

Marcus Breen

She reads in Irish in Boston

(for Louis de Paor)

Almost nervous,
nearly hiding behind her hair,
the long, straight auburn
pushed behind one ear,
on the right side of her face,
as she contorts.

The Irish utterance,
incomprehensible poetry
of words inflected through time,
recast, when,
a thousand years later
re-collected into recollections
- brought knowledge back -
in mind-surge as heart-felt,
body melt.

What I hear is ...
the sensation of survival.

Plural intentions,
gaining, before regaining
what had been taken,
forbidden, destroyed, nearly lost
as she reads,
“the thin veneer of English”
in her language,
“roic mo chuid Béarla ar dtús,”
a reference later, to an earlier
Gaelic order.

I become the historian
shamed by the invaders,
(my people, so I must confess),
a lesson in repossession
by survivalists and dreamers
looking out to see;
hearing her direct connection
in a blue and gold silk dress,
through words her name defies:
Aifric Mac Aodha;

recasting sensations alive,
words, jittery with affect.

The quotes are from “This Weather” a poem by Colette Bryce

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Marcus Breen was born in Melbourne, Australia. He was educated at The University of Queensland, Australian National University and Victoria University, where he received a PhD in Communication Policy. He worked as a journalist, a consultant and since 1996 as an academic in the US with time out consulting in Mexico and the Caribbean. He teaches in the Communication Department at Boston College. In the 1980's he wrote, read and published poetry in Melbourne and Canberra. This is his first poem published in the US.