

## Auto-complete

*Twitter auto-complete: 'I love doing the research about doing the research about doing the rese...'*

*'I envy doing the research about doing the research about doing the rese...'*

*'I fear doing the resea ...'*

Three things come when unexpected:

fear envy and love,

a joke about a Scotsman, a Welshman, and an Irishwoman,

three corbies on a fence

watching a well-fed animal

wandering from its herd,

discussing what to eat,

what to leave and to preserve.

Do I envy your Eisteddfod,

your 'dubh' as 'du' as 'dubh'?

Do I fear your numbers,

do I fear your 'w'?

Your 'grà' is so strong in you,

You 'do the little things'.

Your learners, B1, 2 and 3

wear orange commas and Gaelic rings,

in pop-up gaeltachtaí.

Does our love mean anything?

We're not mirrors or a choir.

I worry we don't ring true

but all the same I seem to want

a messed-up tattoo of you:

*Love and something will last for ever,*

*Though the world will come to an end.*

Three things come when unexpected:

fear envy, love.

Come whenever you fancy,

without asking, at your leisure.



## Common

My mother is gone in a *hpzz*  
and has to call back on her mobile:  
there's a power cut all across Lewis,  
and though she'd been in the middle

of the Comunn Eachdraidh's funeral lunches,  
now I barely have her attention  
and can almost see her at the window ledge  
watching unpickable threads of dark pattern

the village's long black drip to the sea,  
silent except for *hums* and *haws*,  
as torches and paraffin lamps flit - twos and threes -  
across Baile an Truiseil and Mullach an Tòil.

## If you've got this far

If you've got this far, you must have borrowed  
a bike to make it past the loch and its crannóg  
on the peat road through the turbines over the moor  
to the bay where klondykers lie anchored off-shore

your backpack full of childhood icons –  
a packet of *Space Invaders*, corduroys, a rusted 3-iron,  
*Freeman's* catalogue and *Great Universal*,  
the Russian and German swears of Sven Hassel –

and through optic fibres, high-speed train-links,  
computer and satellite technology, speeding and doublethink  
found this trash-filled street. On the kerb outside the door  
you'll have left the bike, one wheel spinning in dead air,

in the unrelenting haar, in the cultural history of that haar.  
If you've got this far, you must've utterly changed who you are,  
switched languages and switched back  
at the first sign of threat or attack

into something that will pass for a mother tongue,  
something you think you remember from when you were young.  
But now in the night-damp of this forever evening air  
you realise you've let fewer people than you'd care

to admit possess you: ripples welt up under your skin  
from the memory of your and their sins  
against the undimmable light. But all of this you can dismiss  
as the creating of unnecessary fuss

for if you've got this far you've learnt to treat  
open wounds as scars, learnt not to hope for the sea.  
Ignore the smooth, ignore the rough.  
If you've got this far, that's far enough.