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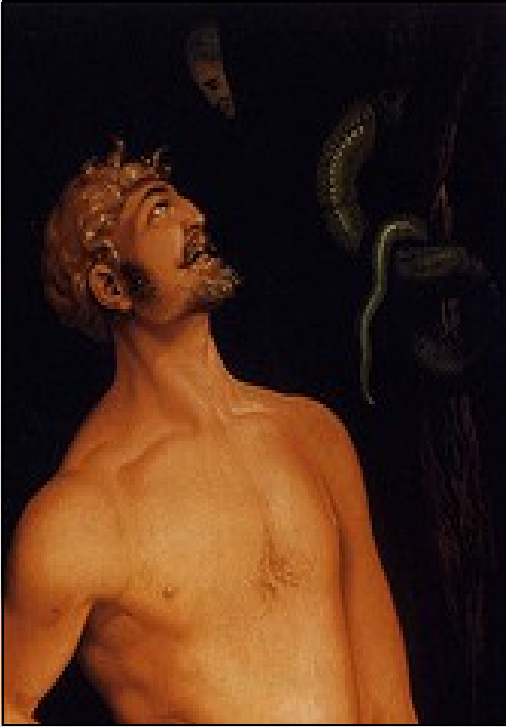
DEDICATED TO IRISH POETRY



“Father and son on a mountain road to nowhere” Photograph by David Davison  
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SPRING  
2012

# NEW IRISH POETRY



## JOHN MONTAGUE

### Speech Lessons

John Montague has never forgotten the mysteries of language or the lessons we encounter in the life-long process of learning how to speak. Sometimes that speech is a remembering of childhood innocence or disappointment; sometimes it's the division from the self, the whisperings of a cloven tongue, the pangs of self-consciousness. In *Speech Lessons*, the poet masterfully expresses his thoughts on religion, art and culture, as well as family, provincial and national history.

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Adam's Apple

*after Cranach*

Her skin is smooth  
as peach or appleblossom—  
or a snakeskin.

The snake's fangs gleam,  
the fruit glistens  
as warmly in her palm

as ever it shone  
on the holy tree.  
He savours it

so slowly  
it sticks in  
our throat forever.

# NEW IRISH POETRY



HARRY CLIFTON

## The Winter Sleep of Captain Lemass

Through both personal and public meditations, Harry Clifton brings his extraordinary poetic and intellectual gifts to bear on the present state of Ireland, which is confronting its troubled past in its current economic crisis. This ambitious collection follows the success of *Secular Eden: Paris Notebooks 1994-2004*, which won the prestigious 2008 *Irish Times* Poetry Now Award. Clifton is the present Professor of Poetry in Ireland.

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The Winter Sleep of Captain Lemass

1923

The life of the country  
Hardened against you  
Like frost, and a new front

Opened— brother against brother,  
Choice against choice,  
Disputing the high ground. Your eyes,

Blindfolded, beheld the ideal State  
As the real one steadied itself  
To annihilate you.

How to survive it, the force of exclusion,  
The freezing out of the soul  
At the site of its own execution?

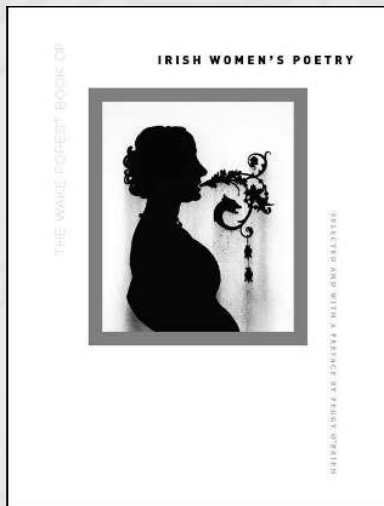
In the high cold, in the light snow  
Of the Dublin mountains, a fox  
Made its own tracks

And vanished....

A single shot—  
A hundred years of travelling echoes,  
Family history, unmarked plots.

# RECENT IRISH POETRY

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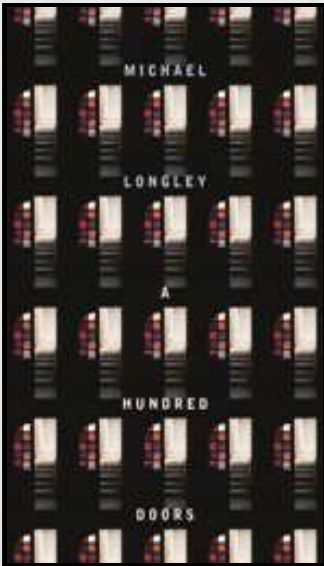
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# RECENT IRISH POETRY

## MICHAEL LONGLEY

### A Hundred Doors



“The entirety of ‘Horseshoe’, from Michael Longley’s ninth collection, *A Hundred Doors*, reads: “I find a rusty horseshoe where skylarks / Rise from the sheep-shitty path, God-sparks, / Sound-glints for bridle and bridle hand. / I am the farrier in this townland.” Read aloud, the lines begin to commit themselves to memory; something every poet wishes for. They read so naturally as to seem hardly art at all – which is the art in which Longley has been instructing himself for many years, evolving from classically educated formalism towards the conversational intimacies of his later work. SEAN O’BRIEN, *THE GUARDIAN*


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