

## Ghost Potato Lamp, Keenagh More, Co. Mayo

I made a ghost potato lamp,  
a back-to-then experimental face  
shouldering eyes,  
a pallor of leaking light.

I cut into the reticent nightshade,  
here was its wet self,  
a water that turned to milk  
stiffening like limewash.

A starched, compassionate look  
rests on the table now  
sheltering the hole of its head.  
Indigenous frightener, tilth-veil blown aside.

Here is a want of speech, a vernacular past,  
implement of a shrine.  
O, fated mirror, we begin to spook each other!

I picture your small lights across the regional dark,  
a maincrop flickering on window sills,  
estranged, but wanting to be loved.

Fast-forward to the morning after –  
the wrinkled ghost-leather, skin of the field –  
it starts already to wrinkle.

But I love the slotted mouth's benign severity,  
the white-rim eyes shrinking back,  
the sweetening these commute.

Imagine children asking, *frighten us!*  
and parents with knives  
marking a surgery out  
on the table of each kitchen in each house.

Can you hear the notch and scratch of blades  
and the sharp teaspoon scooping tuber flesh?

Each cut is the phrase of an old face from inside.  
A single flame, small enough to fit.  
A cupping shroud, its camel hump of soil.  
A singed bitterness of potato skin on the night's air.

I want this lantern's guttering  
to frighten expectation.

I want to be frightened well.

*Sean Borodale*