

All Our Lonely Ghosts

Eoghan Ó Ceannabháin & Ciarán O'Rourke

It was last night that a woman went a calling
To unmarked graves, heart silent as a tomb
Remembering how they they told her she had fallen
Because of who she'd carried in her womb
Because of who they'd taken from her off to Tuam.

Oh, my lost child, I have come to find you
No prayer for you, for I no longer pray
Oh, I've been long, long mourning for you
And now I stand upon your grave
Where you lie cold among 800 little babes.

Now they say that these scandals are all over
So clean the slate and close the book of names
They clench their fists and keep their faces sombre
And sleep at night, at ease with their refrain,
Those muttered words of "Never again".

But I've been thinking and I've been walking
On Dublin streets past all those darkened doorways
See bodies slumped, hear voices round me talking
Of hostel rooms, a blanket and spare change
Ah, the bare bleak day breaks on them where they lay.

Last week I saw another rambling mother
Her child in hand a-turning through the streets
No oul nun's home for her, no Christian Brother
Only cold, open sky and tired tramping feet
Small hope to spare that soon they might walk free.

Now there's a boy sat at another grave
He must be brave now that his father is gone
His Da he tried to find another way
But the landlord came to sing eviction songs
Ah the rope was strong, he didn't suffer long.

No mass graves in our new Ireland, no more
No hidden tombs or crosses etched in bone
The bodies scatter all around us on street corners
And hang in lonely rooms of desolated homes
No company for these ghosts, they fly alone.