



# Geoff Goodfellow

## THE GIFT

i sometimes smile  
passing that bus shelter  
in Galway Avenue  
    thinking back  
to that Xmas of 1960  
& the morning me & Pete  
sharpened the axe  
on dad's oval grindstone  
    the ¼ BLACK AND DECKER  
revving its guts out  
    sparks flying in all directions

we filled mum's shiny preserving pan  
    put it on the gas stove  
went out the back  
    dressed for the kill

24 bloody chickens  
cartwheeled around the yard  
looking for their heads  
    while we sat red-flecked  
on spears of buffalo grass

watching life pump away

eating warm apricots  
& talking about what we would've  
done to those bloody Nips  
if we'd been up there  
in the islands a generation back  
& on the boil  
    we untied their legs

from the rotary clothes line  
drove our tight fists  
into the unknown  
drew back flicked out  
over old newspapers  
& dunked into mum's big pan  
& the steamy stench  
of plucked feathers  
sure didn't smell  
like mum's stewed apricots

& while we cleaned up  
wound a shoe box  
with yards of intestines  
livers & hearts  
pinched some of mum's  
Xmas wrapping & a card  
& wrote

**To Dear Helen**  
**hope you have a Merry Xmas,**  
**Love,**  
**Nana.**

& left it  
on the bus shelter seat

i sometimes smile  
passing that bus shelter  
in Galway Avenue  
thinking back  
to that Xmas of 1960  
& crisp chicken skin  
the succulence of wings  
& parsons noses  
& what a bastard of a kid  
i was.