

ALISON CROGGAN

MORAGH'S SONG

I have no time for the gentler emotions
puling down my cheeks. Outside time
there may be malmsey fields where I can weep
and bury my face in the milk scent of wheat
and am allowed to love. Here the sewerage seeps
dysentery between floorboards and my wanes
foster themselves on a stagnant teat. And I am tired
of foreclosures and indignity
the orbital forms of government and rat nights
the stale stink of hunger and rotting hope
penny by penny counting hours out.

It is the early evenings of poverty
sliding down senile walls, that is the worst;
at siege against the dark. It starts
the rotting of men's hearts, the falling open
of peach skin to maggots before our time
that hones down hope. I have seen fine men
slough away to hatred in this, men who might
be doctors, lawyers, scholars in another place.
And they talk about the war.

Many nights
when banshee blackness scourges me
from sanity, I look to the easier
road that Rosie took downstairs,
a yard of hemp. Only
some stupid hope makes me go on,
the dumb hope of beasts in abattoirs
that something will come right before the end.