

the burren

The famine walls slash through the land of Eire,
raised scars on the land
that refused to grow.
Rolling miles of green
which used to feed millions,
then suddenly, one season,
stopped.

In church, I sat behind a woman
with a portable oxygen tank
machine breathing for her in rhythmic clicks,
pumps like an even paced steam engine.
She was too weak to take a breath.

How must it feel to know
that you're dying?

- an x-ray, tiny cancer eating your lung -
- surveying stagnant soil, potatoes rotting in the turf —

Incongruous knowledge, such an odd sensation.
- like watching the moon rise over Galway Bay
while the sun is still in the sky -

seeing something you're not supposed to see.

Knowing something you're not supposed to know.

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