

3 points of recognition

*Is the miracle that we can bear to see each other at all
that we do not freeze in the stark clarity of reflection or
spontaneously combust in the transient rapture of being?*

1

...

One inexplicably melancholic lunch break
from a job she neither loves nor hates
a young woman (once the girl most likely)
enters a café and asks for her usual
(hazelnut latte extra shot full cream).
The barista, noticing some subtle change
in demeanor; the unset jaw perhaps or
a certain resignation in each breath and blink
refrains from their routine exchange,
forgoes the standard Rosetta
and in a tone suggesting more
than a welcome back to the hive
whispers *today*
today I make for you this ...
Now decades on eyes closed
she can still see the impossibly detailed
feathers feel the lick of flames in the tease
of an updraft.

2

...

Clancy at the door is saying *yes*
just like the poem he gets that a lot
and with his fresh shave strawberry
blonde curls and lilting accent
he knows he could be the poster boy
for Garda Síochána na hÉireann
or the reformation of priesthood.
His smile is solid as the equal armed
red cross embossed on his t shirt.
Once a clipboard and tin can man
did the job now it's all ipads and
credit cards. He reminds each resident
in the carbon copy block
one in five report a symptom
of mental illness
and it all goes like clockwork
until one of them asks not unkindly
and yourself Clancy?

In the early hours of a near perfect autumn day
a gentle breeze rolling leaves between the houses
of a hushed suburb a woman stands in her driveway
car door ajar about to get in or having just got out
answering the upbeat jingle of her mobile
and a passer-by (let's say a jogger) glancing over
notices the stiletto heels and thinks *how?*
when unexpectedly as if some bored director
flipped a switch the scene changes;
the woman's mouth a slow motion opening
emits a strange guttural hurt animal sound
as she doubles over in the kind of pain
the jogger (who is now the witness) knows
from experience can only be the jagged firing
of the starter's gun of grief.
The phone clamped to her ear now a lifeline
for as long as she doesn't let go
for as long as she continues to keen
monosyllabic disbelief.