

## THE AQUARIUM ●

DS Maolalai

we solved  
a murder together - well,  
it was only cluedo,  
and we were in a friend's apartment  
on the fifth floor,  
overlooking  
another apartment building. I had six beers  
and failed to nail the location,  
then went out on the balcony, to celebrate  
my success  
at being such a good loser  
with another bottle and a borrowed  
cigarette.

across the gap between buildings  
most of the windows were black, some light grey  
where the curtains had been drawn. a few stood out  
as white blocks like ice or lump-sugar  
or like the aquarium you keep  
in your bedroom. and party-goers floating  
like drifting tropical fish. this was 2am.  
no-one normal up  
and through the windows  
everyone looked european. but that's just  
the way the neighbourhood is; no-one from ireland  
in grand canal dock. my girlfriend guessed wrong too,  
and joined me  
and we got very focused  
on this one couple - you could see sex,  
movements rippling like fields in the wind,  
in glimpses through their cracked open window-blinds.

sometimes in the countryside  
you're walking on the road in summer,

the asphalt broken from the stress of tree-roots.  
and out of it  
weedish flowers growing, showing their colours and their  
hardy strength  
like life  
escaping from everything.