40 lines.

*Centra  
(Kilfinane, Co. Limerick)*

The women who work  
in the Kilfinane Centra  
live mostly on the edge of town  
going Ballylanders way  
or cutting up to Ardpatrick.

They hope for nothing from the day  
save that it should end as it began  
with dryish light  
a roof  
a ring of gas for the carrots  
for the mangetout discounted  
with the younger ones safe home  
the older ones not unhappily married  
Himself half-approachable  
at least in fits and starts.

I remember when some of those houses were built  
the ones below the Green Bar  
below the shrine where Herself  
sobs over the palings of Gethsemane.  
Twelve I was or thirteen  
adrift on the usual summer visit  
flecked with brick-dust myself  
from the opening bouts with the world.

I watched the houses going up  
the bone and muscle of them  
here and there  
unpurposed nerves of flex  
sun and a transistor on the high planks  
‘Fabulous 208’…

… and perhaps the Centra women   
leashed then in a teen elsewhere  
till time at last should find them  
down among those sockets  
and party walls complete  
with the fright of children already in the air  
a sleek Himself  
not quite tipping to fat  
and mostly a dote like  
save when the roasties were too soon for the plate  
or he had the drink taken.