

Molly Christie

“Frank saved my life” my son says,
“there in Suvla Bay.”
Just so. It blew his leg away.
His father and his brother still remain
but now at least the War has let Bob go.

And you are here. Brown eyes like them
and still in uniform, although
you’re broken too – stiff back, stiff mind,
great heart too proud to turn aside.
“Stay with us for the night,” I said
“You’ll sleep in Alexander’s bed.”

You told us stories of the Boyne –
The little places that you knew
so well, and I recalled the Antrim glen
where William and I met
before he worked the Yard.
“William and Mary,” Bob said then,
“How Protestant is that?”

“But call me Molly,” I replied
“Your homeplace seems so rich
compared to ours.
English, almost, as ours was Scots.”
“Yet both are Irish too,” you said
and then I smiled, “How true!”

Friends came, and day turned into day
And all the time we talked
of paintings, pints and poetry
with music through the nights.
We laughed and put the world to rights
Between New Lodge and Tiger Bay.

Until you had to leave.

“Write soon, for it will surely be
‘Good news for Molly’ when
the Army lets you go.”

You looked so sad, so close to tears.
“Someone,” I asked, “for whom
that never can be so?”

You nodded, sighed,
“MacDonagh.”
Bob said “Hush!”

“MacDonagh –
that’s a fine Scots name.
Was he a poet too?”

“He was. A friend like Bob, and brave as him.
They shot him, you must know,
last month in Dublin.”

Then we hugged,
but I was thinking of

Someone
in uniform,
brown eyes like yours,
who was in Dublin too.

Jennifer Brien