

O'CLOCK

Also by Fanny Howe

Poetry:

For Erato (1984)

Introduction to the World (1985)

Robeson Street (1985)

The Lives of a Spirit (1986)

The Vineyard (1988)

[Sic] (1988)

The Quietist (1992)

The End (1992)

Fiction:

In the Middle of Nowhere (1984)

Taking Care (1985)

The Race of the Radical (1985)

The Deep North (1988)

Famous Questions (1989)

Saving History (1992)

Other titles published by Reality Street Editions

Kelvin Corcoran: *Lyric Lyric*

Allen Fisher: *Dispossession and Cure*

Susan Gevirtz: *Taken Place*

Maggie O'Sullivan: *In the House of the Shaman*

Denise Riley: *Mop Mop Georgette*

Peter Riley: *Distant Points*

Sarah Kirsch: *T*

Out of Everywhere (ed. by Maggie O'Sullivan)

Please write for further details.

O'CLOCK
Fanny Howe

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Many of these poems were written in Newbliss, County Monaghan, Ireland, and others were written on the road while I was working in the United Kingdom. They have been published in *O'Blek*, *Parataxis*, *Chelsea*, *Active in Airtime*, *Scarlett*, *Critical Quarterly*, *Lift* and *Zyzzyyva*, among other magazines. I would like to thank The Tyrone Guthrie Center, The MacDowell Colony, The California Council on the Arts, Douglas Messerli, Robert Grenier and Wendy Mulford for their support.

21:00

Scared stiff and fairy-struck
Under the oak tree
Under the moon — pink hawthorne
By a stony well — very sacred,
Very stuff.

22:16

Powder the greens of hemlock, then,
In a disk of eyebright,
Mallow and self-help. Spin.
Discover the equation for delight
And never speak again.

19:44

You must be pulled along
By thought on a day that's white
With sun and moon. No herb
— no wine — but the math of the mind —
In and out, in and out. . . and fairy-blast.

19:40

Set golden butter out in a dish
Beside a mill, a stream and a tree.
Say: oh my love, loved by me,
Give me your heart, your soul, your body.
Then see.

18:47

Four paws are silver in the night —
A wild strawberry patch —
So what's the punishment?
The same as usual.
Loneliness.

13:22

If a cloak with two hands
Is beating the ground,
And words exit the dirt, or just
A little red circle
Is under your foot, your number's up.

18:33

When orange berries trim the air,
I'm ecstatic.
Why can't I explain it?
Aren't I a poet? No, Fanny,
Not when you're as happy as that, never.

MONDAY THE FIRST

After this girl was grown
the tedium of the nursery began.

Either overdressed or a mess
she was a metaphor
for the suffering of the Irish.

Seven boys and seven girls, a harnessed pony
and a clay pipe, delinquency laws and bad thin boys.

Out like a scout, she tackled the fields
in her hem or heels.

When she was dragged and staked
she called the story of her life
Where My Body Went.

4:14

Go on out but come back in
you told me to live by, so I went
with my little dog trotting

at my side out of the garden
into woods colored rotten.

I did this several times, out and in,
it was of course a meditation.

The out surrounds me now
a whole invisible O to live in:

tender tantrums, sky gone suddenly gray —
still soften light but no one brings

papers here to sign. The top of the water
shudders under the brush of wind.

Past? Present? Future? No such things.

6:30

A full Irish breakfast
consists of sausage, black pudding, brown bread,
butter, jam and some kind of egg.

The tea bag is dropped
into a stainless steel pot
and you pour steamed water on it.

Now the light behind the clouds is rinsing them blue.
And gales on coasts and hills
will fly from such a sky.

The earth will suffer, drop,
then enter eternal doubt
and those soft clouds

will be its literature.
Space in time goes against nature.
This condition is called "the future".

7:15

Every task works its way to infinity.
But blue eyes don't make blue sky.

Outside a grey washed world, snow all diffused into steam
and glaucoma. My vagabondage
is unlonelied by poems.

Floral like the slow-motion coming of spring.

And air gets into everything.
Even nothing.

TUESDAY ONE

Today she bought new nightgowns
for the girls
and a pair of suspenders
for the child whose pants fall down.

Then she went to the market
in the rain
for gooseberries to bake a pie
which she did, after she was finished

sewing dollclothes from the old nightgowns
and watching *As The World Turns*.

12:04

Hive-sized creams are on the chestnut tree
alive for — and with — bees — boughs
of copper beech give birds a ride

for their whistles — clouds
course overhead — the gorse
is buttery sweet — it's May

— the day the right hand gives to the left.

While the lamb pecks at the tit
of its mother — it seems
the rest of the field has gone to sleep.

Now milk drips down its brand new lips
and bubbles of grass wet the ewe's.

She stops chewing and turns her face
to gaze at the feast at her waist

7:30

Bees, bulls and farm dogs
are the meanest beasts in Monaghan

till new ideas
unsettle the social and in comes MAN

and hides his bullets in sheep's wool.

At home — meantime —
women, children and old ones are having fun.

The repose love costs is great.

For a good dinner,
a radio in the corner,
hands chopping greens at the table — safe children
and more to come —
the others go gun-running, into the streets.

WEDNESDAY ONE

Our kind of workplace ends up in rocketed holes.
Cracks let the flowers out.

Red-fingered men run by with ice-cold cakes.
What do women workers want?

A place to act and recollect.
Our kind of job is out in the fields, hands

knee deep in mud. Hooch and a flame, a pooch with no name.
A home inside of the eyes. In sight of the eyes a home.

13:13

Moths in a meadow
flutter like flowers — freed — their wings

take the shape of their mind the wind.

So it's a spirit that keeps me
from breaking into pieces! The speed

would rip me apart without it.

So I should cover the wings of my shadow, ride it.

2:22

Frogs undulate under secrets of mud
and slime while solids warm.

Soil is turned over for worms
hidden by snow. When a person

exists in such a state as this

mirrors shake, blood breaks:
it's the start of a fairy's tale.

4:25

Like a sheep sweating inside
its thick coat, the earth settles
and steams and lives by friction.

Sun ignites the skyline — clean green
after rain. Even wood
is sick for the heat inside it to be met
and I associate.

10:17

I suffer from ire, it's electric.
I quaff a philter to choke it —
followed by a cordial —

the next morning, my ire is back.

When was my heart's ease lost
in circles of fire? When I started
seeking cures made of poison, asp.

THURSDAY ONE

Next time I'll travel by dream.
Quick forward into first person.
I'll try to avoid the world
where bombs obviate everything.

The twelfth century was when?

If I close my eyes my brain
rises with the train.
I'm in a town called Pontefract
where the men who bombed it

are only remembered for their technique.

Still I wonder if the birds
perched along the bridge
are singing — or were —
Oh let them burn!

FRIDAY ONE

Minister to my friends, Saint Peregrine.
Doctor to my family, Saint Joseph of the Hands.

Can obscurity to be so fertile for workers
that they can grow a monument
from the thing in their fingers?

Grant me, Ma, the proletarian way to
perfection.

Then fold back my unbelief
as you did my sheets.

21:09

The dirt feels sweet to the
cheek of the sick.

When you're up against the grit
there's no more fear but fever
persists among fairy insects

and the smell of God is animal.
Cool grass is your nurse, and sandalwood.

SATURDAY ONE

Hospital or hotel?
Fluff the cold pillow and lie down.

Or else it's home.
Light mounts auburn ice.

An impressionist film of dye
and orange slits.

Untwisting the air in my fingers
to find the time and place —

Nurse!

How will I live without the world?

4:23

The slit should be blue
and the solid part red

if it's daybreak and I'm good
for lying on now.

The light comes in to see
the children who make my knees

a pillow. As for the dogs
they slunk away with the guys

— not starved but replaced.

I think of the labor theory of value

as meaning nothing for mothers.
But what isn't a lie.

SUNDAY ONE

Speaking for myself alone.
Speaking by myself alone.

Addressing whom.

Pure air?
Glass eye?
No one?

Pavement dust, oh.
I guess the hard night
is listening through its holes.

15:15

Soft fist of feathers
high to invisible
pulsing through May's misted sky —
Let courage
fly in me this way.

•

Stop, now the yellow
whistle's timid:

the little bird peals
with chirp-chasing beak,

cocks head
and's dittoed

inexactly, from trees.

5:47

Clotted cream and heather, Bronte way to heavenshire
— no, vanity's ugly place.

The sky is the mind and the mind isn't mine
when it travels the world as ambition.

Get up, girl.
A sun is running the world.

13:17

Under sky that is water
humans are humming — old to indolent.

One turns fierce and puts down the phone.

Pear trees wetten, petals fall.
A soft rain elevates the land and hands
long at working: two shake on a cane
and four lie still. All gone wild.

16:16

Rain — red rhododendrum tree —
whitethorn — drumlin — you and me —
a hum of bees — tea —
white milk — brown sugar — bread — honey —
waterdrops — late afternoon sun — near Drum.

Inside me, a pulse of desire.
Inside me, the way elsewhere.

WINTER GONE

Where twigs are breaking stones
and red berries live next to thorns
I never am. I mean
where are the real ones?

Now as usual covering a view
through cool glass to wooden sticks.
If whoever wants to know.

Probably a branch is weighted down
by snow. Then who can see more of the red
than me? All the rest.

Half of every experience is lack of experience.

If I'd known all along
I'd be alone
I'd have gone
to Mount Carmel
as a child-bride calling

Marry me, God!

17:16

Sheep honk and cows shoot moos

into the air — some emergency
in gun-running country.

One cow has given birth to three.

When I get to choose
between following the lives of the beasts or the men

I still choose the latter, it makes no sense.

FEBRUARY ONE

My mirrored me has no friends.

Is glass water? A panda's white eye
might as well blink mine in the frosty compact.

Breath steams the circle like the story
of an ice skater. Falling from city to city.

Decades of industry produced this empty image
where artificial sisters are born.

Air owns the real ones.

MARCH ONE

Mother despises commodity
and not the animals
infinity eliminates.

She loves unstoppable cream,
proliferating currants
and little mouths upturned to space.

But multiplication of leavings, left
as evergreen and oak-leaves overspreading
she uses for burying

the unliving.

6:07

Parent above, look down and see
how far from you I've travelled.

From the swell in your firmament
you'll see the way that the light
has diffused the location of home.

I've lost it, roads wilden
into an interstate between work and wine.

13:14

A red shirt for anarchy.
A white mask with no face on.

The immersers have returned —
firebrands and no mercy from them.

Still, people ask: if your muse was a boy
you loved at age fourteen and if you didn't mistake

one later love for him,
then why this fear of men.

10:18

Into the forest I went walking — to get lost.

I saw faces in the knots
of trees, it was insane, and hands
in branches, and everywhere names.

Throughout the elms
small birds shivered and sang
in rhyme.

I wanted to be air, or wind — to be at ease
in outer space. but in the world
this was the case:

Human was God's secret name.

FEBRUARY TWO

Rambling snowmounds and still sheep along
Cheviot Hills, dense fog, dots of dirt,
snow-banged buildings, scraped fields.
Land pays the price for becoming human.

15:34

You float inside your water
glass among inverted tree
lines, gold and thin as wands.

Your time is really fluid —
or painted in fluid —
your limbs tiny and breaking.

Green leaves are like pages, waterized.

I can drink the image up,
or wait for you to do it.
Whoever acts, divides.

23:19

I feel like the end
of a long day
near Druid stones
and ghosts and hedgerows

thick as storms
where mist takes form
in a water garden.
It seems I am back

in Glan and want
to stay close
to childish things
like milk and sugar

in my tea, a mother
who calls *darling*
— to clouds darkening
the daily hills.

Sometimes it seems
my sight's turned in
on a place dark green
and undefiled

and I am as old
as the young
will ever be.
No, I mean wild!

SATURDAY NIGHT

Through solitary life
confinement
among millions

where “Jesus” means “me”
and “Christ” means “I”

and where many animating
lights on principles that people make

weirdly difficult —
like hells of war and prison, hospitals
and unhappy homes — fall —

I still can't kil
my hopes before the strangeness of change

and so I've come to stay
where Camillo Torres says:

“Every Catholic who is not a revolutionary
is living in a state of mortal sin.”

AGAIN SUNDAY

You travel a path on paper
and discover you're in a city
you only thought about before.

It's a Sunday marketplace. Parakeets and finches
are placed on the stones
and poppies in transparent wrapping.

How can you be where you never were?
And how did you find the way — with your mind
your only measure?

Or were you reproducing
throughout time
on a continuum of nothings?

19:54

She beetles the sheets with screams.

She puts hair and dying together.

She keeps washing — combing — drying.

She is dwarfed and oppressed by reason.

A she even smaller than a me.

The child Mary? No. A banshee.

FEBRUARY THREE

Welcome television to this rug-ruined room.
Three hours of wet traffic
and car windows rain-colored stains.

Physician Goldstein blows up people praying.
How done in Hebron and with what humility?

The girl whose global baby's swelling
in her nightshirt already has an airchild named Dream.

The one inside her gathers its knees, then falls down.
Tonight I have no light left for men

but the baby ones.
To know anything new is to know it as known.

FEBRUARY FOUR

Iced stones in a nice hotel
Whiskey and jacket potatoes.

Through the porthole to the polar:
whisk-brooming snows
shred into the wind, *hello*
to the Scottish Highlands
where, in utter dismemberment,
the spirit unfolds to the animal
of its form.

13:07

After the stone beer
after the extra
shouldn't-have-done-it
some wishes arise

like *Kill my desires!*
But you can't go back
to childhood or Pan
just forward a day

by sorrow's clarifying way.

MONDAY THE SECOND

When was when
we knew that what
we knew
for the first time
we knew
would be disproved
by the end and then found
to be true again?

4:01

The edge of the dome is slipping
like a fool's pudding
under silver. It's dawn, I'm up

aggressively begging: God
give me a penitent hairstyle
and a cell — not a hospital —

to defend my errors in.
And no answers, please, to any of my questions.

16:18

Sometimes a goodbye

seems a bee's
done buzzing

early: purrs
in hair, furred

for the sting.
Fear's then

a hurt-leap.
Time comes in

like the words
Sit down.

Your nerves
reverses.

12:08

From the bray of gray donkeys
over residential walls

to horses walking
city paving with the sound

of cans popping open —
I can smell turf, bread and other goods —

tea and cigarettes too
in brilliant rain-sprayed gardens —

the ones where my mother
was a child among children —

and there I am finally safe
in the sensorium of Drum.

7:34

Once to officials in a din of leaves
I was a street devil and house angel.
Like an automechanic who cheats
 I had neither luck nor keys
at the end of the day
I was a human who couldn't change her ways.
 Money is the enemy of women.

8:14

Prosaic poetry — an animal
with wings. Get her up the streets
to the narrowing.

There she'll know
what the common good means. As if things
grew closer to the glaze
of their associations.

4:23

Twice I wandered into the ring
and lost my way. Down the sandy path
to a lagoon where buoys held up bait
 as dimpled as the moon
I remembered pleasure
God buries in places, the eardrums of the wee ones
beaten by the wind in the needles.

9:22

From the fairy ring there was a view
of water in waves six feet high
 wind at fifteen knots but shifting
I, fast as the rolling sky, no trees —
chewing rose hips in honey —
as the sun marbled the sea
 played on God's back with the beasts.

5:58

A woman working in the fields
I saw disposable objects as a threat to loons
and those plovers trying to roost in sanctuaries
 I was an anarchist
remembering God like a swim in the sky.
At my desk — a wooden spool —
 I was a lover of the eucharist too.

MARCH THE SECOND

Production continues into the alienated night.
The first movement of a message

bodiless as light.

I mean, produce, distribute, then recoup

your losses.

Are you worth your place is space
is all the day-boss wants to know.

Emotional time is what is irrecoverable.

4:13

Wild garlic flowers
whiten the forest — children love their brothers —

people are hope-filled — and skuthers
of wind wear down the quarries.

And worries wear down the man aging
to something as light as a trout

but more lonely from breathing.

15:47

When berries turned frosty blue
the birds in Newbliss extemporized.
I was streets ahead of love in energy and size
but it impressed me with its legalism:
 There was always enough for everyone
 depending on the way
 each measured pleasure.

5:22

The limits have wintered me
as if white trees were there to be written on.

It must be purgatory
there are so many letters and things.

Faith, hope and charity rise in the night
like the stations of an accountant.

And I remember my office, sufficiency.

TUESDAY THE SECOND

The stains of blackberries near Marx's grave
do to color what eyes do to everything.
Help me survive my own presence, open to the elements.

Fog mist palloring greens, no demarcations,
but communitarian gravestones.

Celts lost to Anglo Saxons who endlessly defended marks.
Guerrilla war, terror:
the tactics for landless neo-realists.

5:26

Hello eternal life in the light
of Dublin sunrise.
Hope carries me as-iffing
up the hefty gaps.
Sudden dreams planted to what end?
Fertile as worms? Headless?

4:58

I dreamed I was a closed book
ending: *Mother, why this me?*

Her face looked like an oncoming car,
she had no answer, driving by.

It was my hand that wrote me:
*Pull the covers over your story and say
light, light again and again.*

Illuminate your pages this way.

Where is when
every time.

When is where
I and she combine.

No she without a where, no I without a when.

Body, place, time.

Likewise the same for it and them.
Condensation and diffusion.

4:45

At daybreak birds of all makes
emulate watering holes —

rills — rivers — streams — thrilling
themselves as bells

do people. And dread then aims
for my bed (a swarm of bees)

released from the ceiling. No reason.

THURSDAY THE SECOND

Bracken by the tracks.
Cold lard, layered clouds,
up-shaped sister oysters.
Opal returns to the newly multiplied squares
in valleys of No Other Way.

The smoky travels
of hope
have taken us
only to sickness.
It is one.

NOVEMBER

I often believe that nothing can be lost.
A quarter-inch aura grows
like moss out of everything soft.

White crosses bleed into clouds where the trace
of pain is grey above Dunkirk.

When clouds over Europe float in layers
you can pray for a shining shower and soon
it will rain and poppies flat as paint

will lift their weights — evidence that
attachments survive through space.

DECEMBER ONE

When one more means one less, you are a drudge.
But bear down on passage anyway

and be a lonely communist.

“Why am I otherwise happy
they have blacklisted me?”

Because the divinity of yesterday
divides you from your symptoms.

22:30

He was a cold-hearted Saxon
whose sex was as busy as a farm
and left the room warm
with the scent of hounds.

Believe me, he could have had it with anyone —
man or woman — but he wanted to be good.

These are the dangerous ones.

3:00

I dreamed a dream:
what shall I do?

What shall I do
to be saved
from you?

The lamb is blotted.
Blood and an extra path of teeth.

Its wool is yellow, a gazing stock,
a library artifact.

When you've rolled up the curtains, let in the sun
on each space I've left vacant

I'll see you have written
mine, mine.

OCTOBER ONE

So leave the field.
Overcast and gray as fluttering ashes.

Leave the lashing waves, Germans in church, take a walk.

Wouldn't you know it. The neutrality of the law
ends in punishment.

So pass through the wicket to where the lawn

becomes a thicket
crawling with roses in a halo of losses.

14:15

If you mess up, run to the west
and hide in its sunset.

Pretend invisibility
can be opted for

when it's everywhere
until you want it.

If you need to get lost, go underground.
There you grow strong and fertile as a slum.

1:35

Moon ink is too bright to read.

You run your fingers over the print
and get some sense.

But then you lose it too.
It swims in a pool of logic

that you can't disprove
because it doesn't move.

DECEMBER THE SECOND

Inked-in
nerve endings
never by owner seen.
Snow-lit like
the house of suffering
known by no one but who's in.

4:15

I have backed up
into my silence

as inexhaustible as the sun
that calls a tip of candle
to its furnace.

Red sparks hit a rough surface.
I have been out — cold — too — long enough.

13:01

In envy's carriage there's a witness.

No it. Is true. In envy's travels
there are many new heavens.
But one little head goes everywhere whining.

6:13

Aluminum siding, tar roof,
artificial perfumes, lying words —

No, they're all true.

MARCH THE SECOND

At first there were wishes
free-floating, formless.

Then their voices:

*Love, love, they sighed,
make me weak while I'm still strong.*

*Throw a veil over me.
Then let me look love in the face.*

5:09

There is a city of terror where
they kill civilians outside

restaurants — guys
who are fathers and things.

Food is a symbol of class there
and cars are symbols of shoes.

People are symptoms of dreams.
Bombs are symptoms of rage.

Symbols — symptoms — no difference
in the leap to reference.

17:19

Late afternoon — the shadows lengthen —
it's spring and mayflowers — blue and pink — are back.

Twilight looks like a park before a black part
comes down — for four hours only — when
you can hear the ones you came from say:

*Dread the coming day.
Repress your ecstasy or you might die.*

My hose ripped on the thorns
while the man was jingling silver.

A leg is all I remember of the horror, asking
Am I wearing nylon or am I plastic?

It was a pre-Christian transaction:
no value in facts.

NOVEMBER THE NINTH

Call “die” the end; others call it “leaving”.
To ghost inside the shadow of a worm.

Someone had to say “pass away”
for smile’s sake, then care for the nicest one
at the naval base.

Ward sisters make us think it will never happen.
Like lighting up fishes in a tank
they breathe yellow into stillness.

But the salt in one single drop
off the chest of Jesus — well, let’s follow

Tintoretto to that taste —
where the real is hidden in the paint.

12:01

Spring wind blows trumpet
vines & lilies across the lawn.

Cream drops float, then sink.
A cup tips. Happy lips
dimple the rim.

A checkered cloth is spread
over wood like a coffin.

Complex indications for one she
stuck in a century.

OCTOBER THE NINTH

Pass the small churchyard hamlet
with its dirty coats on. What's all this patience for?

I live at a level of barking.
Then comes the Burren with its silver showers
and underneath are stalagmites made of calcite.

What's the name of that water anyway?
Divers swim underground seeking meaning
in the absolute blackness.

Huge golden torches on the way to Finbar's ashes.

15:18

The father wants you all at home
and she, a bird branching

from pure pneumatic emotion
trails a wake of mist.

She gives you faith — no laws —
but he's your day approaching.

Caught between, you bow and kneel,

anxiously pleasing
no one he and no one she.

You will find the way to get lost
if you're lucky, blessed.

When I where'd
did I ever — could I —
be there?

God-shine.
Loose weights.
Identity later.

Could I — did I —
live by space
or radar?

City parks.
Night beds.
All surrendered.

FEBRUARY LATE

Converse airwaves
flail the sea where a trough meets high water

and the fall
of clouds conceals my view of the road.

My head is a windshield
fogged over with gas and news of the world.

Massacres continue in Greysteel and Palestine.
What is the Greek for complete as in done?
Even in this mess I can find a song to suffer from.

Then I can try regular sound, and then no sound.

DECEMBER THE FEAR

Nuns, monks and swamis
have fought this same anxiety.

(No meaning. No interiority.)

The whole body
condenses to isolation and exhaust

as if neutrality in nature
prefers indifference

or thinks it does.

21:00

When night is in my face

and here is more like air
than the there I travelled for

I'd rather see one color
than the pallor

of the lidded dyer.

7:19

When I am old
I'll have to keep my ankles
up from the chill —
take long walks — smell

the sea and rub garlic
on the soles of my feet.

Still I hope I can finally feel
as safe as a child
who's as wild as the weeds
of the field.

4:27

Unmanned ship — a bed
pressed with linen

for travelling women —
sheets to the wind —

who decided to fly
under dreamish conditions —

airy and solitary
— not here — not there — but always *between*.

17:07

Sallying off to the pub
over cowpads and dung
I was only describing
the person I'd become:

- a disturbed equilibrium
- individual of unre-Marxed belief system
- Carmelite
- mummy

But those were motives, not a defense.

9:13

Herds of deer wander — their heads like wands
upraised for fear
of the human coming — and we always do.

Whitethorn twists into torn lace
on the edge of brittle daisies who face
the sun without a blush.

Almost every prediction has come to fruition.

7:17

A war occurred in the vicinity
of a dream — the form of a bomb
in the hand of a man.

Not one idea but military crosses
clacking. Booted steps

blackened more terror than there was time
to give to the children names.
In the world of the dream

hope was like rain in a shell
or a skull

and each “I” was numbered
“1” in that Hibernia of math, no mothers.

20:12

This kind of fear knows no geography.

Just like a bleet

from a lamb in need, it tugs

for a teat in lady air

— blue lady air, the where-where.

SUNDAYED

On azure seats
chopped lights and limbs, big white sheets.

My day might be the museum of itself
Like I am an ancient mummy.

The avant garde worships history, the others
choose mystery. So far, God, this may be my last
book of unreconstructed poetry.

8:11

Most of the continent
will have unsettled weather today.

Thundery outbursts
from Minsk to Algeria.

Showers over Flemish fields
will sog the paths the closer they get
to the sea. The day should end.

4:04

I won't be able to write from the grave
so let me tell you what I love:

oil, vinegar, salt lettuce, brown bread, butter,
cheese and wine, a windy day, a fireplace,
the children nearby, poems and songs,
a friend sleeping in my bed —

and the short northern nights.

22:01

You can leave the three stars over the wires.
You can leave the last sound, it was the sea.
You can leave the warble of doves in the morning.
You can leave the skerries and the Slieve League —
Dublin's winter twilight and the warplanes
shining under Lough Erne.
You can leave the masses of faces passing daily
and the barking dog.
You can leave the table round with friends
 but you can't leave (though you must, Fanny)
 your little family. No, not without protest.