

An Astrophysicist in Asda.

How does she do it?
Hold an expanding universe
with billions of boiling stars
inside that human head
and still leave space
for cornflakes.

David Braziel

Not so Fragile

One day I imagine I shall be
The very first registered hay fever-
related suicide victim.
The plants smile secretively,
 knowingly.
They are winning.

Elizabeth McGeown

Empty Wishes

She kisses the tips of her fingers
and tells her, 'Remember little girl,
the moon is nothing without the
dark sky. It is permitted to glow.
You are more than the space
that it tries to swallow,' and the
little girl stops wishing
to be as pretty as the moon.

Rachel Hedley

Crawfordsburn

In the weir of the leafy glen a sliver
of a bird on a rock's slippery stage
jigged and jived in the gush of
 sunlight,
leaped, dipped for molecules'
 applause –
delighter of the hard-to-please,
little bringer-to-life of deadened
 eyes.

Peter Adair

Early Glow

February new day
light angles into
Belfast corners.
Onto red brick rows
and chimney stacks:
raised from pits
moulded by trade.
Triassic mud once
again illuminated.

Mark Cooper



New Job

On the one rawest edge of a nerve,
I'm afraid they'll find out what a
fraud I am,
that during training my stare was
vacant
no words sunk past my walls of
indifferent ignorance
and that I'm just stumbling through
life
hoping the next step
isn't off a cliff.

Anthony Ferguson

Remedia Amoris

He came across the dedication
In a copy of Ovid's *Elegies
of Love* that he picked up in
a charity shop on the Ormeau
Road. "To L," it read. "I hope
you cherish this book as
I cherish your love. Joe."

Jim Meredith

The Lunatic is on the Bus

On the morning bus, a drunk
When challenged, broke into
scripture:

'Behind me, Satan, behind me.
Come forth, Satan, come forth.
Are you Satan? Sataan, Sataan!'

You won't find Satan on the bus
But the odd time, on the right
occasion
You just might find Jesus.

Michael Conaghan

Untitled

Winter falls
From a roar to a sigh
That calls on gentle winds
And warms the world within.

Michael Wilson

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Blue Willow

The tiny chip on wedding china
began above sweeping willows,
a rift on the tip of the left dove's
wing
that fell down a cold sky,
fractured past groom's craft,
fled over *ting* bridge, to crack open
river sands,
separating temple from turtle.

Catherine Moore

Nearly Never

We never speak and the silence tells
us nothing.
We never argue and the harsh words
are never felt.
We've never loved so it makes it
easy to be friends.
But we make love which makes it
hard
To get you out of my mind.

Lynda Tavakoli

Jackdaw

Awakened at 5am
a baby jackdaw pokes his head
through my curtain-less window.

He balances hemispherical views
then launches beyond my sight.
I hear his chatter,
relating all he has seen.

Emma McKervey

House

This house hefts out low soft
groans;
calling us, like an anxious mare
foaling for the first time.
I stroke the still-living stones
and breathe with it.

Maria McManus

I Touched Her Arm

during an office meeting
to emphasise a point,
shuddered to sense
a warmth and pliancy
I haven't known
for such a long time.

Niall McGrath

Autumn

i.
rising follicles
miniature sundials covered
frost is closing in

ii.
underneath summer
God's shadow tumbles onwards
illusion of time

Colin Dardis