compassion
A child reminds me of his love
And the sun his resurrection

Liam ó Comáin

Remember

Remember the rain
how soft it was?
With lightning strokes
At Mullagh
In the greyish distance.

Remember the sun glint
Revealing a residual trace
Of a rainbow over the
Turbulent river banks.

Like a wraith in the air
Overlooking the flats
As the bailiff and his
Assistant trudged the
Bullrush acres.

Men as busy as the
Kingfisher from nearby
Overhanging branches...

Remember- can you recall?

Liam ó Comáin

Revisiting Limavady

Revisiting Limavady
I recall most vividly
My childhood in
Josephine Avenue:
A neighbourhood
Extending between
Upper Roemill and
Kennaught Street,
Mainly Catholic in
Composition centered
Around grey St. Mary's.

Educated in the a, b, c's
At the Roemill National
Near a Disneyland-
'The Marshfield' and the
Woods around Kane's
Rock.

Nearby, the Mullagh was
An Everest when one
Was a six year old, with a
Tradition dating back to
The Bards and Colm Cille;
But the sight from its summit
Extended throughout the
Roevale, especially at mid-
Summer when the attire
Was at its best.

Today, from where I live
And from wherever I
Wander my roots are
Forever calling from
Within, and in revisiting
Limavady I savour the past
For in lacking roots I would not exist.

Liam ó Comáin

Sadness

a single tear
bears
the whole
of sadness

Liam ó Comáin

Santa's Day

Dead silence in the district
As soft flakes paint the town;
No human tracks,
Nor milk van wheels,
Disturb the white of the ground.

'Tis six-o'clock in the morning
And the day is Christmas day,
In house by house lights flick on
As joyful children play.

There's board games and dolls,
Sweets and other toys,
Brought by Father Christmas
To expectant girls and boys.

But did you know that his name
Was really Nicholas whom we
Now call Santa Claus- a saint
Of Christianity inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Liam ó Comáin

Sapphire Shells

sifting sand
nudging
sea shells
in the blue
atlantic off
ireland

shells washed
in the lapping
tide by salt and
sand

sapphire
coloured shells
in the western
ocean

a recurring dream
disturbing my sleep

Liam ó Comáin

Screaving

to bring down apples
we shook tattered limbs
or swiped at single fruit

gathered the loot
into our jackets
and by the time
of arrival home
we had eaten much

others were used to make jam
mother being led to believe
that a farmer granted
what the winds had scattered

unaware of the thrill we had
shaking groping and grasping

Liam ó Comáin

Seasonal

ground ploughed
and harrowed
preparing for
a harvest

seed planted
crumbling soil
the dark soil
of a northern
field

earth and sun
nurturing seed
protecting life

growth ensured
bursting through
and flourishing

growing
attractively
until harvesting

Liam ó Comáin

Sin

with hair as dark
as a moonless night
and eyes as clear
as a babbling brook
in her form I took
delight that woman
of the dusky look

Liam ó Comáin

Snow Colour

sun rise accompanies
a breeze

snow laden boughs
shedding flakes of colour

arising from its rays
of hue

Liam ó Comáin

Soccer

A favourite
with the masses
involving skill
and team work

The safety valve
of emotional
pressure in
need of release

Religiously
following
a weekly pattern
of methodical
action with
a consort
of curses
grunts and roars

The latter
reminiscent
of rome's
bloodstained
arenas

Yet a sport
to be cherished
in an age crying
out for play

Liam ó Comáin

Spring Fields

rough acres
ploughed and
harrowed

dark crumbling
soil where seed
was set

the earth
with sun and rain
nurturing growth

Liam ó Comáin

Spring In The North

Dug and raked
A man throws seeds
Alongside a pile
Of stones and weeds

Gathering primroses
By a hawthorn ditch
Children on their way
To a local match

A harrow preparing
Black stony earth
Followed by gulls
Near to a winding path

White nappies pegged
Upon lines of frieze
A recall of sea-birds
Breasting an ocean breeze

A figure strolls twisting
Lanes near Derry
Enjoying seasonal images
As the Spring passes by

Liam ó Comáin

Springtime

lambs now experience sight
and the chorus of winged ones
transforms the valley
into a chamber of song
the eye of the lengthening day
alongside tears of joy
nourishes the landscape
bringing forth crocuses and
daffodils while transforming
the dead growth of autumn
into a bed for the young of nature

Liam ó Comáin

Still Wood

A raven nearby
Non breezed
In the morning light.

Buds unfolding
Forming beauty.

Spring touching the wood
In solitude and silence.

Presenting the Creator
Of it all....

Liam ó Comáin

Strolling

Along the Roe I stroll, alone but happy...

Its woodlands is the American west:
With Indian companions I am an
Explorer facing the hazards of
Warring tribes, outlaws, and rapid
Flowing rivers...

Across the Flat I'm lying on desert
Sands: a French legionnaire facing
Arab tribesmen and the burning heat
Of the Sahara sun. In contrast an Arab
Warrior opposing imperial occupation...

On the Mullagh I'm the first person
On Everest: frost bitten and almost blind
Raising the flag of my country.
An Irishman on top of the world...

By the Green I'm an author, or a Vincent,
Struggling with artistic expression...
Make believe taking me out of childhood
and early youth.

Today, along the Roe I stroll within imagination.

Liam ó Comáin

Summer Traces

the days are shortening
and the children are as
cute as the primroses
of the last spring

captured by a grey
dampness they occupy
the carpet near to
the englassed fire

observing saoirse
being reprimanded
by his wife due to
his predilection for
a bowl of cornflakes

it is long since mid
summer and as a
season it appeared
to be lacking
in essence

or perhaps i have
embellished the
summer traces of a
long gone august
childhood

perhaps....

Liam ó Comáin

Taboo

acres of beetroot
covered the field
where a fairy tree
once stood
the young crop
rotten to the core

Liam ó Comáin

Terror

Upon leaving a bar
With his girlfriend
He bought
Fish and chips

Little
Did they realise
What stalked
Their journey

Upon finishing
The takeout
He fell
As the impact
Of bullets
Smashed his knees

Liam ó Comáin

The Anawim

God is love
we are the beloved
that is
all humans
before
at present
and of the future.

Arising from
the precious gift
of freedom
and the influence
of the evil one
is the required
anawim-
the faithful few.

Liam ó Comáin

The Arrival Of Summer

The days of Spring are gone again
Flowers be-deck the valley,
Gentle is the Summer rain
As through the woods I dally.

From the fields corncrakes call
As swiftly flies the swallow,
Moss adorns the farmyard wall
Near to the rabbits burrow.

Along a lane a blackbird sings
Competing with song thrushes,
Of youthful memories they bring
The ripening blackberry bushes.

A river gently flows along
By lush field and meadow,
Sounding like a fairy song-
A source for miles of shadow.

Beyond the school children play,
Young hearts no place for sorrow,
Thinking not of lessons, today,
Nor of the days to follow.

O'er the hill a cuckoo's call
Confirms the rhythm of Summer
Piercing through the larches tall
And fading without a murmur.

Liam ó Comáin

The Back Burn

On the verge of town
By a narrow stream
We often sought a tan
Where 'tinkers' halted
For a while and mother
Watched us bottling spricks.

Through an arch nearby
Trains daily passed
To and from Dungiven
And if a breeze blew
From the nearby dump
There was no horse shoe
Playing...

Alas, no more that common patch
For a new road hides the flow
But in memory, there, I often pass
With buttermilk from Enagh.

Liam ó Comáin

The Ballad Of "willie, Bar The Door."

In the town of Limavady,
I would have you all to know,
William Cummings he was born
A true son of the Roe.

And in that lovely valley
Near to Benevenagh's feet,
"Willie, bar the door" gave
Many a soccer treat...

For roared on by his public
Throughout the fair north west
This humble Irish sportsman
Put others to the test.

And sure 'twas in his lifetime
A legend he became
One of the best defenders
In the skilful soccer game.

And many were his exploits-
Oh! far too many to relate!
For on and off the field of soccer
To serve others was his fate.

Alas, William now has left us
But his memory still lives on,
In the hearts of those who knew him
And who loved him as their own.

And sure whenever soccer's played,
In public park or moor,
We of his generation
Will remember "Bar the door".

Liam ó Comáin

The Ballad Of Derry

Oh Derry is so beautiful
I'd have you all to know;
And through that ancient city
The Foyle waters flow.
'Tis the city of Columba
And others of renown,
Who brought fame and glory
To that northern town.

Oh, Derry I love well
And world wide is her name,
Through the spirit of her people,
Who never brought her shame.
And in memory I return
From this land where I now dwell
To the Siege Walls and the 'Crit'
And Columba's holy well...

Oh, fair city of my fathers,
I love each little hill,
And the warmth of your people
From Prehen to Carnhill.
Alas, I am an exile
Far from your old Bogside,
Longing to embrace you
and with you to abide.

Perhaps in the future
I'll travel on that plane
To the north west of Ireland-
Beyond Antrim and Coleraine-
To see again dear Derry,
With my kinsfolk at the door
Of that neat little house,
Where I played in days of yore.

Liam ó Comáin

The Ballad Of Kevin Lynch

At the foot of the Sperrins on the banks of the Roe
A revolutionary was born whom many would know
As brave Kevin Lynch from a place near Dungiven
Who died in the H-blocks and went early to Heaven.

In the north of our island there are many brave youth
Who opposed injustice and fought for the truth
To see our fair country a nation once more
And brave Kevin Lynch was there to the fore.

In the war of liberation for his native land
For justice and peace with life made a stand
So remember with pride as the heather does bloom
This disciple of Connolly who died for our freedom.

Liam ó Comáin

The Ballad Of Limavady

In the north of fair Ireland
In Ireland's wee six
There's a town in a county
Where fine folk do mix.

'Tis called Limavady
On the banks of the Roe
And although I'm far from it
'Tis there I will go.

To see Josephine Avenue
'Tis there I was born
And long Irish Green street
On a bright Summer's morn'.

To walk along Main Street
With the shops in display
And meet country folk
On 'the gallop' fair day.

To stroll up the Roe Mill
And see the wee school
Beside the old graveyard
When the breezes are cool.

To climb up the Mullagh
And view the whole scene
Of my own native birthplace
In that valley so green.

Oh fair Limavady
Dear town of my birth
Your the gem of the Roe
And the pride of the north.

And although I'm far
From you to you I will go
Oh dear Limavady
On the banks of the Roe.

Liam ó Comáin

The Ballad Of The Roe

It begins on a rugged old mountain
And down to Lough Foyle it does flow
It's my own fair wee salmon river
And its known by the name of the Roe.

It's the nourisher of the Roe Valley
And my home town lies on its banks
When I see the trout jump at the Cove
To the eternal God I pray thanks.

As it flows here and there on its journey
It runs here and there all amok,
I've fished in its waters by the Dogleap
And by the inlet at the foot of Kane's Rock.

By Pelliper, Carrick, and Largy it gently
Meanders along to where I've paddled
In its waters by the Wee Rock while
Listening to the blackbird in song.

Oh there are many fair rivers in Ireland
The Foyle, the Liffey, and the Lee,
But there's none like that river in Ulster-
A life long companion to me.

Liam ó Comáin

The Banquet

mystical of all
mystical acts

from a tree
upon Golgotha
and a supper

mystical food
and drink
for humanity

come, drink
and eat-
'This is my body,
This is my blood.'

Liam ó Comáin

The Barcelona Marathon

the birds have been
on the wing for long
if not tonight then
another day involving
roosting upon foreign
spires as they seek
to return to me from
barcelona across the sea

Liam ó Comáin

The Barn Dance

they came from here and there
across fields and along country lanes
by car on foot and by bicycle
to the red barn for the annual dance
country folk young and old
grandfathers and grandmothers
set for a night of socialising
some under the weather and a few
townies hunting a bit of romance
malodgins fiddles tin whistles
and a few aspiring mccormacks
and delia murphy's added to the warmth
of the occasion while outside a starry
sky witnessed to the encroachment
of a heavy frost

Liam ó Comáin

The Bomb

the silence
was broken
roofs fell in
lights went out
screams of fear

sirens
gushing water
cries of children
groans of pain

bodies buried
splintered timber
clouds of dust

remnants
of violence
done for freedom
done in our name

Liam ó Comáin

The Carrickatine

(from an ancient womb
death arose claiming
fruit of the birth)

Bow receiving blows
From a fearsome foe
As a fishing boat
Sailed for home.

An autumn storm
Bringing pain and
Loss to the kindred
Of fisher men.

Off the Irish coast
A turbulent sea
Spewed proof that
She had won.

Immune to the hopes
Of a fearful six
As they struggled
Towards their doom.

Liam ó Comáin

The Cherry

buds growing imperceptively
mature and open
revealing a pink tinge

a floscular mosaic
evolving and culminating
in a pinkish haze

a scentful florescence
attracting my vision
in an april spring

arising like venus
from the middle
of an emerald sward

alas susceptible to showers
of rain cascading from
high moving clouds

an ephemeral floridness
culminating with the bronze
emergence of young leaves

Liam ó Comáin

The Christmas Gift

In mystical silence lights flick on
To bicycles and board games,
Dolls and other toys, brought by
Father Christmas to joyful girls
And boys...

The occasion for giving presents
On the birthday of a King wrapped
In swaddling clothes and presented
By a Queen.

So lets be forever grateful for the gift
That Mary brings to the empty manger
Of our hearts - the eternal King of Kings.

Liam ó Comáin

The Circus Field

It was a small place
The Circus Field
The middle field of three
Fields lying between
Josephine Avenue
And Roemill Gardens

It never seemed to be
Used until July and August
When Fossetts Circus
Or Duffy's domiciled there
Usually arriving in the
Wee hours and in no time
The great top like an
Egyptian pyramid rose
And blocked the sky line
Towards Dungiven

Bringing commotion to
Our neighbourhood
With 'townies' and 'culchies'
Gathering to view the lions
And oddities like the obese
Lady with the black beard
And so on...

The clowns and the trapeze
Artists were my favourites
And when the circus moved
On I aped those acts
Dressed in my mother's
Clothes and trapezing from
Oak limbs alongside the Roe

Now when I see posters
Headlined 'Fossetts' or 'Duffy's'
Memories of the Circus Field
Arise in my thoughts
Conveying me back to a

Time long ago...agh the march
Of time

Liam ó Comáin

The Clocking Bird

Beneath a rusting harrow
slant resting by the stable
I found the rhode islands
nest.

Seven eggs beneath the
clocking bird.

As secretive as the migrant
in the lush meadow nearby...

Oh! how beautiful is nature.

Liam ó Comáin

The Collared Dove

A short winged
rapid flight
captures vision
crossing the sub
urban landscape.

On course to roost
after hours spent
in harrowed fields.

A native now
in its spread
across Europe.

A welcome sight
in the stillness
of evening glow.

Liam ó Comáin

The Corncrake

Along the passage
Of the years
Breaking the silence
Of the vale.

A child awake
In the quiet of the night
Observing stars
Through an attic skylight.

What did you look like?
Where did you come from?
What was the distance?
My thoughts then as you
Continued to continue...

Alas, you are silent.
Much combining
To bring about your demise,
But I still hear- staccato like-
Crek crek crek crek!

Liam ó Comáin

The Dancers

The moon
shadowed
the dancers
as they
raised dust
from the floor
of Grianan
their silhouettes
flickering
in communion
with the stars
and the call
of the curlew
across Inishowen

Liam ó Comáin

The Dark Shadow

savaging mind
and heart
in pain twisting
as they rip apart
beat of wings
caw of death
a dark shadow
enwraps my birth

Liam ó Comáin

The Dawning

The dawn arrives
From the darkness
Composing light
And crafting shadows
While putting in flight
A symphony of song....

Liam ó Comáin

The Dead Fox

Over dew covered sedge
we squeaked our way
to a redish form beyond
a clump of rushes

Siskins sang from bushes
at the bottom of the brae
as we traversed the frog
spawned surface

Attracted like a magnet
to the remains of a fox
do you remember that day
then we were but kids
as free as the clouds

The Marshfield then was
our Eden and sometimes
I think after our demise
it will be a heaven or at
least our ghosts will
traverse its acres

On that occasion our
interest was a dead fox
shot overnight by bounty
hunters who removed its
tongue as proof of their
deed

A young fox a vixen
filling me with sadness
clouding my mind
with the thought of death
I almost cried

Liam ó Comáin

The Derry Lament

Flow sweetly on your way, oh gentle river,
Move gracefully on your way as you flow;
For my love lies asleep beside your waters
In a grave beneath white lilies in a row.

Oh my love left me in the springtime
After the snowdrops had lost their bloom;
Alas, I feel the pain of heartbreak
As moonlight enters my darkened room.

So flow softly on thy way, oh gentle river,
Carry me on a barge to my fair love;
Take me from this land of eternal winter
Into the land where dwells my cherished love.

There once again I'll experience happiness,
In seeing again the flower that set me free;
To enjoy again the love of early manhood,
A love as deep as is your loving sea.

Liam ó Comáin

The Derry Maiden

The Derry Maiden

(For Sheila)

As the Autumn sun caressed
I met a maiden fair, strolling
Along Rossville Street
With an independent air.

I knew I had met my love
But our eyes failed to meet
Being but two of many
Along a Foyleside street.

But fate is a curious thing
And after years had passed
I met again this colleen -
My dark haired Derry lass.

Her beauty had blossomed
Into a gem so fair
And my love increased
As I won her love so rare.

We went and we got married,
It was in the month of May,
In a cathedral near the Bogside
On a bright and breezy day.

Now we are the parents
Of one girl and three boys
Oh sure coupled with Sheila
I have all my earthly joys.

Liam ó Comáin

The Dipper

For half an hour or more
The short tailed dipper
Rapidly flew, low but
Direct, along a medium
Stretch of the river;
Interspersed with moments
Of swimming on or under
The crystal flow, while
Feeding on the river bed...

Sturdy legged on little rocks;
Singing with short, high, grating
And explosive notes, with a
Scatter of liquid warbling.

A solitary plunger into rapid
Streams prefaced with a short
'Zit' or metallic 'clink'...

This wren shaped bird garners
My attention, as motionless I
Observe from an old river bridge.

Liam ó Comáin

The Divine Wisdom

From the mystery of The Blessed Trinity
Loving and coming to save mankind:
God becoming man through a Virgin's purity-
An exacting problem for the human mind!

For thirty years experiencing obscurity,
Preparing humbly for an oblation,
To free the souls of humanity
From the depths of sin and perdition.

Later preaching and working miracles,
Sowing virtue like springtime seed,
Endorsing the old laws ancient articles
And preaching love as the new laws creed.

In those three years building a body
Overseen by a man of the sea,
Then finally rejected as a nobody
He accepted death on a Calvary tree.

Beside two thieves slowly dying there,
Confirming death by an open heart,
Releasing streams of saving fayre
Which set his followers from others apart.

In another's tomb they finally laid Him
But within a few days He arose again:
The conqueror of death and destructive sin
Who from within The Trinity now does reign.

Liam ó Comáin

The Downings

shore sand
the colour
of bone

leafy sound
of spray
and wind

gulls bob
an ebbing
green

a place
of rugged
form

azure sky

alone
yet not alone
in the downings

Liam ó Comáin

The Dream

At dusk across the fields
I saw the Lianhan Shee
Beckoning me to follow
To the mound beyond the lea.

In trepidation I followed
The beauty of her form,
Entering a world of wonder
With neither night nor morn'.

The seasons were unknown,
The land ever fresh of hue,
Peace and joy ever present,
And love was ever new.

I was the only mortal there
In love as deep could be,
With the elusive maiden
Known as the Lianhan Shee.

Alas, there was a-miss there,
Perhaps it was human life,
With its unpredictability,
Its reasons, pain and strife...

Oh what was missing
Remains a mystery
What was missing
Remains unseen
As I examine subtle symbols,
The contents of my dream.

(Lianhan Shee - seductive Fairy Queen)

Liam ó Comáin

The Drop

as bare hedges
dance the wind
in solitary flight
a kestrel drops
its shadow....

Liam ó Comáin

The Drowning

Raven haired
With a dark
Complexion,
Small for her age,
A bit tom- boyish
But well liked.

With two friends
She left for
The woods
After tea time,
It being July-
A hot summer.

Later upon leaving
The cinema
With some friends
I sensed something
Was wrong as I
Approached home.

At the fluke hole
Apparently she had
Lost her footing,
Fell in, and although
A swimmer the depth
Took her.

Fourteen years before
From the waters of a
Womb she swam forth
Birth crying into the arms
Of love....

Liam ó Comáin

The Drunk

after a rainfall
a bee entered
bud after bud
in my garden

from the flow
of nectar
staggering
as if blissfully drunk
into my neighbour's patch

Liam ó Comáin

The Eternal Presence

a Being
who is love
dwelling in
our souls
inviting us
to embrace

our beginning
our becoming
preserving
from conception
until death

nurturing us
with streams
of living water

the eternal Presence
incomprehensible
to human reason
who has destined
for our race
an existence
more suitable
for the divine
than human kind

Liam ó Comáin

The Fall

trees speak
with tongues
of fire
through
change
and death

Liam ó Comáin

The Fiddler

easy skill
from an
improbable
source
eased the
pain of a
misshapen
dwarf

Liam ó Comáin

The Field Of Poetry

akin to quiet rain
entering broken
earth poetry
permeates our lifes

like the air we breathe
we do not see but it
is there

flowing from the well
of the poet's being
shaking our minds
like turbulent sheets
in a march wind

conversely a field
of pleasure and joy
to the open heart
with its grains of peace

Liam ó Comáin

The Flesh

You are the author
Of my conception
And my experiences
In the womb
That is
The way of the flesh
Which is blessed
By You
But because of sin
The way of the flesh
Is part of
An unholy trinity
Along with the world
And the devil
Therefore I request
Your help to overcome
The latter three
But especially the flesh
Which for decades
Has obstructed me
From making progress
Upon Carmel's slopes

Liam ó Comáin

The Funeral

From hillside and glen
They came to the Church
Upon the hill.
After the service
They carried the remains
Of their neighbour
To the long black
Hearse outside the
Chapel
Tens of mourners
Groups of four stepped
Forward to bear the
Coffin as the hearse
Snailed forward along
The dusty roads.

A ritual tracing
Back for generations:
A community coming
Together to pay their
Respects to one whom
They knew and loved;
To one whom they
Schooled with; to one
Whom they toiled with-
Sharing the joys and
The sorrows of the
Yearly seasons. A giant
Of a man whose demise
Created a gap in their lives.

Liam ó Comáin

The Girl Who Fancies Donkeys

Here is the girl
Who fancies donkeys
Hand feeding
From a bin

Dusky looks an
Gentle of manner
Her hair flowing
In the wind

Wrapped (oblivious)
In fascination
Unaware of the
Approaching wasp

The prevailing silence
All now broken
As the donkey gallops
Over the grass....

Liam ó Comáin

The Great Folly

all children
of a pleasure
seeking age
seeking
painless lives
and yet
be christian
ignoring the fruit
of the
gospel page
that Christ
crucified
is our salvation

to accept Christ
is to accept
the cross
our rose is
accompanied
by the thorn
by the
cancer cell
or the
painful loss
this is the path
of those reborn

no neurotic
searching
or hoping
for pain
but peaceful
acceptance
if it be our lot
willing his will
as we bear
his name
let this be
the spirit

of our thought

the cross
is Jesus
and he is
the cross
viewed by many
as the great folly
but in rejection
it is their loss
as unto death
we travel daily

Liam ó Comáin

The Growth Of Light

a grey mist
touches
the little hills
as sheep
settle at dusk

near march
and as the days
lengthen
the deep caws
of the crows
can be heard
from tree tops

not long since
darkness covered
the land by 4-30
recently it is still
clear at 6-15pm

lengthening days
are a signal to
the flora and the
fauna of the
landscape

like the mythical
role of the stork
in human affairs
extending light
is a carrier of new life

Liam ó Comáin

The Happening

(Easter, April, 1990.)

Eucharistic Adoration
Kneeling and bowing
While closing ones eyes
In the Church of St. James
At Medugorje

An internal experience
Of a living reality
A mantle flowing from
The figure of a woman
Floating above a field

Opening ones eyes
Prior to closing
Yet the person was there
Slowly disappearing above
The colourful landscape

A figment of the imagination-
Or what? - I don't know...
But I wonder was it you Mary
Was it your mantle blowing in
The breeze within my being?

Liam ó Comáin

The Haws

during winter
the great artist
nature
brushes red
along the
hedgerows
for the birds
of the wild and
aesthetic souls

i saw his work
today

Liam ó Comáin

The Heron

One summer's evening
near the M1
from an access road
I watched a tall legged
heron glide from its
high nest along the river
to the weir where it
landed silently
observing and snatching
a trout which it carried
laboriously in large
winged movements
back to its roost

Liam ó Comáin

The Hills Of Derry

Far from the land of home
I dream of Irish hills
Those hills for which I long
My own fair Derry hills.
For a sun set in the west
Coupled with various hues
Beyond those lovely hills
Is the king of nature's views.

Drumceat, Donald's Hill,
Benevenagh, Lougheramore,
Slieve Gallion, Benbradagh...
Places of my youth-
Of hunt, picnic, and fair,
Calling me from far away
To breathe again the Derry air.

Alas, I may not ever see those
Hills from which I am apart
Although the west wind beckons
Forever calling to my heart.
But, to those hills of Derry
Ever reaching to the sky,
From the depths of my heart
I refuse to say "Goodbye"....

Liam ó Comáin

The Incarnation

earth
ploughed
and harrowed
where seed
was set

land
wholly intact
carefully
nurtured

the birth
like a fall
of snow...

mankind
forever
conscious
of a rainbow

Liam ó Comáin

The Irish 'Famine'

It was not what they called it
For the latter is born from nature
And therefore not man made.

This was man made-
In fact an attempt by non natives
To end a race via genocide.

Thousands upon thousands dead
Thousands upon thousands forced
Into exile across the globe.

And for what- four green fields
Whose produce was exported
As men, women, and children starved.

Of course the potato was blighted
But corn and other produce left our
Shores while inhumanity was confirmed.

Liam ó Comáin

The Island

grey course
to a sparse
solitude

derelicts
smelling
of turf

people
dispersed
to the four
winds

salty
breeze
with fowl
and spittle
of rain

wave
after
wave...

cloud
in still motion

Liam ó Comáin

The Kite

a kite rises
on the march
wind
kissed by
falling rain
drenching
the land near
a pagan ring

Liam ó Comáin

The Labourer

he drove bullocks to market
as cold rain lashed the land
saturated to the skin
a drovers apprentice
excused from schooling

experiencing the back
breaking task of gathering
spuds on a frosty morning
the black earth encrusting
his staple diet

under burning sun
spading turf in the
mountain silence
earning winter heat
by the sweat of his brow

would he swap with those
who romance labouring tasks
for the residue of past work
now pains his aged frame

lying within the human field
until nurtured with age
it sprouts forth like
corn shoots from harrowed soil

Liam ó Comáin

The Land Of My Youth

I will arise and go
to a wood alongside
the Roe
where I will raise a
house of Irish oak
and Sperrin stone

Rural peace
and solitude
I will share
with mallard and heron

Drinking spring water
from a holy well
where I was a Mohican
in those early days

Reading and writing verse
digging and planting
rising with the dawn and
bedding with the sun

Perhaps there I can be one

Liam ó Comáin

The Latebred

I'm a well - bred latebred
And properly managed
I'll get you early into bed
On the day I'm released
In the old bird National
Coupled with winning joy
Whether I'm a girl or a boy
That is if you don't overdo it
And celebrate into the wee hours
For knowing you pigeoners
You like a pint or a half or two
In the wake of successful racers.

Liam ó Comáin

The Leaving Of The Valley

No more for me the melodious
Notes of the skylark in your air,
Nor the various little singing
Streams which makes the Roe so fair.

No more for me the lengthy walks
In the evening of your day,
Through wood and glen with valley
Men like children at their play.

No more for me the vision
Of the coming of the Spring,
With your landscape changing daily
As your birds began to sing.

No more for me the reality
Of a boy with dreams anew,
So farewell, fair valley of my youth,
Your verdant fields adieu.

Liam ó Comáin

The Local Poet

Imbibing brandy
And Irish stout.

A grey flecked beard
Coupling a tweed cap,
A wrinkled brow.

At times receptive
To dialogue and moods
Of silent presence.

A source of thought
Striving to be free
In metre and rhyme.

A somewhat solitary being....

Liam ó Comáin

The Man In The Moon

soon you will stand
and blot out
the moon
with your hand

an orange
or an apple
or a football
as you grow
often looking
to see the man

as you age
when you
venture into
the night
it will be
your friend

eventually
you will
introduce
the man
to your child

oh never
lose that magic

Liam ó Comáin

The Matador

Beneath the burning sun
the matador
diced with death,
his narrow hips
evading a searing surge
within a cloud of dust.

Akin to a ballerina
with blood red plume
he spun in step
plunging the silver blade
into the charging bull.
On this occasion man
was supreme....

Liam ó Comáin

The Moment Of Truth

Huddled around your bed
Did we appear looming
Like figures in a dream
As you departed?

Was father waiting there
For you?

Was there a loss of colour
Especially of those you loved
Of spring and summer hues
Autumn leaves and winter berries?
Or sound like the wind down
Our stack during winters past
When you talked about the fairies
And the dark shadows of night?

Have you travelled far or as quick
As your morning walk to St. Mary's?
Where each stone knew your step
And every window carried a reflection.

How do you look, now,
Or are you as you were?
Or at the moment of truth
Did all end- is there no more?

Liam ó Comáin

The Nest

Brought to my notice
by the flight of a bird

Formed with
the twines
of a clematis

Cupped hands
composed of grass
inlaid with mud

Minute items flecked
the outer surface
it had yet to nestle eggs

Liam ó Comáin

The Paschal Lamb Of Love

Hail Redeemer of our race
The Paschal Lamb of Love,
Born as man to Mary pure
As Angels sang above.

On Calvary You saved our souls
By the offering of Your blood,
Accepting death by Our Father's will
As You hung there on the wood.

Hail Redeemer of our race
The Paschal Lamb of Love,
Intensify our love for You
As through life we move.

And when our mortal life is o'er
May we to Your Heart wend,
Adherents of Your Holy Cross-
True lovers to the end!

Liam ó Comáin

The Ploughers

Giddae up there, Sue, there's work to be done,
We'll plough this side of the hill and down by the burn,
We'll plough the wee meadow 'til the hour of eight,
Then I'll release you and at the hearth I will eat.

Oh, many are the years since you and I first met,
And many more the drills in fine weather and wet;
But time takes its toll as the years they march on,
We miss the youthful vigour and the old friends
Who have gone...

So giddae up there, Sue, keep straight to the line,
To the left of the Fairy Tree beyond the incline;
And never forget our wide reputation of being the best team
In this part of the nation.

Liam ó Comáin

The Poet

Rural scenes all beautiful to his musing mind
He captured for our pleasure and delight
The valley and its yield he saw with a poet's eye
As accurate as a migrant swallow's flight.

The subtleties of his vision he conveyed
While experiencing seasonal changes by the Roe
For this poet loved nature in his inmost heart
A non ebbing love - a constant flow.

He loved the woods, the lanes, the streams
He loved the song fair nature sung
The mayfly settling on the Roe
Forever kept his warm heart young.

Alas, young nature- spring by name
Witnessed this gentle poet's demise
And as the vale embraced a cuckoo's call
Brought a gleam to mournful eyes.

Liam ó Comáin

The Poet Of The Hedgerows

(i.m. Francis Ledwidge)

lover of a piper

d

o

w

n

many a road

(the yellow beak)

capturing thought

and emotion

in a flight of words

pipng us to embrace

the beauty of life...

(at Slane today he almost raised the dead)

Liam ó Comáin

The Potter's Wheel

clay spinning
on the wheel
by the wheel
a man of clay
life spinning
spinning the clay

Liam ó Comáin

The Presence

In enclosed silence
You dwell
A decorative entrance
Being a blind
To Your presence.

Daily You salve
The bruised and broken
Hearts of many.

The aged, the young,
The sick... all come
To thank and seek
Your compassion
In solitude and silence.

Your presence
Is a grace, a gift,
A solace...only love
Could be its source.

Liam ó Comáin

The Racing Pigeon

~

Crossing marathon and
Lesser distances over
Terrain of various type
On journeys back to
Palatial and other abodes,
Facing obstacles alive
And inanimate.

~

A unique example of ones
Love for ones home
Irrespective of the means
Of unravelling the reality
Of their release into
Environments unknown.

~

So let us toast the bird
Of all birds at the heart
Of the sport of all sports-
The sport of the gods-
That is the racing pigeon!

Liam ó Comáin

The Rainbow

the warm evening sun
journey's semi high
as beyond some trees
a gentle shower encloses
a rainbow

the sign of the ancient
covenant between God
and his chosen people
imprinted in mental soil

a multi coloured reality
which initiates the recall
of childhood memories
the lore of leprechauns
with their pots of gold

from loving parents
whose people knew
'Jack Frost' the 'Headless
Horseman' and the mischief
of the 'Wee Folk'

slowly the rainbow
disappears after stirring
the imagination of one
whose roots lie in peasant stock

Liam ó Comáin

The Referee

Joe and Patrick
Remained at home
With mother

On your back
I hung with Tommy
On the handlebars
And Mary behind
The saddle

Pedalling
Like an athlete
Over the White Hill
And other lesser braes
Determined to reach
Terrydremond
Before the start
Of the summer match

Urged on by the fact
That you were the referee
On that occasion

For it's duration
You handled a fair game
While we played
In lushful acres

Then off we went
As before
Flying down the hills
On our way home

Three miles of wind caressing joy
In the company of a father we loved

Liam ó Comáin

The Revolutionary

The Revolutionary

(To the memory of
Michael Montgomery)

Winding roads
And a dream
With new ideas
And praxis.

Democracy,
Class progress
The impetus
But not all
Can have vision.

A new departure
Sacrificed to
The fetish
Of force
And dilettantes
Of the left...

Ultimately
A heart-
Breaking demise
But in your time
You sacrificed
And that is your epitaph.

Liam ó Comáin

The Rose Branch

Icons of belief
from childhood
arose in memory
as a rose branch
tore my flesh
like the thorn
tortured man

As the wound
seeped like
melting tar
sucking blood
tasteless to
the tongue
to release
images from
when i first
perceived a crucifix

You were always
knocking at my door....

Liam ó Comáin

The Rose Bush

it was late to leaf
we thought perhaps
the roots had failed
however we look
forward to a full bloom
although it carries
like human birth
the seed of death within

Liam ó Comáin

The Rough Fort

from childhood
pondering
its aloofness
and origins
scarcely setting
a foot upon its
grassy mounds

as a shadow
it lingers like
a birth mark
in my memory
pointing to the
ancient origins
of my people

Liam ó Comáin

The Ruin

Once it sheltered human life
including the sound of little
feet and the music of an
ancient tongue; a mother's
bread making by a fire of turf
and a father's stories of a fairy race...
a ruin with skeletal grace and Errigal
winds playing melodies through the rafters.

Liam ó Comáin

The Sand Bed

chestnut tinted
with an
evening glow

there
coots are silent
within green
shadow

childhood
with an empty jar
playing with sand
beneath crow clamour

Liam ó Comáin

The Seagull

breasting
a breeze
the gull
pauses
cries
and dives
to re -
emerge
climbing
the wind
with a trout
squirming
from its beak

Liam ó Comáin

The Season Of The Harvest

Like a fruit from foreign pastures
The moon hangs above the hills,
There's a sharpness in the breeze
And long gone are the daffodils.

In the eaves abodes are vacant
For the swallows all have flown,
Across the earth's fair surface
To climes which are unknown.

The fruit of the earth has ripened,
Stubble reflects the yield
Of corn, oats, and barley, which
Once en clothed each field.

'Tis a time of mellow fruitfulness
As a poet perceived of yore...
The season of the harvest -
Fair nature's brimful store.

Liam ó Comáin

The Self

across life's canvas
the self forever
paints a portrait

the finished work
may not be
to our liking

but disdain not
for it contains
its own integrity

Liam ó Comáin

The Snowdrop

Winter's death decree defied by the snowdrop
As up through a dank leafy decay
Arrives green shoots,
Followed by a white blossom
Then another, then another...
Opening nature's imprisoning fetters
Against the odds in order to herald
A resurrection.

Crocuses, primroses, daffodils
All follow echoing the new life,
A call taken up by all of nature
Except one who doubted
And from whose doubt came
The great act of truth-
' My Lord and my God! '

All in accord with the great natural symphony
Impregnated with a promise from one Anointed.

Liam ó Comáin

The Song Of The Driver

(after Lorca)

Over ice, down hills,
Blue car, pale moon,
Love is calling me
To a fireside in Derry.

(Chorus)

Oh Derry, Derry, Derry,
My own lovely Derry
The capital of the north
West of Erin.

Sure the journey is long
But the car it is sound
As I drive over hills
And through valleys.

(Chorus)

The journey I know well
For I've covered it before
On my way to the
Oak Grove of Erin.

(Chorus)

Liam ó Comáin

The Song Thrush

The song thrush sings
from a budding bough
not far from the fields
where farmers plough
'Tis early spring- so
crisp and cold- but in
this season I am never old.

I welcome the spring
of every year as the thrush's
song attracts my ear
attracting me to the emerging foliage
a miracle of nature just like my old age.

Liam ó Comáin

The Sower

(Upon seeing ~The Sower'
By Vincent van Gogh)

As day broke you scattered seed
While a chorus permeated the vale
A solitary figure with a fist of seeds
Silhouetted by a rising spring sun

From a slung sack you grasped
And dispersed it back and forth
In the footsteps of your father
And his father and so on

Bedding seed to germinate
And flourish forth in order
To feed animal and man
To stave off their hunger

You are a sower by work
But you are also
An icon or image
Of he or she who provides

Through you I see God
The giver of life, the great
Provider, scattering the seed
Of love to and for all

Liam ó Comáin

The Spirit Of Love

Our Creator
And his Word
Love
One another
For God is Love

From their love
Comes the
Holy Spirit
The third
Person
Of the Trinity
The Person
Who is with us
Who is in us
Nurturing
The growth of
Love for God
And each other.

Unfortunately
The great gift
Of our freedom
Comes into conflict
With the essence
Of our Creator.

Liam ó Comáin

The Stream

entering the river
from high mountain ridges
via woods and moorlands
the stream gallops

smoothing rocks
enveloping trout
disturbing pebbles

the carrier of leaves
upon a turbulent
surface until lost in
the river's mouth
on its way to the sea

Liam ó Comáin

The Thatched Cottage

It could be anywhere
That peaceful place
Approached by a boreen.

Distemper white with
A thatched roof like
A statue looking down.

There the birth cry was
Heard and from there
Funerals took place.

Night and day it sits
Like a seagull keeping
A kindly eye.

Occasionally mail arrives
From different parts
Like swallows returning.

You'll always be welcome
There- just lift the latch
And go on in....

Liam ó Comáin

The Thaw

white carpets
shred as a thaw
settles

early spring
with dark boughs
dripping

a snowdropp
pierces slushy
ground

from a cherry
robin observing

Liam ó Comáin

The Thorn Crown

It caught my eye
on a sunny Lent morning
nestling above a picture
of the Sacred Heart;
outside a slight wind blew
and the observed cherry
bore light pink blossoms.

It was a crown of thorns
carefully formed using
the tension of the wood,
an assumed replica of
the crown placed on
the head of Jesus
prior to his Crucifixion.

A model to reflect upon
and my thoughts caused
a shiver down my spine;
I who knew the anguish
of seasonal depression,
yet nothing in comparison
to the potential of those thorns.

What mystery lies in providence:
that a plant thorn would be an
instrument of torture in a
mock display; presently recalled
by a ring of thorn wood near to
a rush fashioned Brigid's Cross.

Liam ó Comáin

The Tick Of A Clock

The only sound
Is the tick of a clock

You are reading a novel
I am writing verse

You enter the author's mind
While I enter memory

Yet our hearts are one

Requiring each other
As the tick requires silence

Liam ó Comáin

The Valley Of The Roe

Blessed with God's grandeur is the valley of the Roe,
Which reflects nature's glory where pure waters flow,
The sun nurtured foliage by heather mountain sides,
The patchwork landscape to Lough Foyle with its tides.

In Spring there's the growth of numerous green shades
And Summer arrives bringing forth golden blades;
With Autumn there's tints of red, orange, and yellow,
And with Winter's arrival the hues are somewhat mellow.

Yes, the valley of the Roe is a gem to the beholder,
To a son such as I as through life I grow older,
For God has lavished that vale in Derry county
With gems of creation from the realm of His bounty.

Liam ó Comáin

The Verse Artist

an onerous task
if only for the mis-
understanding
encountered...

daily struggling
to express through
a personal voice
even beyond the
limitation of rules

Liam ó Comáin

The Wake Of Bloody Sunday

No

Dogs bark

Nor people

Smile

Broken hearts

And silence

For the dead

A city sobs

A nation

Weeps

Because of a peoples loss

Liam ó Comáin

The Wake Of Rain

brightness
of atmosphere
rain drops
slithering
pebbles
changing colour
as they dry

Liam ó Comáin

The Walls Of Derry

(By this shall all men know
that you are my disciples-
that you have love for one
another as I have loved you)

From planter sweat
And Irish stone
The walls arose
Beside the Foyle;
Where a foreign duo
In power combat
Conditioned the minds
Of a Christian people.
Rooting within the
Seeds of hatred
Which has flourished
For generations.

A paradox
Seeking resolution-
For their God
Is love and their
Share is hatred.
A resolution for
The good of all
Where genuine love
Replaces enmity:
Symbolised by an
Ancient structure
The Walls of Derry.

Liam ó Comáin

The Wart Well

a curative spring
eases from a moss
covered stone
enshrined with
pieces of cloth
like a drooping
willow

Liam ó Comáin

The Wild Goose

dusk in the isle of inch
waiting for the moon
takeing wing and rising
to meet the wild goose

with others forming a V
for a flight in moon light
soaring above Ireland
as the moon drifts
and the sea groans
in a deep bed far below

after hours of flight as
the sun rises parting
without a sound
flying homeward upon
the wind's crest
bringing to a conclusion
an imaginary journey

Liam ó Comáin

The Yellow Violin

From the yellow surface
In 'the yellow violin'
By Raol Dufy
I lifted the violin
And began to play
A pattern of sound
Which had it's origin
In the realm of mystery

Liam ó Comáin

The Youthful Season

Akin to scent
Is the air I breathe,
Our feathered friends
Follow the plough,
And into the womb
Of mother earth
Is set the seed which is
The bread of man,
Prefect of nature's realm.

In these my winter years
I let the windows
Of my soul gaze upon
The herald of summer:
Sweet spring,
Creative spring -
Spring the season of youth!

Liam ó Comáin

This Is What I Would Have Said

If I have not the time
to say goodbye

Life I have loved
My parents and kith
True friends I met
Our land of myth...

Nature's way
Snowdrops on Brigid's day
Swallows in the air at morn'
Fresh ploughed fields
And shoots of corn...

And of course
The magic of words
Pregnant with thought
Windows to eternal things
And Love himself with Mary there...

Our children with a love that's deep
And in that love I treasure you!

Liam ó Comáin

Thoughts Clothed

From the womb
of my being
poems form

Coloured
flecks of an
Irish dawn
between
each stanza

Thoughts clothed
in the words
of a human tongue
green and white
orange and more

Spiralling through
creation in tune
with the rhythm of
the stars twinkling
in the beyond

Liam ó Comáin

Thoughts Of Derry

Thoughts Of Derry

In August at mid-day on
An English building site
The air was clammy,
And office workers
Across from the site
Lay in the shade of
Ancient trees, at lunch break.

I too sat eating tomato
Sandwiches after hours
Of hudding bricks
Wondering if the sun
Was roasting the Creggan
Or were grey clouds
Sprinkling drizzle on the Foyle.

Near by, roses were
Blooming and window
Boxes flourished with
Natures glory but in
Thought recalling flowers
Mantling the grounds of
Brooke Park and es.

And as a tourist sought
Directions his presence
Initiated recall of past days
At Fahan and Bunrana
When the August Bank
Holidays sparked an exodus
From my native City.

Tonight, with a friend
From the Fountain, I
Shall enjoy a few pints
And then back to the
Hostel where sleep will

Prevent, unless I dream,
The constant tug of my Derry roots.

Liam ó Comáin

To A Couple Of Poets

(John Montague & Seamus Heaney)

*As the oak lies in the acorn so
poetry comes from everyday life*

You showed me that poetry lay
In the soil and the smell of slurry,
The hayrick and the competitive
Spirit of a gaelic match.

I was inclined to look for it elsewhere
But through your art I met the Muse
In the streets of Derry and the Fair
At Ballycastle...

She drank with me in a Limavady pub
And swam the cove across from
Mullaghmore as July rain peppered
The sea birds.

An elusive maiden but one to be wooed
With persistence in consort with a
Nurtured awareness of ones milieu.

I thank you.

So dig fellow poets among the pigeoners,
The potato gatherers, or whatever life bestows.

Liam ó Comáin

To Call Back Later

'Time grows afraid of the triumph of time'-
Thomas MacGreevy.

He made an effort to smile
And my eyes filled up
Knowing the man he was...

At five asleep (or in a coma?)
As Mary washed his brow.

Leaving, to call back later,
Recalling events from childhood...

Later, upon contact, a heart-
Broken sister...

Hard to believe he's gone...
Seeing him now in the face
Of my child.

Liam ó Comáin

To Ensure Life

(in memory of my mother weeding)

in bent posture
a woman moves
along the drills
occasionally
she straightens
and the sun
brightens
a furrowed brow

on she goes
with back breaking
movements
her purpose
to ensure life
in the grasping act
of death
her form melting
into the landscape....

Liam ó Comáin

To Paint In Words

I regret that words
must fail
in my expression
of love for you
and yet
from the depths
of my poetic soul
I have ploughed
and harrowed
syllabic soil
until sweat broke
upon my brow
forcing me to lay
aside my tool
and try again
another day
to paint in words
my love for you

Liam ó Comáin

To Pass Wind

You come with a noise
And a sense of odour
But then where do you go?
Do you implode?
Is there an explanation
For your behaviour?

Liam ó Comáin

Turf

a piece of turf
glued to a door
over a crack
so the wind
can't spider in

Liam ó Comáin

Two Verses

Lime coloured petals
Hanging from tresses
Of teenage days
Drop snow like
Into the flow
Of sparkling streams
Reflecting the silver
Of summer moons

The murmuring flow
Waltzes across
The sands
Of orchard green
Contrasting with tinged
White and pink buds
Of opening autumn
As the mallard flies
Into the rest
Of warming nights

Liam ó Comáin

Two Young Derry Martyrs

(To the memory of Michael Divine and Patsy O'Hara who died on hunger strike seeking political status as prisoners of war.)

Tell me why people are gathering in Derry's little streets?
What is their conversation as solemnly they meet?
Why are the shops closed in the drizzling rain?
Break the news, break it softly, there are martyrs coming home.

It was not the field of battle both willing to face with pride
Where the sounds of guns rattle where our martyred heroes died
But in the dreaded H - blocks they found an early tomb
With the bravery of Cu Chulainn two young Derry lads went home.

Hear the march of our people with faces sad and pale,
Hear the steady foot and the solemn and the piper's plaintive wail,
Hoist the Tri- colour to half-mast above the muffled drum
For the gloom around is now cast our martyrs are coming home.

Make their graves upon the hilltop where they played in days gone by
Fire a volley oe'r the graveside where our martyred soldiers lie
And let's not forget their sacrifice- for us they stood alone-
Bravely serving the noble cause of Theobald Wolfe Tone.

Liam ó Comáin

Uillean Sound

(For all whose roots
are in Ireland)

Uillean sound
Permeating
The depths
Of my person.

Drawing me
To my roots on
A western isle.

Passed on,
Generation by
Generation,
Expressing
A nation's spirit.

Named and
Renamed,
Carried by ear
Through
The passage
Of the years.

Sound touching
A receptive mind,
Bringing a lilt
To my lips and
A lightness to
My feet, in the
Spirit of my people.

Liam ó Comáin

Ulster Lunacy

Shoot the assistant in the shop
She's a 'pape' not worth a pop.

Blow the legs off the civil servant
In the cause of a national parliament.

Shoot the joy riders in the car
Do it now before they travel far.

Smash the hands of the imbecile
Then no more will he ever steal.

Blow up the baby in the pram
It was an accident claimed a man.

Curfew the town said the khaki trooper
These paddies need a bloody whooper.

Grab their testicles said the burly cop
That will ensure the words will pop.

We will not agree said the politician
While day by day we face perdition.

Liam ó Comáin

Ultimate Gift

Faith is gift as is reason

The former greater
Than the latter

Reason is wonderful
But it can fail as well
As being deceptive

Through faith God
Unites with humanity

An urgent requirement
The seedbed of love
The source of life eternal

Liam ó Comáin

Under The Eye Of My Mother

Oh Immaculate Mother
My parents helped me
To find You in my life.

You remained there
Even when I abandoned
Your Son for You know me...
Assured of my return
As a result of Our Father's love
Via Our Holy Spirit.

Oh Mother,
It is my belief that Our Lord
Has placed me in Your care,
So that You may fashion me
According to His pattern.
For You are the instrument
Of Our Saviour and His grace,
Therefore I am Yours - all Yours.

Liam ó Comáin

Unfinished Verse

In a small vale
in Derry county
there dwells
a teenage beauty.

With her bluish eyes
and graceful sighs
my Rosy is the best.

Alas I'm in a situation
dwelling in trepidation
for she may
have found another
through the influence
of her brother.

Oh a calamity
there would be
if she was to go
away from me....

Liam ó Comáin

Universal Caring

We cannot care
unless we love:
being unselfish
for each other.

For love is the
means whereby
we become
concerned for
one another as a
sister or a brother,
and that's what
we are no matter
what our faith, our
race, our colour.

So let's care for
our neighbour
and our world,
loving custodians
of the universe now
and forever.

Liam ó Comáin

Upon Every Leaf Of Spring

As a species
We do not live
To die, we die
In order to live.

Not death
But life-
Eternal life -
Our destiny.

In the midst of winter
Let us be spring people,
In the midst of death
People of resurrection,
For the latter is written
Upon every leaf of spring.

Liam ó Comáin

Upon Observing The Springtime Sky

Old memories tug at my heart
Bringing a tear rush to each eye
As I think of you upon observing
The springtime sky.

Down memory lane I tread
There we are all together,
Those years of joy and happiness
In the company of Mother.
Not far from the pigeon loft
Were you recorded many a win,
And the bicycles nearby which
Helped to keep you trim.
'Then', little realising that
The flow of time brings grief...

All were sad, some could not weep,
Some sorrow had not tears, as you
Departed from our lives in answer
To our fears...

In the cemetery by Saint Mary's
We laid your coffin low
With broken hearts as a church
Bell rang near to the River Roe.

Yes, my thoughts are always of you,
Da, when I view the springtime sky,
And this prevents me since your death
From being able to say goodbye....

Liam ó Comáin

Urban Effusion

the greys of the city
lingered and deepened
in its aged structures
a mature effusion
beneath wearing rain
and wind and sun

an elemental artistic
achievement visualising
the demise of urban
reality

here and there
within the inner city
pockets of concrete
and synthetic blossoms
brightened the shadows
of ancient abodes
reminiscent of the
floriferous space
of the suburban
environment...

beneath
a puniceous sky
the new and the old
stood solitary

Liam ó Comáin

Vincent

night was
important
lack of light
compensated
through visual
memory

the principle
of contrast
and the influence
of delacroix

cypresses
olive trees
mountains
the catalyst

pursuing
essence

landscape
its very being
its vitality
its flux
its constancy

sunflowers
irises
blossoming
almonds
a few of
the creme
de la creme

Liam ó Comáin

Visitation

candle light
flickering shadow
stillness

presence
beyond
perception

mystical
permeating
purifying
healing

solitude
silence
communion

Liam ó Comáin

We Follow Your Light

Oh Star of the Sea
We follow Your light
Bringing us to harbour
On the barque of the Spirit
Captained by Your Son
To the embrace of Our Father
Within the harbour of love
Our only desire

Liam ó Comáin

What Christmas Means To Me

The anniversary of the birth
Of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Born of Mary the Blessed
To save us from perdition
That's what
Christmas
Means to me.

The greatest gift to be
Received by humanity
Wrapped in swaddling
Clothes in a manger
That's what
Christmas
Means to me.

A parcel of Love delivered
From Loves Source
For us to love one another
Via the grace of His Spirit
That's what
Christmas
Means to me.

So let's hail the Gift of all gifts
Within the depths of winter
And love Our Saviour fair
Who brought us salvation
Thats what
Christmas
Means to me.

Liam ó Comáin

What We Are

across
the darkness
let us together
light our candles

let us be
what we are

why sacrifice
what we are
to what we wish
to be

perfectly
we are shaped
to what we are

and the sculptor
is indifferent
to applause

Liam ó Comáin

When Children Sang

(In memory of a poet and mystic-
Patrick Kavanagh)

Along Raglan Road
I saw you stroll
One fine Easter morn'
When children sang
'Christ has risen,
Christ has risen'
As they skipped along.

Joy flowed from their voices
As you strolled along the road
With a smile you stopped to listen
Prior going on to your abode.

I often recall that occasion
When I saw you in Dublin Town
Far removed from the pagan poet
And those northern hills so brown.

So now, dear Patrick, to your memory
I raise my glass this blessed night
Thanking you for your gift of poetry
Which has brought us much delight.

Liam ó Comáin

When I Am Gone

When I am gone
from your sight
feel me in the life
around you.

In the kiss of the sun,
the touch of the rain,
the push of the wind.

When snow falls I am there...

Hear me in the crunch
of the frost, the cry of
a child, the call of the birds.

When I am missing from your sight
know that I am with you always.

Liam ó Comáin

Who Happened Upon America

From Genoa
With a desire
For fame
And fortune.

A man
Of mystery
With many
Masks
Changing
The course
Of history.

In youth
Falling in love
With the sea
Seeking
Not gold
But spices
Which he pursued
With a fiery mind.
In fact the entire
Far East
Glowed within his
Imagination.

Inspired by
Muslim traders,
Their influence
And wealth,
Columbus set sail
Unaware of fates course....

Liam ó Comáin

Winter Art

a hum from
telegraph wires
where dark
movements
of starlings
flap and shriek

lough ice
cracked
and bobbing
ducks slithering

a young rabbit
puzzled
nibbling the air

winter strokes
on the parchment
of a white landscape

Liam ó Comáin

Winter In The Valley

A strong wind blows from the north
Through the gap of snow- capped hills,
While beyond the fields flows the Roe
With pieces of ice like broken drills.

Some travelling folk are in the wood
With a Connemara seeking to be fed,
As milking cows low from the byre
And wild rose blooms, alas, are dead.

Beyond the barn alongside the hen house,
A group of ewes in a huddle lie,
Far removed from their summer quarters
Below an owl in a turbulent sky.

Upon a leafless bough a little redbreast
Utters a call to the coming spring,
In need of food, in need of shelter,
Perhaps a thaw tomorrow will bring...

My wife sits knitting before the fire
There listening to the north wind's call,
While the babes asleep in the upper room
As I stand watching snow- flakes fall.

Liam ó Comáin

Winter Vision

Slowly rays pierced
The cloud
And for a moment
I felt as if I'd been
Reborn
Knowing the coming
Months will see the
Valley in a new light
And the now dormant
Land like a well
After a period of drought.

Liam ó Comáin

Winter's End

A crystal frost
Slithers down a pane
As the sun mounts
The morning sky.

A day opening
In glory as it is
Filled with the wealth
Of the ascending sun.

A new year advances
Over a grey landscape
Clothed here and there
In cobwebs.

Ones footfall breaks
The silence with a crunch
And steam dances from
The back of a bullock.

The frozen earth is
Lifeless to some
But others are aware
Of the stirrings of spring.

Yes, the tail- end of
Winter is a period
Pregnant with new life,
A time for expectancy.

Liam ó Comáin

Woodland Death

On the woodland path
Unfolding leaves die
On a broken limb
An assault
Upon mother nature
Self inflicted by the wind
Or the action of a human vandal.

Liam ó Comáin