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Belfast Elegy

Noel Valis

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Noël Valis

BELFAST ELEGY

Belfast is grown careless with grief, indifferent as grass growing over death. Here lies margaret who prays in loving memory of her bastard of a husband, here lies devoted daddy who birthed living curses against his daily children, here lies bobby sands who fought for ends squalor pocked across his gutted body. I should weep for you, rattle beads. Barbed wire surrounds waiting fields, the ira monument continues to be bombed and the brown mound of earth facing the barricade of british splendor in the grass grows. Grows. Unkempt marked dirt, belfastian decay, I don't know what I'm supposed to feel. I'm tired of seeing these bargain basement plots, this purchase of early escape, of comatose comforts. Adverts tell us how good we've been, having earned the right to sleep through all the Sundays, to sleep in exclusive lots designed to hold the dead in and keep the living out: the sodden prophecy held in the thirsty earth. My feet are full of clay, tiny tombs I've tracked around, as if out homesteading. My shoes make soft, sucking noises. The throat of the earth is salt, paralyzing corrosive salt that eats away our dearest, carves a hollow out of the sacred, knocks flat our anger. Bloodletting melted bones, the land has loved you and left you and now she's taken you in one great sex crazed incestuous swallow of tongue and lips. Her teeth are upon me too and I am drained dumb. I refuse to weep for you, loving margaret, I refuse to mourn for you, devoted daddy, I refuse to march for you, darlin' bobby. Be still now and make a place for so much death.