

# Corncrakes



Not one among the rushes  
None in the meadows  
None where the farmer dropped to his knees  
Lamenting the crumpled nest its requiem  
    wringing his hands  
    like a chaplain  
    bringing bad news  
    to the door  
    in the night time  
*Them's rare wee things – them's rare!*  
    ... and rarer still  
    the small clutch  
    a universe among the rushes  
Small planets grounded in troubled heavens.  
These scraplings scurry in frantic sorties  
To grub in the undergrowth  
    amongst the brackens.  
It is the night, it is the stars impress  
Africa, Africa, Africa  
Opening the night  
    terra incognita –  
There is no way  
    only opening the night

Listen, first intently;  
    closely – no further than at arms length  
    and then, when everything is detailed,  
    clocked & inventoried & only then,  
    double the circle  
Listen, double the circle, Listen  
    sense unreachable places,  
    calm places at the eye  
    of hurricanes.  
Flee your fever  
    and with unholy impetus  
    hurl  
Into the nomadic sky,  
    into severe places  
    into unspeakable theatres of ablation,  
Into mystery, uncertainty, doubt,

and tell everything  
when  
you  
return.

***Maria McManus***