

Seán Lysaght

NEW LEAF



Gallery Books

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for Jessica

An Opening

Yesterday's cuttings show how I hold on,
a scythe asleep against a haycock,
a hayfork still rooted on its tines.

Now the morning surrounds me
as I sit at a big window
designed for just this light.

I am kept by rendered walls
beside a line of windy trees
and a distant, motley quilt of fields.

All of it the measure of a plan,
but for a notebook opening
and a pencil hovering, to write,

*Like a swallow through an open door
it turned briefly in the kitchen,
the space of its fluttering soul.*

May

A maiden aunt, who approached
those dazzling heaps of white
as she crossed a field to the well

along a worn path
her nephew followed in June
when the blossom was all over.

I fished obsessively in the river
and made her anxious. (She believed
that the big pool by the bridge

had swallowed a coach and four.)
Now I'm on her track once more,
waist-deep in rushes

to fill her white enamel bucket
and get it brimming back
to the scullery cold.

Loose boots across a concrete yard.
White spit of my toothpaste
on silverweed, confusing the hens.

A zinc mug dipped to rinse my mouth
and fill, and fill again with may blossom
until the month runneth over.

New Leaf

So much fun with pronouns,
but in the end no certainty
that any fit.

And what if living stopped
in the house of optatives,
what legacy would be left

beyond the obvious material effects
(royal mugs, a green vase
of my mother's, Dad's flower books)?

Every day now I visit
my own wood to see
how wildness structures space

with light and leaves,
and learn at last
to speak a language of the arbitrary

and keep saying it,
before a visitor, out of respect,
steps through the back door

to smoke a cigarette.

Aubépines

Still time to consider the question of tone

for that man slumped forward
in his chair in the garden
after a lunchtime glass of wine.

Does he look like someone summing up?

Next thing it will be your turn
to help him back to the house
and take his place beside the hawthorns.

Do it now while they are still at their best,
go out into the garden, leave the page
to a different moment of remembrance.

Any later and the *aubépines*
are lost in translation very far back
and the flowers will be confetti flaking off.