

# Aftermath



They are here

Still.

They have no choice.

Was there a prayer

Unspoken or unheard?

A voice in fear or anger, or despair?

For still you find

The silence is not dead

The wind is not the wind.

Lean back against the wall now,

Let your breathing fade

To nothingness:

They breathe instead.

Perhaps they call

in whispers and in rustlings

Such as pass unnoticed in the world outside

Except

That here there is no Outside:

This is all they have.

For you, the door is open, and the stair

Leads upward to the light.

If you should choose

Beware.

They know you now. and where you go

They go with you.

**Jenny Brien**

This poem was inspired by an image from the inside of Kilmainham Gaol (though I did not know where it was at the time of writing). It was published in *New Worlds New Voices* in 2022 as part of the University of Ulster's *Books Beyond Boundaries* project.

Image: Spiral staircase Kilmainham Gaol