

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE KEAG

(PRONOUNCED "GIG")

The pattern and the water
meaning and substance of the tide,
the keag and mighty principle that moves it,
swamping boundaries, advance and ebb.

It shows us that are waxing, waning;

The keag does not devise.

It gathers all to its process,
embodies the meaning of gathering,
letting go, belonging, loss and longing.
Its masterpiece is movement, its movement itself.

Ebbing at inrush, rising with outflow,
the water is always here.

The keag is never empty,
running out as it runs in.
It comes back different each time but always –
as ages come and go, not by design,
but surely nonetheless, in going
never to be gone.

On point of transformation,
tide breaks from quiet poise.
As balance fails, the current powers backwards,
shouting its way upstream in "reversing falls:"
while under, ebb still sighs like lost souls

sinking, swept from sight.

Then ebb exposes slippage,
the soft concealed and revealed between
water and rock, man and imago. In tidal
lands between what we know and are held to believe,
we choke: between the self and the seeming,
where living comes to grief.

In the end, as waters
pass away, yet others come,
the past redeemed but as another matter,
itself but made of ever newfound time.

I mean the decades of providing,
caring for young and old.

The kitchen table in the middle of the night
my cathedral close, my Oxford, Shangri-La, and Arcady.

TRIOLETS FOR FLANNERY O'CONNOR

I

"I've never been any place but sick," she said,
left like a shell, a carapace in the sand,
but the place she called her sickness was Wonderland.
"I've never been any place but sick," she said
and wrote what she knew, claiming her town overspread
the world – with a college, madhouse, prison, and band.
"I've never been anyplace but sick," she said,

left like a shell, a carapace in the sand.

II

Left like a shall, a carapace in the sand,
“I’ve never been any place but sick,” she said –
more telling than grand tours of the unread.
Left like a shell, a carapace in the sand,
Her gifts unpacked by a popular brand
of critic by personal suspicion fed.
Left like a shell, a carapace in the sand,
“I’ve never been any place but sick,” she said.

PRIVATE LOVE, PUBLIC HATE

(a true story)

On the way to the forum, seen in wet cement:
“ENGLISH STINKOS” and “MIKE LOVES MOMMY.”

WHEN WE LET SOME FARMLAND GO BACK TO NATURE

Competing poles reach high for light;
this is how they die,
as parallel strivers fighting for height.
We learn from them to rely
on our well-connected web of souls.
We learn how much is enough of the whole
and how enough can be the best of all.