

THE BLUE OF MARY'S DRESS

It is the blue
that comes into its own
with the fading light.
It is the blue of something
not usually coloured, the chime
of the wind-chime.
Ice doesn't describe it,
nor that winter low mist
over the willing estuary

though it is defined against
the patient ochre of horses
the optimism of a heron.
It is not rainwater nor melt-water
but a lucid blue,
as lucid as the ankles of a baby
who is newly born,
ankles gently curdled
as if it were still in the womb,

but ready for anything,
ready to lead lions
and to imitate birdsong.
It is the blue of the eclipse
when the father holds his own child
over a cliff edge:
the mother watches
the world shudders
the birdcall freezes

but all that falls is an episode,
it falls over the edge
of what is possible.
It is a colour that is alive
it flows in the cells of the skin,
is secreted deep in the veins.
What good does it do
to ask for a sign, when we cannot see
what ought to be as clear as day?

Ask me, says the Lord,
and I will show you
a whole willow pattern of design
and everything is imprinted with it
and the blue I have used
is the blue of Mary's dress.
It is the blue of many bridges,
And, however recessive,
of many Allelujahs.

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