

Atmosphere

from distance through windows
the sound of the crowd
at a football match – bohs
vs rovers up phibsborough,
a ten-minute walk. people together:
calling like onrushing
tide at some pile
or collision. and atmosphere
this glass-finger tuesday
is right to carry sound.
clear enough for norwegian
radio at certain altitudes
in camper vans overlooking valleys.
and they're singing now.
no words – but the voices
chord like wind on mountains
through a stubblegrowth
of joyous living trees.

Shopping for vegetables

deeply hungover,
feeling really quite dreadful,
and shopping
for vegetables
in sickening sunlight.

red apples tumble
from market-yard boxes;
bricks in a badly-
built building.

At the Pan-Asian supermarket

and we could be carrying
these flimsy green shopping baskets
into any five-year-old's
birthday. everything pops
brightly colourful firework, snapping
like fish and spilled piles
of skittles from bags to the carpet,
choosing which ones to have first.

I wander down aisles,
examine the language
on packaging. feel much
like a toddler – it looks,
to my eyes, all like candy
and I'm an illiterate. and I'm
hungry, sure, but it's not me
making dinner. you choose
your favourite noodles,
and your favourite rice
and freeze-dried
vegetables, all imported

wrapped in plastic,
and from way
across the world.
it all looks so
delicious. all looks so
colourful. you walk,
showing me frozen fish
and unusual soft drinks.
I'm so glad you're here
and you're showing it to me.

Castles with flags

love is adoze
in the bedroom one over.
love's on her phone,
on her laptop or something.
watching a movie. you are
in a room next door
typing out poems about it,
building castles with flags
of its skin. why are you doing that,
idiot? she is in there with legs
crossed and waiting,
so comfortably warm.

The innocent

they tested the intercoms
after the fire. fixed up the vents
and the lifts. the building was safe
as a cage for a parrot: apartments
suddenly worth some more
money. in the basement
a black lad had been sleeping
on a camp bed in a corner
behind the maintenance room.
I'd met him in passing
on a site inspection a couple
weeks earlier: he was very
polite. someone called in
not that long after. I took the call –
passed on the message.
I wasn't involved more than that,
and I'm thankful – after all, what
would I have done or had to do if I was?