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.