

## **Tomas O'Leary – Three Poems**

### **Going Back**

When I think of the lost  
generations of myself as they  
wind like ribbons of tripe around  
the handsome head of some  
astonished ancestor

I trigger a blizzard of Celts  
from the skies of my forebears  
and wonder what wisdom I'll forage  
from a head rolling loose in the snow  
or a bowl of steaming porridge.

if blood were less thick, and water  
less true to its flowing, I sense  
I would still be obtuse  
in the manner of cracking  
the bones of my thoughts; yet

time, as it captures my being there  
now, might cut me some slack  
for the delving. If I find my own head  
in the snow, I will know  
it's a bad time to visit.

### **Thieves and Maker**

What you've created, let's just say,  
outstrips the almost everyday  
creations of mere geniuses in our  
in-house employ. Oh, you're our boy:  
a quantum paradox in a glass dome,  
faux snow flakes as we shake you.  
You're the muffled grandeur of purity  
in a ropeless boxing ring  
throwing punches of coded thought  
at the absence of conspicuous opponents.  
Yet because you're supremely high-tech  
the cavalry arrives none too soon  
to pull the arrows out of your brain, to  
sedate you with scrupulous measures  
of soldierly rum. Then the gods of  
all the space we freely grant you synchronize

their epiphany watches. With cavalier  
toasts they swallow your franchise.  
Your brilliant concept flies, pilot  
anonymous. We find it really works.  
Nice going. Well done.

### **Pool Shark Preacher Cuts a Lotta Slack**

Death ushers us down the back stairs to a pool hall  
where all the balls wriggle and jiggle and drop on cue  
into pockets of death. The regulars who come here  
sundays dive right in, smash balls and score and keep  
coming back. Even newcomers depart fulfilled and  
still alive, though the tables baffle their best shots while  
their own energy goes haywire. It's pretty awesome how  
the ceiling depends on prayers not a soul is saying or even  
bothers to look up at. No one can say for sure what it is about  
pool they'll never stop trying at, but just you go ahead and  
grab a stick and chalk it up like you knew what yore doin'.  
See, it ain't the pool per say, if you get my meaning, it's  
only the death of the world when your whole mind drops off  
into pockets, but go 'head, keep shootin' and shootin'.  
Gotta say though, I like pool myself and never much listen  
to this sorta shit I'm spewin', where'n hell does it come from.

**Tomas O'Leary** -- poet, translator, music-maker, singer, artist and expressive therapist --  
has a volume of *New & Selected Poems* from Lynx House Press: *In the Wellspring of the  
Ear*. His previous books of poetry are *Fool at the Funeral*, *The Devil Take a Crooked  
House*, and *A Prayer for Everyone*. A teacher for many years (college, high school,  
elementary, adult ed), he has worked (played) the past couple decades with folks who  
have Alzheimer's, eliciting cognitive and emotional responses through songs, stories,  
poems and free-wheeling conversation.