

Two Poems by Pádraig Daly

BRIDIE MURPHY'S GOD

I knew him in bright shadows behind the cowhouse,
Where dung was piled
In fragrant heaps;

In fields where white geese foraged,
In the dark places of the hedgerows,
In pasture and copse,

In all the nests of eggs -
Crows' nests in high trees,
Thrushes' nests in the bushes,

Nests of truant hens,
Nests after mowing, full of screeching scalds,
Nests in uncut fields.

His scent overcame me in the dying grass:
I could not bear his closeness.

SINGLENESS

(For Matthew Hemson on his Ordination),

There will be joy too in your singleness
As when gloom lifts while you listen
From some heart fastened to sorrow,

As when children in schoolyards ambush you
And drag you off to riotous play,
As when affection swamps you in a festive congregation,

As when ailing women you visit in shabby flats
Fall silent
Before the mystery of broken bread,

As when the dying bless you
With their last,
Most precious smiles,

As when, sitting in the silence of automatic prayer,
You know suddenly
You are being visited by God.

The old will shelter in your untidy heart,
The young will know in you
The laughter of Yahweh;

And the wretched see
You have no bride
But them.