

My Name is Frank Ledwidge

I knew her parents didn't like me.
Not good enough, they said.
She was torn
and tore away from me:
walked out with a lout from over the border
the same place as herself.
Disembowelled;
dragging my entrails after me
unleashed in an instant; my fists
on man or dog or half open door.
My blood boiled like the Boyne weir
before it was lost in a fathomless pool.
I longed for the deep pool in my head
as I stood on the parapet

The volunteers marched
to the top of the hill and down again
pretending their shovels were guns
I listened to that northerner; MacNeill
and the posh Anglophile Redmond; the musicians and poets:
all talk and no action.

Dunsany would preserve me for his posterity
and I ran away to his Inniskillings
who sent me off to Turkey.
I heard they shot the poets
And heard my brother calling
again and again; 'Why? Why?
The shame you brought on us!'

I had abandoned her
as I did my country.
The traitor who went over the line:
I sold my soul to the Devil:
I put the bullet in Thomas McDonagh.

Pauric Dolan