

Rhythm, Rhymes, and Pleasure:
Mesostics on Ciaran Carson's *The Star Factory*

By

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raglan sTreet
my father wHo
on the thronE
 headS level
 wiTh
 eAch
otheR
 brieF looks of
 diAlogue
 exChanged
 exTends
 beyOnd
 the cRamped dimensions of
 memorY

1/01

and narraTive
 Him his
 cigarEtte
 becomeS a
 lipsTick blip
 time-lApse squiggles
the 3-d blackboaRd
 oF possibility
 illustrAte
 Cursive loops
 The writing fades
 tOo-slow
 bRains
predetermined Yet always new

1/11

each Telling
empHasis
Each time
whiSpering
aT some appropriate
signAls
an impoRtant episode
From
pomAnder bulbs
desCribed by
iTs ubiquity
Of plumbing
labyRinthine sewers
in stYgian gloom

2/06

porTals
enormous tHick cast-iron
discs provEd
impoSsible
To lift
corporAtion would
mateRialize
disturbed circumFERENCE
And we
desCending into
the world wiThheld
frOm us
we had pRemonitions
squinting through the eYe-knot

2/19

of a creosoted pine
counterweights and
cogged
wheels
porter
emanates
where blurred men
club-footed hooves
rang out
each
other
mouthing silently
writing on the air
the andrew carnegie library

That library
in some households
like loo and water-closet
i'd see
water wobbling
just after dawn
tinkle of the milk-cart
night-shift disembodied
float on board a tram
exercised minimal
stops and starts within
iron
parallels of time
early

drawing ouT their awnings
their produce fresH and cool
that morning's markEt
 haS occurred to me
 in These
 dreAms
 my paRents
 beFore i was born
but the dreAm
 meChanism always
 subverT this
 Outcome
back where I staRted
 listening to mY father

4/04

as i wriTe
three maHogany-stained
 pinE
 Shelves on
 iTs
 bAck wall
 once Resided
 british Ferns and their
 Allies
rovering to suCcess
 sporT for
 yOung men
 loRd baden-powell
the life of the flY

4/21

<p style="text-align: center;">with sTanley on the congo the romance of fisH lifE i Said oddly diddle i hunTing wAsps foR a variety of reasons Foxed pAper a lewis Carroll figure recenTly in the pages of the cOmplete poetical woRks of new York</p>	<p>4/23</p> <p>5/2</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">visiTing card withH a coat-of-arms a remarkable reSemblance to that of belfasT two rampAnt sea-hoRses I sniFf again smells thAt appertain to the waiting-room mantlepieCe gongs of sT peter's waft acrOss the inteRvening time unbearably tall mill chimneYs</p>	<p>5/13</p> <p>6/01</p>

Teetered
cHurning out
smokE like
fleetS of armed
desTroyers
a frAmed
repRoduction for
the Five-funnelled
russiAn destroyer
Commonly known as
the packeT of
wOodbines
it Reminds me
these daYs

6/06

someTimes he comes down
a book under His arm
oftEn it
iS
The
belfAst street directory of 1948

6/18

* * * *

zeTland street pondering 7/02
the alphabet wHich
a gEm engraved
uSed as a charm
2nd cenT
egyptiAn gnostic basilades
expRes 365 by addition
Found in a 2nd-cent poem
As a
Child
Till they're nearly indecipherable
tO write between
the Ruled lines
in the preceding entrY

waTerproof street 8/09
tHink of
mysElf
aS a bookworm
ruminaTing through
one thousAnd
five hundRed and ninety six pages
Following my
non-lineAr dictates
I make Chambered spirals
browsing leTters
blip of near-transparent yellOw
scuttles fRom the fold
distressed bY my metaphorical bookworm

expeditions inTo
green carpet tape tHat
is bEginning to come apart
nevertheleSs it remains an impressive
piece of book-productiOn

9/04

And
beaRing embossed advertisements
a sheaF of old
postcArds
form some mysterious allianCe
firsT
its frOnt
an elaboRate colour
darkens our skY

buT every
cloud Has a
silvEr lining
brighten the dayS
as They
pAss
forbid ouR repining
Fine-nibbed
delicAte hand
life on the oCean wave
would you like That
mOunt
pottingeR
did You have time

10/02

is it any beTter

10/11

tHan belfast

intEnded to

Send to you

wriTe and

Ask him

not a veRy good one

somewhat Flummoxed as to how

the rAby street address

Can only surmise

neiTher stamp date nor address

wOuld suggest

seRving the great war

luxographie a noYer paris no. 55

no leTter today

11/04

barron and mcmanus of ballysHannon

wEre both wounded

itS

Thinking of you

whAt make it

woRse

this Few lines

cAnt think what else to write

same thing over again inCluding Sunday

Think is it

gOing to last

foRever

for Your sake

Two messages	11/22
Had	
been predestined to meet	
it reminds us of the	
contents of a house	
the domiciled relationship	12/12
if furniture could speak	
loses the reflection	
implies a narrative	
we ascribe their provenances	
a new chapter	
a newcomer to the auctions	
the skewed incremental scale of bidding	
the accuracy with which	
a certain lot would come up	12/13
Hobby mania	
number variety and set	
in this case	
numbers are inherently variable	
say	
2 waterville street	
traffic cones	
lagondas	
penny-farthing bicycles	
farthings	
golf-balls	
marbles	
dinky toys	

hoTel-room sewing kits 13/12
pHonographs
moviE stills
Swords
pisTols
All these and
many moRe things
will Find that many subtexts exist
within the vAst realm
a thematiC collection
a sTamp menagerie
which cOuld include
the tapiR of the state of borneo 13/25
the daguerreotYpe of brothers water and place fell

the glazed chessboard seT 14/14
the lloyd loom cHair
thE pair of
cobra-Shaped brass candlesticks
might be
the fAce of a clock
a thiRd skewed prop
my rough scrawled holograph draFt
my shArp FW-560 fontwriter
he COuld afford to burn

* * * *

vasTly complicated interactive model 15/03
sHifts of emphasis
and dEtail
its parallelS are
benT by interior temperatures
engine nAcelles become gun pods
a diffeRent slant everything
Felt
clArified and heightened
the city's miCrosopic bits
Transfixed by
hOw I might assemble them
for theRe is no
more complicated technologY

i Trembled 16/01
filed them to the rigHt proportions
custom-madE from melted down
masterS of trompe-l'oeil
commercial colour charT
tree frog green khAki
stoRm salamander blue
some distressed their Fighter
plAnes
a heated surfaCe in order to
obTain flats
would lOok
wRong in the air
an earthbound plane of realitY

and yeT 17/03
to better inHabit the culmination of a drama
thEre is a narrative behind it
the cannibal techniqueS of model-makers
derived from the beauforT torpedo bomber
mAdE use of
beaufoRt parts
from Four to two
wAs powered by
herCules radial engines
naTurally changes were made
a lOckheed designed unit
poweRed by merlin engines
so you imagine mr humphreYs

whisTling as he recreates 17/26
tHis particular aircraft
sErved with
no 22 Sqn
in sanga sanga airSTrip in the phillipines
tremulous blAbby lips emitting the
cacaphony of messeRschmits and hurricanes
hold opposing Forces
in their hAnds
in hospital Corridors
in a parallel realiTy
try to make cOntact
thRough us with
crazes of religious mimesis tYpically

wiTnessed in damp patches 18/14
a turin sHroud christ
nEver
strange Since i surmised a
norThern response to
the moving stAtue
syndRome
daFfodil-yellow anoraks of german tourists
Apparently as you passed
her hand beCkon or she would nod
These statues were dumb
the demise of the family rOsary
a waRning of impending armageddon
opaque spawnY embryonic

sTages of 19/15
one tHing nor the
othEr
Skewed
brackeT
of An
eyebRow here
half an
eAr there
the power of iCons
the almosT russian orthodoxy
tobaccO
candle-flames aRe wavered by dim bronze gongs
the clunk of a copper pennY

dropped through the slot of a money box
candle auctions of the sixteenth

20/04

Century

Successful

the disappointed punter

the custodian of an exorbitant set of objects

your wavering orison dwindles

more efficient

Are the tibetan prayer windmills

their long wing-Cases

Trailing behind them

crawling up the neo-gothic

blackened spires of st peter's

lurking in alleys like winos

* * * *

assumpTion of the blessed virgin mary 21/02
dogma of the cHurch
until thEn
the bleSsed virgin
shorTly afterwards
it wAs assumed
assumeRe to take to
this belieF
a probAble opinion
whiCh
docTrine is universally held 22/01
nO
diRect reference

because they are used to slaYing

without doubT 22/27
in irisH august is lughnasa 23/01
cEltic god of light and genius
equated by julius caeSar with mercury
the harvesT festival held on
1st of August
at any Rate
the boneFire
in the leftover patch of lAnd
baCk of mooreland
for its consTituent elements
we'd scOut building-sites for planks
we'd knock on dooRs
do you remember the Year

Tied up 23/24
perHaps
bEcause the guy
three yearS younger than me
Thus belonged
at thAt age
thRee years is a generation
learning diFficulties 24/03
scApegoat status
eat still-warm Cow's dung
made a profiT
and the herbivorous aroma of cOw's dung
similarly hoRses droppings
a wholesome smell like processed haY

bet a thrupenny biT that I wouldn't eat 24/14
a matchboxful of live earthworms boys
carriEd such
acceSsories
in Their pockets
At any rate i
mouthed theiR writhing vermicelli
six half penny chews For instance
one bAr of cowan's
implaCable highland toffee
which lasTed
sOme seconds
kalahaRi bushman
paradigm of the duodecimal sYstem

Tempted to
buy about £4 worth to
see if i could still manage
the house-of-cards
Trembling-fingered
balancing
trick
teetered Fell and
clattered in bits
across the
scratched
mahogany
veneer of the table
broken crayons

pencil-stubs and curtain rings
one such involuntary
cache
in the fifties
we threw out our
sofa and half-dismantled it
carbonised into the scorched brick-like earth
Frosted with the
smashed glass of milk-bottle petrol-bombs
August has occurred to me
about four hours ago I was in
waterstones
their shop in
royal avenue

encyclopaedia acephalia by georges baTaille

26/08

browsing tHrough the
lattEr volume
of a Sudden my eye
is caught by
a photogrAph of castle place in august 1952
theRe are a lot of pedestrians
the Figure in the middle right foreground
unlike all the other pedestriAns
is turned towards the Camera
I strongly suspecT
the bag slung On
his Right shoulder
too good to be true but Yes

his dapper litTle feet
his Hands
hEld rather stiffly
hiS general demeanor convinces me
the circumstances too are righT
the art deco clock above sAmuel's the
jewelleRs shows five past twelve
a Fresh batch of correspondence
for some yeArs my father's beat
or walk as it was Called
suggesT
i phOne my brother pat
who lives not faR off
in cushendun some forty miles awaY

26/26

with my sister caíTlín 27/19
he sHould be photographed
hE
alwayS loved trams
his happiesT early memories are of
being tAken on a
tRam by his father
that aFternoon
my fAther's father was dead
on the corner of Clonard
sTreet and the falls
waiting for a trOlleybus but lo and behold
an old tRam comes down the road instead
and he is filled with joY

the Tram will not stop 28/07
wondering wHat
this drEam might mean
Some acquaintance with psychology
There is a connection between
your father and the trAms
the tram repResents your father
climb wolFhill
gAze down like guardian angels
Climbed on board 29/05
saT down
clOsed his eyes
they were filled with teaRs

* * * *

the general posT office 30/01
pHysicists
lEd me to buy the benjamin volume
becauSe i'd
serendipiTously opened it at
this passAge
as i bRowsed the book
liFe
Always bears a hint of corruption
of Course such
acTs of
décOupage would be anathema to
the tyRo collector
the power of magnifYing glasses

in my early Teens 31/16
Having progressed thus far I bought
a spring back loose-lEaf album
with leaveS of heavy paper
cream-Tinted groove-fluted
Also an
osmiRoid fountain-pen with interchangeable nibs
deFunct profiles 32/06
inks of pAle rose
carmine lilaC
slaTe bistre cobalt
and vermiliOn
the minoR indian state alone
now that theY are obtainable at reasonable prices

philatelic sTudy 33/12
of the britisH
commonwEalth
one could eaSily
 devoTe a lifetime's study to
 early cAncellations of
 empiRe
 inFinitely extended if
 whAt benjamin calls
the sometimes indeCipherable demography
 i collecTed a few
 nOminal examples of
 the pRovisionals
completion of shannon hYdro

elecTricity scheme 1930 34/06
international eucHaristic congress
 goldEn jubilee of the gaelic athletic association
 which Shows an art nouveau female
 her lefT
 hAnd on
 a haRp
 First big meeting
 apArt from a few
 new Colours orange and blue 35/04
over-prinTed with 1941 i gcuimhne aiséirighe 1916
 did nOt
 appeaR
armed with a with a baYoneted rifle

lillipuTian gpo 36/09
 a death
 noticE
 lookS to be in
 prisTine condition and not
 the bombed shell it becAme
 the fouR main varieties of gunman
 taken in leFt profile 38/11
 hung on the kitchen wAll
 all Conferring in
 the ancienT power of
 prOfile
 their vast caesaRean dominions
 sackville street and lower abbeY street

a holocausT in which it seemed 39/02
 a catHolic priest
 in bas-reliEf
 a renowned gaelic Scholar
 died in the pulpiT
 three dAys
 befoRe the issue of the first saorstát stamps
 the soldiers Filed slowly 40/04
 pAst me
 Cradling their guns like babies

* * * *

millTown cemetery 41/01
british special forces sHot
dEad an ira team
three bodieS were
broughT to belfast
michAel stone
fiRed shots
according to Folklore
when chAllenged
gained entry to the heavily sTewardred cemetery by uttering
tiOcfaidh
áR lá
apocrYphal or

noT the phrase is riddled with 41/11
an EnglisH
subtExt
in iriSh one
cannoT own a day
ownership being a hAzy concept
noR can a day have active volition
lillibulero bullenala in Full is a corruption of
an lile bA léir é ba linn an lá
the theme tune of the old bbC world service
posTed at the graves
in milltOwn cemetery an apologist
oR a
psYchiatrist

mighT interpret stone's act as 42/16
the voice heard by the french royalist
the archangel's role
against the rebel forceS of lucifer
occurred to sTone
word bubble Ambiguities
Rub up against each other
oFf the
broAd thoroughfare of the falls
a derelict mill that had onCe been powered by
sTreams that emanated from black mountain
flOWing beyond
carved out by aRtifice and weathering
the remedY for this injury

hospiTal 44/04
Humour
inordinatEly boring
steadily progreSsive myopia
mishandled ricocheT
As the headlights
the blank stone eyes of aRchangels
you Feel
the deAd are signalling to you
from a roCky orifice on
black mounTain and
down the mountain lOaney
both river-bed and Road
the farset river that ran below the Yard

of sT gall's 45/16
scHool in waterville st
farsEt the name of belfast
béal feirste aguS áitainmneacha laistigh
noTes that the
educAted accent on
the fiRst syllable bÉlfast
powerful inFluence of the bbc
the working clAss
pronounCe it
belfásT
as dO most country people
those few who suRvive
weighted on the last sYllable

whaT the name means 46/02
the moutH of the pool
might recEive some corroboration
from local factS
buT as it is
clAims that belfast is
deRived
bel in celtic means Ford
bel or ford of the fArset
sCholars since
the Times of
jOyce
misundeRstood
the battle of the boYne

belfast an illuStrated history 47/17
the mysterioUs cruiHin
 a pEople
 cloSely
 connecTed with the pictS
 the dAte of 666 ad
one of the maRks of the beaSt
 lucht na Feirste 48/04
 the Axle people
power sourCe
 for a sTring of mills
in which bOth denominations
 weRe
 emploYed

* * * *

Traditionally focussed around the hearth
for the tHird
timE that week
at family roSary 49/16
Time 50/01
these circumstAnces would be
overtuRned
the Flimsy sheet itself
from sAns souci park
a tea-Cosy
coTtage
its threshOld
into the imaginary Room
beYond

the slow meTronome of a pendulum clock
the ligHt of a
vermEer interior
the Same calm
brighTness
fAlls 51/01
acRoss the crinkles of a wall map
anderson's Flying trunk
mAde remarkable expeditions
for suCh an
osTensibly
floor-bOund item
the sheRbet fountains
miss boYd

maTron 52/01
ricHard chamberlain gardener
arts council of northErn ireland
181a stranmilliS road
the bungalow opposiTe
198 strAnmillis
Road
the Floor furthest from the fire
a stAmp type
a shon gan a bheith ann acht a Chló
d'aithneochtha gur Tarbh a b'eadh é
though it was only an embryoO you could see it was a bull calf
cuiReadh na cló chun póige
drYads murmur from within

the Trees 54/07
and motHs flit through dappled
moonshinE trembled by a zephyr
the occaSional swash of a car
for an insTant
in a migrAine flicker you imagine yourself
the steeRing wheel absorbing the luminous blips

* * * *

the Titanic 55/01
for monthS and months in that
monstrous iron enclosurE there
waS
noThing that
hAd the faintest likeness to a ship
the iRon
scaFfolding for the
nAves of half-a-dozen cathedrals
the skeleton within the sCaffolding
at the sighT of which men held their breaths
bOsses and
beaRings of propellors the size of windmills
men were laYing

on concreTe beds 55/17
sliding ways of pitch pine to support
the monstEr
when She was moved
the pavemenT surface
more thAn two tons
spRead upon the ways
Fixed
agAinst the bulk of the ship
when the moment Came the waters
Thrust her finally from the earth
built by messrs harland & wOlf
the twin vessels maRked such an increase in size
but the voYage

was never compleTed 56/23
two Hours and a half later
her crEw were drowned
and 705 reScued
a floaTing
pAlace sailed from southampton in 1898
Rich passengers savoured her luxury
the books title was Futility
fourteen years later a reAl luxury liner
laden with riCh passengers
There were not
enOugh lifeboats
Robertson's novel
a tramp steamer canada-bound from tYneside

midnighT 58/03
the time the titanic had Hit the
icebErg
the Sea had been calm
these Thoughts took
shApe and swelled into omens
his lonely watch his tiRed bloodshot eyes
the coincidence was terriFying
it was the dAy he had been born
the ship Churned
to a halT
deadly icebergs crOwded
in aRound the tramp steamer
to displaY their wonder

lighT so much more intense 59/26
this beautiful sHip
in dirE
distresS

Telling and warning of
the cAlamity happening
in the woRld beneath
a Fellow 60/02
pAssenger
the narrow approaCh
oppoRtunity was to be
fOund
the backgRound too was different

* * * *

the sTar factory 61/01
parps of car Horns
two or thrEe occasions
i found mySelf re-entering
the Turnstiles of the
falls road bAths
with my hiRed bathing trunks
their Freight of meaning 62/22
inhAbiting a
sentenCe
withouT digesting it
diverse persOnal
naRratives
howled unaccountably

aT the sound 63/22
How a brobdingnagian
space vEhicle
its argus multitudeS of portholes
in lifeboaT mode
like a dAndelion
pRopaganda drop
from early speculative Fiction
cinemA and
obsCure esperanto novels
with fellow esperanTists in the
sOviet union
and spRingfield massachusetts
some great cataclYsm

in the foresTed interior 64/15
Hoary workers
lodes and nodes of rarE commodity
gangS of
meTronomic hod carriers moved
on regiments of scAffolding and
laddeRs
as iF reconstructing
echo-chAmbered conversations
knoCked over
accidenTally
thOse who sought
the starry Rock
an aztec crYstal skull

with dazzling effecT we saw 65/20
tattered wraitHs of cloud
recumbEnt
idolS gazed at us
following with difficulTy
the time-worn sketch-mAp we would
fall thRough trap doors
conFirmed 66/04
a chApter of the serial
your man manaCled and shackled
the beaTen track
where gOspel
tRuth met
mYth

st paTrick has a dream 66/11
 whose iconic details migHt
 in diffErent
 Shifts of emphasis
 or conText
 elevAte and quicken
 the naRrative
 a sod of turF becomes 67/11
 a pArable
 the saCred
 hearT reminds
 One of the power
 smile or fRown
 the sYnthetic horn

a duffel-coat Toggle a 68/16
 broochH with a broken catch
 each could tEll its tale
 a narrative abySs
 oTher alcoves other niches
 each a cornucopia of pAst accociations
 the stoRyteller leaves
 ornamental Flourishes
 mitigAteD by the grain 69/17
 of his voiCe
 the liTeral
 rOom
 that bRown glazed mixing-bowl for instance

* * * *

the frontier sentinel
times were Hard
would have liked nothing
many prayers to this
in Tension
read the paper
for Rent in mullaghbawn
reading the Frontier sentinel
listen to this Kathleen
he stood outside McQueen's
are you interested
it's a bloody great hole
satisfaction guaranteed
and maybe more

71/01

worth Twenty pound
fair enough
it's a deal
he hands McQueen a tenner
Then he began to think
this hole's in mullaghbawn
get her from one place to another
as near Fifty foot deep
as makes no odds
in this very office
damn the hole have I seen yet
what kind of service do you call that
the manager called over the wee Red-haired man

73/31

74/03

* * * *

i Translated that 76/03
heard it many times as a child
compendium of an Ecodote and memoir
Seo síud agus síud eile
This that and the other
translation seems implicit
from once place to another

the sultana loaf 77/25
current soda bread
the audience evolves into
different
odes and knots of
atmospherics crack about the room as
big freckle-fisted Young men balance

cups of Tea 78/09
on their thighs
stuffing their
faces
paper plates
with the calibrated edges
for future
reference
tea to fortify them
on a reduced scale
the kitchen of the
kitchen house
performed a similar function
the people paying

respecTs 78/27
rosary fasHion
the populacE filed in and out
an omnibuS where a dozen 79/01
might be accomodaTed
lAid out on a double bed
upstaiRs
when the coFfin
cAme
the Coffin
mighT get stuck in
an indecorOus angle
bookies' Runners
mYsterious

gifT of the gab 79/21
from beHind 80/08
mid-fiEld in about
two-point-something Seconds
to collecT the return pass
he wAltzed
Round two
deFenders
burying the bAll in the top right
the seated shirt-sleeved Crowd behind the goal
the beauTiful move
in slO-mo on a
baR table

* * * *

the greaT northern railway	82/01
the grasp of the mecHanical grab you had	83/06
paid a pEnny to operate	
Smaller slot machines	
like miniaTure monocular	
trAffic-lights	
dispensed multicoloured gobstoppeRs	
Flipping open its	
engrAved lid	
passing Clouds tobacco	
queuing at the Ticket	
bOoth	
I am impReSsed by this routine	
jersey snagging straggLY barbed wire fence	85/28
jump a five-fooT-wide	86/01
ditch to enter	
the other rEalm	
Slippery	
sTepping-stones across	
the blAckstaff into	
the maRgins of enemy territory	
marshy steppes where reFuse	
heAps	
stood out amongst the braCken and	
heaTher	
I always lOngeD to explore	
somewheRe	
territory held by the mickeYs	

the staunch proTestant quarter 86/25
his traditional tHursday night visit

I hadn't hEard before 87/01

So as he could

chaT

the hAtchet field seemed to

attRact stories

the hatchet Field remains

imAging myself standing within it

penCil

sTub and

police nOtebook

take a detouR into musgrave park

but to a boY

an exoTic ecosystem 87/26

sHafts of light into 88/06

the cloudy wEedy underwater

thoroughfareS and

groTtoes

the whole everglAdes

shimmeRing and buzzing

consulting the Free 89/19

fortwilliAm pharmacy

illustrated by arChival photographs

appropriaTe since

the balmoral shOw

the Rural population of ulster

turns out to Yield nothing

facTs 91/16
 big sasH windows overlook
 donegall squarE
 dust-moteS
 drifTing down through prisms of light
 mAginifed by
 scholaRs and fanatics
 Focus
 bAdly blurred 92/01
 pastiChe façade
 the ghosTly absence of
 peOple
 the winding staiR within it
 swaYed by moving clouds

 belfasT college of 92/17
 tecHnology
 by samuEl stevenson
 five Storeys in portland stone
 rusticated columns seT on a frontispiece
 gibbsiAn columns
 belfast coat of aRms
 glass-Fronted cupboards 94/18
 displAy
 old paCks of cards and matchboxes
 three youThs
 further dOwn the limestown road
 paRt of an ongoing
 huddles of opposing loYalties

beaTen up split lip 94/27
inaudible smooCH 95/15
decEmber
royal belfast hospital for Sick children
both communiTies here
neAt
Rows of iron cots
Fit and not sick 96/01
allowed to wAnder
unspeCified illness
i sTruck up a friendship
our travels arOund
the many coRridors

* * * *

a ploT of undeveloped land 97/02
between blacktHorn hedges
whEre we built
tree-parlourS
ensconced in Them invisible
remAin untold and
so intRicate as to be untellable 98/01
Frogs mice and birds
their cleAn white skeletons
microscopiC reefs deeps and sandbars
its currenT
round an impOsing stone
flood-boRne minor mississippi rafts
bomb them with claY pellets

our new esTate 98/11
owenvarragH
occupiEd
rowS of
isolaTed nissen huts each
was a hospitAl
waRd

Flickering with embryonic fish 99/08
rAnk columns of umbellifiers
Ceilinged by over-arching trees
This was a secret place
i would sit alOne for
houRs
dizzY 101/11

a repaT of campfire carbonised potatoes
it almost Hurts to look
into the hugE blue
levelS
a jeT scored a silent white line
a blue small-petalled flower grew abundAntly in the
neaRby seven sisters meadow
doFfers
weAvers winders tenters
sCared me as
They'd march out
the rOad
the desultory tRaffic of the time

102/13

* * * *

radio ulsTer	105/01
the receiving mecHanism	
a wireless rEferring to	
marconi tranSmission	
beamed ouT from	
radio beAcons	
an ambient wallpaper patteRn	
snuFFing them out with	106/02
a miniscule bishop's hAt	
behind the Closed doors of confessionals	
the priesT	
thrOUGH	
a wiRe grille	
glebe refuge and asYlum	
irish language deserT island discs	106/12
ba gHnath liom	
mÉ fein a chur i bhfolach innti	
its enormous gloomy Smell of canvas	
Twine and	
fAded correspondences	
a book-lined Room	
a Flint for striking a light	109/15
mixed beef and mutton fAt	
latChed	
buT not chained	
cOlumcille noiselessly open the door	
he stRuck a light	
all praYing as they worked	110/03

Ten minutes then 110/05
rusHing out
sideways in the mElted
greaSe and
spluTtered out
scrAped it off
the flooR
returning from the Fold
sAw the gleam
Copy it 111/03
work secreTly at night
thOUGH the shepherd
cry out and Raise the alarm
columcille has betraYed me

copied againsT my 112/07
wish
thereforE the copy is mine
it Seemed that everyone
in that greaT
hAll
agReed
straight and Fierce amid
leArned men
columCille cried
monumenTs of our faith
men and wOmen are crying out
for leaRning
clYdesdales

infanTry 113/14
 irish Hagiogaphry
 clEar
 ciaran'S hands
 silenT as a bell 114/01
 do not speAk to anyone
 until the bell Rings
 he beFriends 115/07
 boArs foxes and badgers
 preaChes to them people
 sTay to listen
 ciaran stOod
 the tRees were touched with gold
 wonder whY

 documenTs 116/10
 and justifies the crooked patH that lead him
 insidE escaping into language
 renegotiateS this memory
 to make a sTory of his life
 disparAte
 tRains of thought
 in forties american Films
 clAmbering aboard
 parallel on the traCk
 the Train would cut
 the biggest lOgistical problem was
 disposal of diRt
 derelict building on the foYle road

it has five sToreys but 118/21
in bisHop
strEet

beSide the pe hall 119/01
crept cauTiously down the pitch
the gAme was going well
to scoRe against kevin schmeichel ryan
it was a Foolish
mistAke
i marChed
sTraight into the room
simmered for a mOment
then tuRned into people
pYlons were wont to be blown up

* * * *

i sTill dream about 122/02
Half-built houses
complEted
semi-detachedS
a neTwork of
smAll paths between
the pRivet and convolvulus
an aura of raFtered pine and brick 123/02
wood-shAvings and cement dust
ziggurats of briCk
embedded like morTars
discarded hODs and buckets
a documentary of bReughel building techniques
antonYms of lamplighters

the advenT of alarm clocks 125/06
the Hastily conscripted crew
a compass or a dEpth-gauge
our dug-out-turned-Submarine
sinking to hiTherto
unfAthomable depths
the Riveted steel panels start to creak
the whole craFt
threAtens to break up
a slow musical bass Clank
at this sTage in the story
whO has seen it all
there's moRe to come
bunches of defunct keYs

candle-sTumps and empty snuff tins
the trenchH wall
 mallEable as placticine
 lilliputS of belfast
 the ciTy was its eventual destruction
cross-stAves and theodolites
 shoRtly after

125/23

* * * *

the ulster cinematographic theaTres	127/02
artHur square and its confluEnce of five streets with Shops sTores offices public houses cAfés cinemas joseph bRaddell & son gunmakers Fishing rod and tackle manufacturers heraldic and general stAtioners the x l Café and resTaurant mayfair schOol of dancing w j kidd & sons	
boot upper manufacturers and leather meRchants	128/01
short wave radios Yakking	132/21
simulTaneously hardly interrupted	132/21
barman move among the tHrong clinking Empty tumblerS glass boTtles then the sobering vinegar tAng of fish and chips jail deliRium	133/02
Freaked out by the social blAther from the world beyond the Crib reed's eleganT deplOyment of sound at impoRtant desultory intervals	
the streets turn into stairs or wYnds	134/28

when leasT expected
when you brusH against them
they collapseE and vanish
with a Sound like
falling sooT
a neat terrAced street
white half-moons scRubbed before the doors
through its Fog into home territory
from a film mAtinée stumbling into daylight

135/01

* * * *

a lit coroneT of gas 136/01
Hissing
undEr a blue kettle
it beginS to
whisTle up
a heAd of steam
overhead Rack
aluminium ladle Filling them with glop
sacramental discs of wAxed paper
a longer Circumference of crimped-edged lid
sTick on the dated labels
i recOgnise
some kind of transfeRred memory syndrome
the apparition of the black chrYsanthemum 142/02

* * * *

whiTe star street 143/01
will gallagher was a blacksmithH

hEre he would
Spend
parTs of most nights
when trAin and
motoR-car remained to be invented
the cloven-hooFed one 144/30

vAnished
i've Come
to Take you to the lake of fire
his nether regiOn was stuck to the seat
the black pRince will went on the tear
saYs he

no siT down in your damned chair 145/23
get my Hat
you'rE a tidy man
began to Sweep the floor

nor would it leT him go 146/02
back to flAGs of hell
for another seven yeaRs

an oddly Formal 148/13
Address and a
suspiCion arises that
such wriTten vows of affection
will-o'-the-wisp confused by scOtt with friar rush
been lanthoRn-led by friar rush

* * * *

suggests that belfast is

153/03

Horizontal

frieze

whose gable end is the left hand frame

the rest of the foreground is occupied by

the sunlit presence of a woman

wearing brilliant white

a black flag or shroud

strained towards us

confused by this Charon phenomenon

i started to doubt the hearse

a wedding limousine and

the wreaths were bouquets

* * * *

elecTric street 159/01
 every nigHt
 i would tEnt the
 bedclotheS
 the annual Torch I got in my
 christmAs stocking
 pRactically unaware
 they quaff fine wines 160/11
 i Am tempted
 words of vitriol and stryChnine
 raTsbane arsenic agent orange
 the waft of blue cigar-smOke and
 red heRrings
 various murks of Yellow

 coleman's musTard burnt sienna 161/01
 launcHing
 tentativEly into it
 feel my way with fingertipS
 up milTon street
 and reAch the
 bluRred oasis
 the sudden Fug of the 162/13
 classroom radiator-wArmth
 raCk and clunk them up like snowmen
 a sour-sweet Thaw will blend
 school bag leather ink lino blOtting paper oak
 and vaRnish
 solferino olive loden berYl

avocado paris green sapphire cobalt peacock hyacinthine oxford blue
trams on the Shankill road were 163/03
blue as the
gallaher's blues
cigarette
packet
trolleys emitted ink blot stars
an impossibly talented meccano boffin
had constructed
a platonic model of a working windmill
the height of a
nine-year-old boy
admire this complicated paradigm
as we were swept into the foyer

coty yardley 164/12
givenchy
deep blue carpet
versailles marble staircase
taut corsets
were displayed
the corner of my eye
flesh and blush tones of
diaphanous spirella bras
escape to the
sober warmth of
muted thornproof donegal and harris tweeds
we passed through the store
brylcream styptic pencils and 7 o'clock razor blades

my head without a Torso my hands invisible 165/11
paralyzed beneath the barber's nylon shroud
try not to wince as the cold die-cast
clipper snip and snag
a mirrored grand inquisitor
violently kneads my head
a plumb-line parting on my cranium with a sharp steel comb
baron von richthofen in his red fokker
constructed from Airfix
Crash-land in the hallway
worked the early shift
dozing on the sofa
authoritatively drooped black peak of his capped
stylized like those

on an asrolabe 169/07
robin Hood shot
a nude riding through the glen
two halves of a 170/01
cut lemon
a scrap of paper
a childish embrowned female nude
Frieze
leaks an upward plume
as they reach the upper edge
lemons suggestive of breasts
nibs whose waisted
pattern degenerates into female torso curves
we were warned to stay well in

* * * *

reTail outlets	172/04
solid tHrum	
benEath the dotty	
morSe and atmospheric static	
heighT of the troubles	
assAssination occurred	
Routinely	
Flinging him against	173/26
slowly sAnk back	
silenCe fell	
the episodic Tin-can radio	174/01
air-detective bigglesworth and his air pOlice	
fiRst printed in 1953	
a post-war spY thriller	

* * * *

belfast cenTral library 176/02
 the smaller branch libraries
 falls ormEau
 Shankill donegall road through tullycarnet
 tremble lifT and slip off into
 outer spAce to wander
 in daRk forever
 mein kampF 177/06
 question mArks and bullet points
 proClaming the church of retrospective predestination
 the Text is backed up by
 authoritative quOtes
 the Rest of the acts of hezekiah
 a willow patterned hieroglyph

arresTed in the eastern sky 180/03
 detachHing the sandpaper striking strip
 its spunky gluEy crunch
 lick the bulbouS red heads 181/01
 Too
 dispensed from open trAys
 intRroducing them in ones
 i Flew to ancient egypt
 met similAr daedaluses and
 masters of zodiaC cryptology whose complex
 pylon archiTecture
 from a flying bOat
 one perceived its wiring-diagRams of constellations

* * * *

high street looking east 1786 184/03

a photograph of an engraving
the main feature
its curious diamond-shaped clock
on a gibbet-like support
in 1798 Henry Joy McCracken would be hanged
from similar devices
the clear effulgence of 186/18
a cloudless atmosphere illumined by the moon
artificial beams
imitative power
living objects
in our streets
might go astray

set right again 188/16
farmers and fishfolk merchants pedlars and huxters
all seemed to find their way
to Hercules
street
fancy
brought us back
for safe keeping
heads of lavender and sprigs of rosemary
Covered with blue and white crockery-ware
shining brass ketles
half-brown
cRocks
I have quoted Cathal O'Byrne

ramble of fanTasy 189/27
gHostly floating
pEtticoat
outside of the crockS
speckled whiTe interior bowls 190/01
fresh-firecoAl chestnut
o'byRne's unhyphenated sheepdogs snoozing
dozy yourselF
thAnkfully then
wake up on ocCasions whereupon
they emiT an
alternate wOof or baa to
jolt you from this Reverie

* * * *

sometime in the sixTies	194/02
broken cHinks of light	
at the Edge of	
the eaveS and	195/01
the doTted rivets of	
water-tAnk	
weRe buttons of light	
the converted loFt was my bedroom	
heAvy objects	
book-case sCrewed into the top	
three drawers beneaTh	
twO	
synchRonized	
an odd metaphysical	196/27
deaTh injury the tram	
I can never catch	
then suddEnly	197/03
revS up and moves off	
nighT	
alwAys connected with the past	
derelict buildings cRumbled victorian pubs	
this occurs quite Frequently	
vast secret hAlls	
a curious air of deCadence of crumbling	
parchment skins and sTale perfume	
fire-bOmbs on 6 may 1974	
much loved victoRian covered market	198/01
a scattering of cobblestone-greY	

sTrutting pigeons 199/13
stalls boothS and awnings
the mEwing of seagulls
the scent of orangeS and herrings
fronTing on to
this confAbulation
belfast gRocer's corner shop
vienna caFé
copenhAgen doll's house
Chicago kosher
buTcher's
lOs angeles
thiRties automobile showroom
tokYo shoe shop 200/03

* * * *

chalky dust-motes sifTing downward 202/04
 he would inCH his way 203/14
 a reluctant suicidE
 till fingerS of one hand
 only promoTed
 the exAct point of this operation
 its clandestine thRill
 rooFs and tops of backyard walls 204/05
 up on black mountAin
 sunlight glanCed across
 the whiTe-washed farmhouse
 high abOve the
 thRum of a linen mill
 along the gutter in a minor stYx

 the casT-iron deep 204/18
 sHit
 the wastE
 productS of the city
 Tumbled ruins of
 abAndoned brickfields
 to Reach greenan's shop 205/12
 the aromatic Fugue of
 soAp sweets
 Cheese and
 cigareTtes
 your rOutine order
 jist a cupla duRes from ar scule
 on the verge of martYrdom

sTumble on me 206/20
between their teeth
a time-bound ampitheatrE with clonard monastary
a coloSseum which cast
its ancienT gnomon
shAdow
micRoscopic life 207/01
kaleidoscopic Frozen moment
minutely detAiled mundane dreams
go to sChool
enjoying all the rouTine panacea of a day
Occupy some fleeting moment 208/03
a foRm of déjà vu

* * * *

we were consTantly interrogated 212/02
 since mucH of our
 routinE learning
 primary School alphabets and tables
 lisTs of latin
 conjugAtions and declensions
 off by heaRt
 to preserve its whiplash Flexibility 214/13
 z treAted his with vaseline
 different teChniques and
 subTle disciplines
 were brOught to bear
 the erRatic head high flail
 proper egYptian

 sTyle 217/22
 asHtray 218/01
 a miniaturE of the great
 piazza of st peter'S and its huge basilica
 builT on
 vAtican hill
 figuRatively
 the uFo descends 219/12
 the vaticAn
 Cendrier
 reminds us of our own morTality
 a small heavy pOcket icon
 a momento moRi
 Yawning avenues and dark arcades

* * * *

it was great to geT lost 221/02
all the warehouses and sHops in the town 222/01
their refusE
contentS into
the precincTs of smithfield
on whatever scAle
it is puRsued
how diFficult it is to burn books
reAms of them survived
poked them with a stiCk and a wind blew them
i sTill wonder how
censor illusiOns
relics shaRds and signatures
retrieval from the pYres by lovers and disciples

undergrounds of samizdaT 223/20
would stitCh their
remEmbered
epiSodes together
preTending to
mAke a quilt for a
funerAl
crippled Furniture 224/20
the walls hAve held fast
which book to Choose
the Third is reading
an open bOok in his hands
this trinity of Readers
stitches a Yarn

the Typesetter 226/04
 tHought fit to justify them
 pray dEed they
 –Ship o love
 Thief
 chAp
 a tolerably faiR if etiolated encryption
 baFfled 229/05
 she trAnslated a pattern
 orchards of windmills perChed on the sides of mountains
 celtic-norse-scoTs-english
 creOle
 swiss linguists who arRive in flocks
 and the guY

sTanding at the front 230/26
 his long Hair flying around from under
 his earphone-horned hElmet
 pointing his Sword in the
 general direcTion of
 irelAnd
 encouRaged by the 231/01
 baskets of Food or faeces 232/24
 being rAised or lowered
 the raCe from which he sprung 233/03
 st simeon sTylites
 less abOut him of the arrogance
 down from his pillaR at a word of advice

* * * *

compare bridges of the ciTy to bar magnets 236/02
 metal vehicles tHrobbing emotionlessly
 polarizEd above a river
 or a meSh of train tracks
 leaning over a parapeT
 gAze into the black magnet
 parabolic swaRms
 starlings Flit and 237/01
 swAy in baroque paragraphs
 Clocks go back
 an auTumn chill
 shadOws lengthen
 the multitudes come home to Roost
 two sea-nYmphs holding a drowned man

on a grey graniTe base 238/26
 from southHampton to 239/03
 nEw york
 theSe included the ship's designer
 initially erectEd in
 donegAll square
 noRth

up the blackstaFf river 241/05
 sAid to be
 a hiCker in belfast dialect
 might be relaTed since chambers cites
 a not-so-welcOme shower
 of shipyaRd-workers' bolts and rivets
 a jekYl-and-hyde wraith

a wounded terrorist angel lost in the dark
Holographologists
in their white
coats
emendations carets sets arrows underlinings
I have to go
Running my fingers over the keyboard

244/07

* * * *

<p>the stark realiTy of the star factory is more Humdrum than the stories it has inspirEd nubia and Soudan kind of an anTelope on a south african stAmp floppy collared flannel shiRts</p>	<p>246/02</p>
<p>an old wooden Flute-box with two brAss hook-and-eye catches special two-for-the-priCe-of-one deal supporTed by a glass jug almOst dead centRe</p>	<p>247/06</p>
<p>the type of chlorophYll it grazes on</p>	<p>248/10</p>
<p>the dark interior of crofTers' handloom cottages each bolt of cloth a wEb of dna strands Sniff one admiT the possibility of white-coAteD hierophants with flaRed nostrils parFumiers of tweed dribs and drAbs a Cold st paTrick's day saffrOn-kilted tweed jacketed pipe bands tieRed on the five broad steps</p>	<p>248/11</p> <p>249/01</p>
<p>known as brYce's lane</p>	

electric lighting staTion 250/18
wrestling with Hydra
chapel lane and castlE street
deScribed by
marcus paTton
centrAl belfast a historical gazetteer
we have Real information
delFt 253/20
brass hAlf-gallon jugs
brylCreemed hair
boTtles variously full
exchange their hOoped
shiRts for long white aprons

* * * *

the typical star factory shirT tailed well below the bum 255/02
 in a High magnolia hospital room 256/04
 lucozadE
 glowS like a
 voTive
 lAmp
 remembeRing its beaded bubbles
 upward Flow of souls
 a totAl other zone of self
 Creaking pterodactyl wings 257/09
 gloves of virTual reality
 i gOt the names
 befoRe the streets were named
 i would try to analYze

its junked componenTs 260/03
 st agnes' parocHial hall
 not much biggEr than
 a scout Shed
 maTinée
 a public entertAinment or reception
 a woman's dRess for forenoon-wear
 proFfer each other 261/24
 from flAt opened packs
 boxes of matChes and the daily whiff of sulpher
 the ploT is simple
 a rapid clOud of drizzle 262/04
 an antonym of shRinking

* * * *

the queen's film Theatre where i saw 265/03
the orpheus myth

a converted lEcture theatre
queen'S university

where i was a sTudent
still the cAse though now

Rather plush
smoke in the Foyer

at sAlient points in the drama
a mini-Choreography of
struck maTches would flare up

the sub-sub-plOt of 266/01
cigaRettes
stooks or pYramids

of cuT turf 272/13

his long sHadow off the edge 273/06
of the pagE

paneS of various sizes
ghosTly symmetries
of opAque light

a glacial fourTh dimension

Fizz

interminable bombing cAmpaigns

regiments of Clerks and salesgirls 274/05

behind the fluTtering white security tape

the zOne

devoid of tRaffic

* * * *

mcwaTters' bakery 277/01
 footsteps ecHoing each other
 beginning to evaporatE into chilly mauve
 for Seven days
 a vasT resounding parcel-sorting office
 district-coded phAlanxes of
 big wickerwoRk trolleys
 coffeE percolating 279/07
 the Afternoon city shift
 oranges and Coal smoke
 beTween beery pubs
 and poultry-merchants' windOWs
 the parlouR of a bar on the shankill road
 a twinge of hYpsophobia

 traverse the gap beTween 279/28
 Hoist and floor
 a singleE trembling plank
 poiSed high above 280/01
 a bliTzed
 bAttlefield with
 cement-encRusted howitzers
 his smoker's pen-kniFe attached to 281/25
 his watch-chAin
 various deviCes for
 chopping the sTuff
 tamping it into the bOWl
 an aromatic gestuRe 282/02
 the rhYthm

hypnoTized you 285/03
 banal trougHs
 or nEgative exhausted
 Silences
 night-shifT refugees
 grocer confectioner tobAcconist and newsagent
 another soul wander in from the daRk
 teem into life and Flight 286/04
 swArming confusedly about
 killing sCores with a
 single squirT
 dOckets and receipts
 coRroborated by
 glassy rhYmes

 the nexT link 288/19
 through the broad High attic sky 289/02
 the wholE ornate array
 glintS of blue and green and clear and amber
 Till it looked like
 a starship armAda
 Riding at anchor
 a whiff of norwegian Fir
 brought me back agAin
 magenta bright magenta lemon oChre green turquoise prussian blue
 pale violet rose-red chesTnut
 commOnwealth of
 momentary pleasuRe 289/25

* * * *