TWELVE WOODCUTS BY DERYCK

Here you are, the thirteenth disciple
At the last supper:
On your left, no doubt is Thomas
On your right Judas —
Their unblinking eyes hone in on the wood
A shower of Galloglaich is taking cover —
The question is: will the English lancers
Pursue the Irish horse for eternity?
The smell of sweat, excrement, horse manure, blood:
A javelin is thrown, but still they circle
   And circle like the prettiest carousel
At the funfair.

Twelve is more than the
Company, for there is one more:
Here is the artist, his hair is lank and greasy,
He is drunk and sweat glistens on his brow.
You are the absence that even Jesus dared not dream.

Once the pansies, stones, trees were lifted up.
A dark mood, brown study
Things that are hidden, dark words, backstabblings,
Blood at the dim gateway
   All that echoes in a moment’s time.
For all the pansies, stones, trees
Were sucked up in a formless vortex
And the old-placed evil was postponed
Sent off to some never never land beyond the sea.

You, the artist, depict yourself as Jesus
You are your own creation, the eyes glimmer.
They love you, at last. As you gaze beyond
Your creation, past the woods,
The hurriedly-arriving Kern
With arquebuses alit, and the Light Horse
Disconnecting the lances placed in their backs
By your hand, and circling more and more
Quickly as another evening comes
Somewhere, sometime, in Ireland.