

Poetry Series

# Seamus Hogan

## - poems -

Publication Date:  
2008

Publisher:  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Seamus Hogan()

# A Christmas Carol.

Crows freeze in mid-flight  
And hang there  
Like fire damaged decorations.

In longboats farmers  
Glide out to fodder  
Tossing ballast with steel pronged

Oars to a pod of cattle  
Bugling steam into the evening.  
Along Broderick's hillcrest

A tribe of stooping pine  
File east slower than Artic thaw  
While daylight leaks

Through a star pricked sky.  
Baby Jesus could you know  
That between the bar door

And the midnight choir  
Someone would urinate a crucifix  
In this year's snow?

Seamus Hogan

# A Falling Leaf

Two riders in the elderberry road,  
grass between.  
With blackthorn and hazel, unseen.  
Only the breathing, the hoofs  
and browning green.  
Two horses, two riders.

A hollow came, rose,  
returned again. Another came,  
rose and returned again.

Two silent riders  
in a silence unbroken  
but for sound on stone  
and breathing air.  
Broken, unbroken  
as they pass by the door  
which was their destination.

Hollows came and went,  
returned again. Bends  
bent, unbent, unmentioned went.

Seamus Hogan

# Bomb Victim

A child blown to pieces  
And a cardinal speaks.  
Bells lick blood.  
Silent curates.  
Like little coffins  
Cameramen shoulder cameras.

Seamus Hogan

# Boudoir.

Evening again lays down shadow  
Like a cardplayer  
With a hopeless hand.  
At the bend in the avenue  
A Fragrance of honeysuckle  
Gathers up overhanging dusk.

Three trees by the bedroom window  
Are unwinding the final strands  
Of daylight from their branches;  
With silent hands  
You are winding another night  
Through your hair.

What is it, is it that is in the air?  
Something finished, or a thing just begun?  
While the orchestra underneath what happens  
Still plays on, will play on,  
You go on twisting and untwisting  
Nights through your hair,  
Nights out of your hair.

Seamus Hogan

# Damascus

Perhaps it's a little consolation that the village  
Lays a carpet of whispers as you are led into  
Church on Sundays. That they look towards your pew  
at an angle and grab a glimpse of their lives  
In the blankness as though it were a mirror.  
When you hear those prayers for the sick through  
The nave of the priest's hands, who do you see?  
Or hear? Last winter's ice underfoot  
On the way to the cowhouse, or some October's  
Apple falling. Which will not splinter or fall  
Through your eyes again.

Once, thinking you were alone, you shuddered.  
Then, like transparent fruit, two tears were shook  
Free from your pain's branch. A sob, too much  
In your hands already, shattered the silence  
And cracks raced to my shore of vision  
Exposing a torrent of helplessness.  
Sometimes when I chase a last pea around the plate  
Or say 'That girl is really pretty'  
I feel as if I've opened a letter  
That isn't for me.

Seamus Hogan

# Decade

Until I was nine or ten  
I don't remember any other cares  
Than getting the lessons done in time  
To play a little more before the prayers.  
Though, some nights, in the half moon,  
Around the fire, of personalised chairs,  
Between the mysteries, the pinching, the faces  
and smirks, I'd be half half aware  
It was because of another world  
That we were kneeling there  
Bums to the heat.  
Many's the time since then  
I've prayed, without smiling,  
For a heaven just like those nights  
When the Rosary was said.

Seamus Hogan



# Feeding Time

Out fly the fowl  
Like feathers from a bolster  
And who comes last but the rooster.  
Pausing to raise a leg,  
Stretch a claw,  
As though easing on a glove  
Before his morning stroll.

Attached to my hands  
By strings of grain  
I move the flock across the yard  
And back again.  
Back again.

Seamus Hogan

# Hearth

For Seamus and Marie

A turf flame is more modest  
Than that of well seasoned elm,  
More at home in a smaller room.  
But with a wedge of rain  
Between here and the woodshed  
What can be done?

Seamus Hogan

# Heron, West Cork

Among reeds  
Surrounded by waves of rock,  
Stands a Heron.  
In its beak  
The X of a frog  
About to make his final 'plop! '.

The Heron collects,  
Beak first, then out around the wings,  
Slowly, slowly all the way down, down  
To its claw tips.  
Slowly. Slowly drawing the cloak that is Heron  
Up, up into air.

Seamus Hogan

# I Was About To Call On You

I was about to call on you  
But at the gate I noticed  
Even the smoke reluctant  
To leave the chimney.

Seamus Hogan

# Kisses

Like birds  
Flight of tongue  
Curlew of neck  
Swooping breasts  
Song of belly  
And twisting thighs  
Have all made their nest  
In my beard.

Seamus Hogan

## May 2006

In the orchard  
Our dog Mr. Lynch  
Rolls in his own happiness.

Framed by Marybrook pond,  
A heron.  
Still life  
On the easel of himself.

Across the river  
Sunshine butters Knocknanuss  
With furze blossom.  
Cattle bat flies  
With their fly bat ears.

Two jets crisscross  
A blue sky  
Leaving an X  
On the ozone layer.

Seamus Hogan

# Memory

It must have been this month of the year,  
November, because I wore boots of rubber  
and the cows wore boots of mud.

There wasn't a lot of milk to be milked  
but still it had to be done,  
a dropp for the tea. Mastitis.

Warm hindquarters in the draught  
white hyperbolas in the dark  
methodical munching of hay-

ah, what a way  
to have grown up,  
what a way.

Seamus Hogan

# Monday Morning

One coin and none to keep it company.  
The chicken I'd imagined laying golden eggs  
Today asserted himself.  
The chopping block chopped.  
From the foothills of morning  
A steep looking day.

Seamus Hogan



# Moving Apart

Moving apart

As quietly as a puddle freezes,  
Crying as silently as slush.  
Ah, how long it seems  
Since the first word was a kiss.

Seamus Hogan

# Near Doneraile

Chisels of rain  
Prise light into seven arches  
On a gossamer anvil.

Last week's snow from Ballyhoura  
Swells the old Awbeg  
With its childhood.

The cock snaps shut his beak  
Just in time, preventing the cock-a-doodle  
From toppling him over.

This last Monday before New Year  
Neither courage nor terror necessary  
To ascend the alarm clock rungs.

Seamus Hogan

## New Jacket. (For Damaris)

That dead tree that I'm about to cut,  
proud with its crow bounty.

A few sheep mushroomed  
fly scarved cattle fields  
down the road,  
you.

In the wardrobe  
a new jacket  
waiting to be worn old.

This winter  
whatever the weather  
I shouldn't be cold.

Seamus Hogan

# Nightfalls

This evening of open windows  
Night waits among the leaves  
As quietly as tea draws,  
As a last fruit ready to fall.

Things seem about to step apart,  
As though far too close  
For what is coming to pass through.  
Then, as if grown too long,

Song breaks away from the bird  
And in this silence everything,  
As in a minuet, is briefly parted  
Before the last movement can begin.

Seamus Hogan

# Nightshift.

Neck deep in night  
With mainland morning just a line  
On the horizon under a splash of ink sky  
Spilt by the arm of waking dreams.

Two ships pass the last pipe of darkness.  
Flagpoles fidget for their flags;  
Unbridled masts fret for the bit.  
Apart from the odd sighing truck  
Lights change for no one in particular.

Clocks lap daylight's shore  
And a time lock ticks, ticks,  
On the stable door of my dreams.

Seamus Hogan

# Shreds

Yes, it's true  
that I am quiet  
this morning.  
But did you hear  
me smile in your ear  
before dawn?

Seamus Hogan

# Sketch For A Self Portrait

If You can imagine a blind woman  
Knitting, in total darkness, a woollen  
Jumper then the wool you see is me.

If you can imagine a benevolent angel  
Hand knitting a child's dream, as the child  
Dreams, you see the pattern and me.

If you see an altar and a lamb being led  
To the slaughter, the space between the sacrifice  
And the slaughterer is me.

Seamus Hogan

# Starlings

From their control tower  
the nest of chicks  
Guide in their parents  
On a runway of cries.

Following the briefest turnaround  
Take off across the backyard  
Is over a broken white line  
Of birdshite.

Seamus Hogan



# Station

Station.

Our train has stopped  
But the platform seems to move.  
Your book is closed  
And that poem moves me still!

Seamus Hogan

# Territory

For Hannah.

Before settling for the evening  
A cock pheasant  
Hammers in staves of sound.

Then applauds himself.

After a pause  
Smaller birds  
Trellis the in-between spaces.

Seamus Hogan

# The Blackbird

Inside a sycamore  
yellow peaked black movement  
embroidering the branches  
with music of threaded air.  
Loose ends dangle  
into Claremont Road.

Seamus Hogan

# The Raising Of Lazarus.

As he slowly rose,  
The weight of death wound  
Around him, moans wrenched  
in two like a smile for a stranger  
Who momentarily seemed familiar.  
The crowd, as if a vulva, pushed aside  
Allowing this strange awakening passage.

At each bending of the knees  
There seemed a hesitation;  
A nearly worded indecision  
With every footstep swelling  
Then drowning in the steady current  
of their need. An anger  
Kindling in eyes already unused to light  
At having been called away  
By their suffering to decay.

But the earth, already overflowing,  
Decided. It knew his going  
Was merely a slow return.

Seamus Hogan

# Wave

Right out to the lighthouse and further  
Fields of sheaves meshing and swashing.  
All along the floorboards of fathoms  
Sound ceaselessly threshes silence.

Water rising, floundering, water dancing,  
Water flailed to water clinging  
Between waves to a breezebeat pirouetting.  
Crest and trough to the shore bringing

Alated landscape from a butterflied hill  
Inside unmoving salient slopes  
Aboard their observer's surrendered will

Seamus Hogan