

Eamon Grennan

**OF SHARDS
AND TATTERS**



Gallery Books

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Breath-Happenings in Plague Time

Last night it was the lying-on-her-back small silver boat of the March moon — afloat into the wider dark of this night's star-pocked sky — that I wanted to keep alive in my mind through sleep that's otherwise haunted by all the nagging bites of anxiety the present is treating every last one of us to, and so I hoped to have that silver coracle call me away to a simpler state, but nothing happened . . . though I still think of all the six-man currachs of Aran plying between inlets and always at the mercy of those unruly seas but setting out anyway — the way even I might simply look unblinking into the face of what might happen. Awake after ragged sleep, so, I walk once more between trees, each with its own face and outline — from the small broken ridges of these oaks to the upward-muscled ropeyness of locusts, or the pale surface of one solitary yellow-wood . . . And so, even if this morning's grey cloud ceiling keeps us confined, still my sense of how these trees are swapping underground their own age-worn secrets, their larger sense of all that happens, I can still — minute by minute — breathe that in . . . while the perfectly balanced silver-riveted moon-boat presides over all this that cannot help happening.

Things Here and There

While the black dragonfly of a sky-high helicopter drifts silently overhead in the wide blue yonder we get on with our this-world business of shopping at our local supermarket where, among its corridors and crowds, I can sense the calm drift of souls in purgatory with their tempting choice after choice but unable to choose: their distress etched on their own halted adrift faces, their own purgatorial, aching souls . . . while in the garden next door three children — like liberated souls in the fields of light — are playing with their small white poodle they call 'Angel'. Hearing that, I shuffle back with you into the house and begin unpacking what we've bought: all the simple good things (apples, oranges, soups, vegetables and meats): an array of simple plenty, and good enough in this shifting unsettled world for me — for us — to be going on with.

Recognizing the Real

Even though the unleaved magnolia at the gate goes on thrusting its hardy, white, still barely spear-tip blossoms into this March air, and even though that scarlet-winged cardinal will not cease its flute-clear spring song of its own territorial imperative; nor the invisible dove stop cooing its lament from the leafless, young red oak; and even though I go on walking and waving when I pass a stranger at a safe distance (each of us intending the common blessing (*Stay safe! Stay well!*)), and even though (once safe home again) I'll sit by a window and with closed eyes take in the bright late afternoon sun bathing my whole grateful face, and feel luxuriously at home in it and far from what Sappho calls *Night's black sleep on the eyes* — still I know I must open my sight again to what this world has to offer at this, its plague-pierced moment, and so — despite white blossoms or red bird or the kindly salutation of strangers; in spite of this redemptive touch of sun on my suppliant skin — I'll have to step back again into the line of fire, and try once again not to flinch at it.

With Mozart and Wren

Note by note she coaxes Mozart to enter our living room — building a melody by slow degrees, repeating a phrase until the ear confirms it and she can move on to the next cluster, the way you'd go over and over a phrase in any scripted speech — so the whole thing hangs together, with nothing left wanting: the very air tuned to it, made musical, while the room becomes for a minute transformed to a space where the music turns time — that old enemy — into its essence: a blessing. Meantime — at our sun-struck front door — a wren has been building its nest, and breathlessly making its own sweet headlong music in our lidded postbox while placing a multitude of thinnest twigs flat to make a floor on which the woven nest itself has been — twig by twig — taking shape with filaments of dried grass blades twisted in: a finished form into which a miniature brace of eggs will be laid and left. Life, so, is what's happening under our very eyes and ears . . . and so what can we do but wait on it?