

Steak & Stations

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Michael Egan

Penned in the Margins

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For Noelle

Steak & Stations

*after all
as the man said
thought
is in de mouf*

'A Theory of Poetry', John James

*The shadow of a buzzard moving, seldom
Noticed in the city – people
Have lost interest in that sort of thing.*

'Some Words about Some Silence', Christopher Middleton

Steak

steak!

they gave him steak his gums red and hollow
not one tooth left he chewed it he swallowed every bit
he got it all ate can't eat the stuff now
not even soaked in gravy onions and mushy peas
his mother with her dark eyes from as far east as you can go
not the dingle's sloping streets but nothing foreign about her really
it was just she was weary that's why her eyes were dark
her hair falling out then so young she wore
a grey shawl over her head as if going to mass
they never did how strange them never setting
foot in church our lot my mother's lot
always there day in day out on first name terms
with the priest so he blessed my father
before he got new teeth crossed his hollow
gums gave him holy water to splash on them
but that steak massive chunks at the end of his fork
pushed into the blessed memories of how it was to chew.

landfall

it is other than this these waves we've had
for too long so long they're ours these unsteady suppers
it has shape look the long back of a sleeping
beast because the river dee has long since silted
we end up here her legs open lady waiting
lighthouses flickering in harbours bays
ports there is the firm footing of forgotten streets stumble
cobble and going further out so you can't see the sea
so you can't smell it forget what merchants bring
what went back out why penny lane is penny lane
there's less of it less of this man's land
of bricks rising up and windows firmly shut the homely hearths
you know lay at the bottom of those chimneys chimneys
exhaling smoke from the hill to see it is enough
even up there no sea just the still waves of land
frozen tumult of fields and the tall spike
of an aerial like a mast and all of this its ship
it is other than this out there this wind now blowing
and rummaging the grass wouldn't bother sails
they'd stay and soup wouldn't slosh from our bowls.