PROJECT MUSE®

Irish Poetry

Eavan Boland

New Hibernia Review, Volume 5, Number 1, Earrach/Spring 2001, p. 9
(Article)

Published by Center for Irish Studies at the University of St. Thomas

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/nhr.2001.0001>

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/23962>

Eavan Boland

~

Irish Poetry

for Michael Hartnett

We always knew there was no Orpheus in Ireland.
No music stored at the doors of hell.
No god to make it.
No wild beasts to weep and lie down to it.

But I remember an evening when the sky
was dark at four.

When ice had seized every part of the city
and we sat talking—
the air making a wreath for our cups of tea.

And you began to speak of our own gods.
Our heartbroken pantheon:

No Attic light for them and no Herodotus
but thin rain and dogfish and the stopgap
of the sharp cliffs
they spent their winters on.

And the pitch-black Atlantic night.
And how the sound
of a bird's wing in a lost language sounded.

You made the noise for me.
Made it again.
Until I could see the flight of it: suddenly

the silvery, lithe rivers of your southwest
lay down in silence
and the savage acres no one could predict
were all at ease, soothed and quiet and

listening to you, as I was. As if to music, as if to peace.