

KNUTE SKINNER

IMAGES

Just now as I'm sitting at my desk with an empty sheet of paper on it, two donkey ears appear at the bottom of the window. They belong to Nippers, Sue's new foal, who is temporarily living on our weeds. Earlier today, I heard on the radio that a line of people are crowding into a terraced house on the Falls Road in Belfast. The features of Christ and of Mary have been detected in the stains on the fireplace tiles. These images — both the ears at the window and the faces in the tiles — are now part of my life. The neat trick would be to put them together in a poem.

KNUTE SKINNER

AUGUST 2

A change is coming, sweet Jesus, a change is due.
We smell it in wind, we hear it clack in the window,
we look at it in the sweep of darkening clouds.

It is time for a change, sweet Jesus, it is time for a change.
The grass grows brown on the hill, the bare earth cracks.
The road past our gate has become a powder of dust.

Oh the open sky, sweet Jesus, turn the road to mud
from Healy's cross to the far end of Caheraderry.
Then soak our backs as we carry in rain from the barrel.