

## JOHN GRIFFIN

### IRISH EVICTIONS, 1848

There is no picturesque pose for death,  
head high, lean against eaves, the low roof  
dripping the rain. The bailiffs are frequent  
and cold as mists; they drive into the bones  
like winter. They don't dislodge. Surrounded  
by daughters in shifts, the drift of women  
asking for love and bowls-full. They finger bare  
the wooden stones of the rosary, till grain  
grows smooth and links thin. Chickens scratch,  
and a pig in a good year growing fat;  
but this is the year for stones down, burnt thatch,  
taking the road to the port. The mimic mind  
endures no more, insists deliverance  
lies by water. There are stones of gold  
will never be found on other far streets.

### WILLOW

This willow is kelp in currents  
sucked and surged by a lazy sea.

This willow is crazy tails of crazy sheep.

I can see frantic tassels twitch  
on the boobs of go-go dancers  
in Brobdingnag, after the eighth drink.

I think I am the prisoner of this tree,  
its slave. I am programmed annually  
to rake its million leaves. Anyone need  
some mulch? I can deliver  
twenty-five barrow-loads this year.

This is a monster beached in my yard.  
Its hair is green, its huge hump  
is visible backyards away.

And then the wind. The tree succumbs  
slave to the air about it; watch it  
thresh and lash and bound.

## TOORAK GARDENS BOWLING CLUB

Shadow black distorts the lawns.  
The snail creeps out from hedge  
and bush, looks to the dropped mouths  
of curled hibiscus on the paths.

The dew is whispering up to windows.  
My unwise slippers lift up little puffs  
of leaves. I'm unobserved observer  
of lit rooms; someone's old men there

in shirt sleeves drink their last beers.  
Committee men, they look committee men  
in their filling shirts, holding the night  
with reluctant departures,

the last beer instead of going home.  
Their wives all sit awake in units  
watching Epilogue. The moonless jacarandas  
breathe the fog that settles down.