



Muscailt

“To Awaken”

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Muscailt

Island Home

I've travelled very little from this island home. My native land grounds me keeps me in contact with the rhythms of nature, the sound of the winds the call of the wild birds and the dialects of its people.

Tyrone's inland landscape of moss clad hills and flat bogs break every now and then like an ocean wave. Small towns and villages emerge lively and loud against the woven landscape.

One can drive for miles across back roads criss-crossing town lands whose names mean; stony path, fairly coloured field or hill of midges; before a village appears out of the hedgerows.

Fintona, Seskinore, over the mountain to Fivemiletown. across the side road to Sixmilecross, Carrickmore, Gortin and to Omagh again the view always lifts the spirit.

Gortin village is one such place, hidden within the protective fauna of the forest and rough mossy hills flanking the road into the village. Fiddle music sails up from the music store.

I may not have travelled far but this island home were the ancestors left their marks on the lands in awkward names and primitive art. This will take me away in mind at times.

dried fruits
on the bird table –
bees hum

soft raindrops -
spring sings her lullaby
heartbeat on paving stones

Starlings -
under the roof space
claws on wood
spring cleaning.

rose petals floating -
small puddles reflect summer
in sun drenched pools.

flowerless Hawthorn
bending against the winds path
farewell to litha.

hedgehog
looking my way

lost in grief

out of nowhere
a bee
hungry for summer

winters coat
birds unable to furrow
come close.

against the window
melting snow
melting the moon

A Haven in the Mind

This land has molded me
has scolded me like my father
in shades of grief unspoken
spiritually tethered to it's acres.
Divided from one another by boundaries
walls, flags and the isolation of tribal words.

My thoughts often turn inwards.
The landscape of the soul changes
when i wander the Tyrone hills
filling my soul with moss coloured
songs; of how nature always finds a way.
Seasons blend into one another without
much argument; they have a spirit of
their very own and follow it no matter what.

Casting off.

Getting beyond your land mass of hills
bog and the binding of a strict catholic upbringing
takes some working.

When mother poor of purse filled diligently
the chapel envelopes for mass I rebelled.

Shamefully I begrudged giving
when wicker baskets were passed
from row to row.

The clink of coins set off a clink in me
a change that has developed since and
continues still.

Mine is not a raging god who casts out
revenge sending me to the fires of hell.
I know that, feel it in my soul.

St Teresa's Primary School '69

Almost sheltered from the world
by an umbrella of prayer.
Smallish veiled nuns with lines
mapped out on olive skin;
wore over sized Crucifixes
pierced at heart level.
Whispered prayers echoed
through the boarded floors
resonating in the old heaters.

They taught of the starving babies
in Africa; the droughts in India.
Each girl handed a Trócaire box
to take home. Every swear word
uttered; a penny went into it
boxes were filled often
without much argument from sinners.

They taught a bit of everything; Needlework, cookery
historical facts about Henry the 8th and his many wives
but nothing of the 300.000 Irish sold to slavery
in the new colonies of the West Indies and America's
nor of the fate of Ann Glover; sold to the planters;

the first witch killed
in the Massachusetts witch trials of 1688.
Her native language
confused as the devils tongue.
I imagine she thought Cotton Mathers mad for thinking such a thing.
Her a mere washerwoman.

The 60's by-passed St. Teresa's I think. Through the nuns we learnt the bibles
history, the litanies, love for others; Respect.

"You'd rarely see a nun dressed in habit these days"

The News at Ten

There was in our house a silence
it banged in my eardrums
followed me to bed under the watchful eye of Oliver Plunkett.

Ears pressed tight on the hard feather pillow
the eiderdown wrestled with coarse blankets.
Silent drums paraded, fractured only by the 'News at Ten,'

"Whist
13 shot dead in Derry"

Never much liked the news after that.

The Hillman Imp

(a.k.a. The Scottish hill-climber)

'A devil of a wee car' Da would brag.
The embarrassment I'd think
cube framed and as small as.

It took us on weekend voyages crossing
the border into Donegal coughing and percolating into Pettico,
over rocky clumps, it wrestled the bendy roads .

Killybegs meant fish forever
poached, fried, boiled.
Da, re-juvenated on the journey
Ma delighted at glimpses of her flag.

We took the long route home
the air fused of trawlers, old holborn, whiskey chasers and sea weed.
We stopped at intimate villages devoid of pound signs and iron fists.
Native speakers greeted warmly in soft tones.

Where the sea met slate rock, we breathed salt air
into fume filled lungs, returning inland more refreshed.

Teachers

Are we ready for them?
They come to us through life
some stay only a while
whilst others stay a life time.
Some in a passing word
or expression others
we have come to know gradually
whose expansion of soul
reaches ours.
I often wonder
if we appreciate those teachers
who impart the knowledge
we lack I hope so.
I have sensed it in their energy wrestled
with the connection, tuned into their radio frequency
a message will come if we are alert enough.
Bath a while in this beautiful transmission
adrift on the creation of ones soul
for these teachers may only stay a short while.

Loretto Convent Primary

Dress code was strict
like the cataclysms repeated.
Gabardine in navy blue;
kimono, crisp white shirt, tie.
White or black plimsoles
a customary slipper bag.
The nuns guarded the grounds
like penguins on parade
on the lookout for impudence.
Our lady's' grotto, daisy chains
Come mayday.
Respect was a good thing.
Mother Mona bent with age
bore no warmth
although welcomed us always.
Married to god
her happiness traced as lines on olive skin.
Never liked a chatterbox more than once
I had to hold my tongue at the blackboard
or stand for ages with arms out shoulder length
crucified, like Jesus.
I think of Sister Joanne fresh faced, funny, light of
heart. I couldn't understand her calling then.

Seekers of Truth

Truths like crystals lie buried under earth under ancient oaks and long forgotten pathways leading to the ocean.
In the songs of yesterday adrift on the spring mist as I gaze out over the hills.

In layers of prayers petitioned to sky that soar to the universal spirit.
In cosmic shifts, of the soul's migration; from before birth to beyond the end of life.

We seek it in books; in passing thoughts that nudge us towards a face in the crowd. In the faces of the old. With others on the journey interlinked, truth emerges out of the dark, returning as the light within.

Consult the Oracle

I talk to my higher self on a regular basis
my guru is my own little voice
who steers my every move
whether I listen or not.
Sometimes it tells me to walk
along a path long forgotten
where ghosts appear in random
order, I dwell there a while
pay respect to the ones I met before.
Sometimes we have an argument
where my guru is always right
we accuse each other of being unloving
we seek comfort in each other
this guru knows me better than
I know myself
I consult this oracle before I leave
the house, thank it for the offerings ahead
to the nature around me, send love
to all I meet.
We are very much in love
my guru and I.

Muscailt*

Awakened, made it through
the veils of pitch,
threaded with wars, flags and
tribal intolerance; fixed
on the horizons of my mind.

In dreams the inland rivers claw
like hunger towards the Atlantic coast gathering with it clotted
memories, of a torturous past in every blast; rousing the shadows of
Ireland's ghosts.

Tuatha de Danaan, the Pilgrims
the Famine and her coffin ships
the uprisings, internment, the troubles
the hunger strikes, sons, daughters.....

*Muscailt ("The Awakening" in Irish)

The Tool Shed

When in the form and not raging at the shape
of the politics in Ireland dad would head to the tool shed
make himself scarce after tea time.
Uneven shelves holding all manner of things, paint pots
marvel tins, Master McGrath tins bursting with nails
washers, screws, clips and bolts.
He'd spend ages soldering and sharpening tools.
A battered brown work coat covered in paint
hung from a crude nail in the wall.
It smelled of turps and old holbourne.
He loved that shed, mixing unused bits of paint
that summer our living room was a Picasso inspired orange.

The Battle of Sitting Room

Christine had four brothers
you needed your wits about you
when you went to visit.

The sitting room was a war zone
hundreds of troops dressed for battle
tanks, guns.....

The sofa, battle point, all soldiers
positioned on the arms, the high back
tanks strategically placed on cushions
the sheepskin rug.

Hundreds of foot soldiers
lying in ambush watching our
every move, it was un-nerving
sounds and all.

Omagh Recast

Newly formed glass buildings
glint like Healing Quarts
across the River Strule.

Townfolk browse in sedation
at comely Shops, offering
goods at super-low-costs.

The young seem unfazed
amid the air of peace
amid horrific undercurrents.

The Courthouse watches
with a face of certainty
less imposing nowadays.

Flashbacks

In a half sleep half awake state
the edges are often blurred
you filter the tail end of something.
A wild animal long extinct
prowls through my thoughts
tearing apart the curtain of the past
memories of spousal abuse suddenly
evaporate before me in my minds eye
that thundering voice, clenched fist
less frightening now, cleansed away
by this animal, my totem animal
who reveals before me beauty without
fear. Streams rise serenely from clay
displaying around it a glorious meadow
for the lamb to play.
My thoughts come fully awake
gone are the bad memories, I tread softly now
like a new born lamb counting my blessings
counting the sound of my heartbeat as
morning emerges.

Cycles and Spheres

the leaves are beginning to fall
trees show summer and autumn
wild birds have followed the
energy lines of earth and have
come back to roost in the same place.

hedgehogs hunt between light
appreciating the camouflage the falling
leaves have brought. hard frost
begins later in the evenings now
the street lights warm up.

my thoughts turn inward another year
on the clock. Its been three years now
since my brother passed from view
death sounds so final, is it final?

when someone ceases to be
are they still around in essence? in spirit
like spirit orbs passing through walls
from another dimension, visiting

are they energy? Our sun is the biggest orb
of energy seen with the naked eye
struggling to shine at times, still the
seasons will turn and turn

working with the invisible energy
to unearth annual changes of various
stages of growth over and over...

Sid

I was a punk
he was too
now he's someone
I used to know.
We stood together
against the world
and all her injustices.
Now I love Rumi
mystics and balance
angst gone.
You play roulette with
the devils brew
swallowed by addiction.
I was a punk
he was too
now he's just someone
I used to know.

Display Cabinet

holding her bits and pieces
glass, ornamental tilly lamps
victorian decorative plates
silver and gold trimmed
her mothers wedding ring
her fathers pocket watch.
It was under lock and key
and raring three feisty boys
her finger pointed often
a warning not to break or
bump into the glass press.
She locked away her memories
of her Wexford youth, the North took
over her life but every now and
then she'd open the glass doors to
dust the memories, each piece
had a story attached.

Apple Shampoo

My first pay packet from nurse training
i bought a sachet of apple shampoo
mother god rest her, a simpler kind of
woman with restrictions on the purse
kept the bathroom stocked with T.gel shampoo
brown, gloopy and stank,
oh and good old lifebuoy soap, handy for cleaning
grubby white collars on school shirts
red in colour and ponged, often stained
the white on the Armitage shank.

My discovery of apple shampoo in sachets
within my price line led to a whole new
world for me.

Hair smelling of Granny Smyths especially
when a soft wind would blow it over
my face.

That smell evokes a memory in me now
every so often i go to the chemist and
look around for the apple shampoo
unscrew the top and take in youth.

The Stealer of Time

A song drifted in from my neighbours yard
volume high
I was back at the disco again.

A lonely mirror ball floated above the
lit up crossword styled floor, every now and then
flashing on the beige walls.

An out of town DJ clad in demim
wearing cowboy boots and a moustashe
flipped is LP's and in a radio voice,

"The first slow number of the night
for all you lovers out there
Romeo and Juliet Tah!"

Memory is the lover that remains in the
minds eye long after the dance is over
tip-toeing over the years until you hear again
that song.

Memory is the stealer of time, the giver of rainbows
its the fast forwarding of soul
it's what we yearn for when our days are numbered.

A walk through the Town

The bells on the Sacred Heart Chapel ring out the Angelus in the faint frost.
Brightly lit; the chapel dives skyward.
Friday confessions, they somberly walk in.
The world on their shoulders and within the hour emerge smiling again.

Ready for the weekend; a clean slate, the sin-eater
swallowed the badness and served it on a plate to old nick.
The pavements glitter like reflected stars
only it's not stars, it's *John Street* on a Saturday night and already the clubs filling up.

Noises rise into the moonless night, Rock, club sounds traditional
Ambulances siren and loud shouting.
A hen party arrives under the courthouse clock.

Someone has already thrown up in Georges Street between the taxi office and the Chinese.
Teens in spangley heels and boob tubes shiver
I want to wrap them in Mohair jumpers to keep warm.

About the Author

Aine MacAodha is from Omagh, North of Ireland. Her work has appeared in *Episteme*, *Bamboo Dreams* (the Doghouse anthology of Irish haiku), *Poethead*, *Glasgow Review*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Shamrock Haiku*, *Irish Haiku*, *thefirscut*, *Outburst*, *A New Ulster*, *Pirene's Fountain* (Japanese Short Form Issue), *DIOGEN Poetry*, *The Argotist Online*, *The Best of Pirene's Fountain* and *Boyne Berries*.

She self-published her first collection of poetry, *Where the Three Rivers Meet*, which was later published as an ebook by Argotist Ebooks. Her latest collection, *Landscape of Self*, was published by Lapwing Press, and can be purchased here:

<https://sites.google.com/a/lapwingpublications.com/lapwing-store/aine-macaodha>

More information about her and reviews of her work can be found here:

<http://ainemacaodha.webs.com/index.htm>

<https://ainemacaodha.wixsite.com/ainemacaodha/reviews-and-interviews>

She was interviewed by poet and broadcaster Mike Marcellino on Blog Talk Radio where she read some of her poetry.

Her poems have been translated into Italian also into Turkish as part of the Conversation International Poetry project.