

## Scott McKendry

### *Doagh*

for Jimmy McAleavey

After church, we'd walk the long Cogry Road,  
the cocker spaniel sweeping ahead  
snuffing a way, but on her lead.  
We'd turn in at a field,  
where Aunt Millicent knew the farmer,  
where she'd unfurl the tartan quilt—  
deflap the wicker hamper,  
pass out picnicware,  
produce a large wedge of prizewinning blue,  
still-warm wheaten, a ham hock,  
under a plum tree  
clung to by a rufous nightingale.

All summer long, I hadn't heard a single 'fuck'  
till, careening towards the *garage*  
I etched a scrabble across Uncle Doc's Rover  
with the jaggedy pedal of my BMX.  
He shouted. He...shouted too much. He  
jabbed his spotless finger.  
Clocking the stink from the slurry pit but,  
I pined for grubby pebbledash, tarmac,  
rounders in the cul-de-sac,  
the howl of the mongrel,  
the instant noodle in its plastic pot,  
someone's mother going to someone, 'Whaaa?'