

‘No Undue Details’: Love, Sex and Embodiment in the Poetry of Pearse Hutchinson

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In his book *Irish Poetry since 1950: From Stillness into History*, John Goodby observes that Pearse Hutchinson ‘is particularly impressive as a love poet’.¹ The impression Hutchinson’s love poetry leaves however is political insofar as it laments legal, social and cultural proscriptions on the rights of some to love. There are many poems that explicitly explore loathing based on skin colour, sexuality or religion, and in each case the poet overwhelmingly urges the importance of love as a way through enmity, which the poet calls a ‘hateful / tiring chore’ (*CP*, p.73). His work returns again and again to challenge prejudices against not only ‘the love that dares not speak its name’, but also against anyone deemed an outsider or from a minority group, and to find an accommodation with those who practise such hatreds without repeating ‘the overtures of hate’ (*CP*, p.81). This takes the form of meditations on hatred as a dispositional act in ‘Fear’ (*CP*, p.279), ‘Manifesto’ (*CP*, p.274) and ‘The Right to Love’ (*CP*, p.219), and of celebrations of acceptance and kindness in ‘Poem with Justin for Paul and Nessa’ (*CP*, p.102). From the painful recitations of homophobic refusal of human dignity and the right to life in ‘Speaking to Some’ (*CP*, pp.80–1), ‘Dear Gods’ (*CP*, pp.67–8), ‘Speaking for Some’ (*CP*, p.40), and ‘Two Young Men’ (*CP*, p.278), to those of the violence perpetuated by monotheistic and doctrinal righteousness in ‘Judengasse’ (*CP*, pp.262–3), ‘Odessa’ (*CP*, pp.228–30), ‘Ostfriesland’ (*CP*, pp.231–3) and ‘An Evening in Amsterdam’ (*ALFW*, pp.36–7), Hutchinson makes the case for love as a shifter of paradigms more powerful than creed or credo.

Given the focus on love and grace in Hutchinson's work, it would almost be possible to describe it as Christian despite its arguments with spirit-imprisoning religion and institutions, except for the fact that sacramental moments of grace and humbling connection are expressed through the allegory of sexual pleasure and its anticipation. Sexuality as an expressive source of joy, and personal truth structures Hutchinson's understanding of love. In 'A Tree Absolving', for example, the potent sexual image of 'a small cherry in full flower' breaks open against the 'terrible dominical dreariness' of a church service. Because the speaker 'stayed out, like sun and tree' – outside the stone edifice of the church and the love-based liturgy that often becomes love-denying in practice – he finds he 'suddenly no longer had to try / against such granite odds', to 'feel the earth can be like heaven' (*CP*, p.42). Ending with the wonderful play and slippage of feeling the earth (move), the speaker's flowering 'cherry' at the door of the church signals a relationship to the 'granite odds' of inherited shapes and forms that Hutchinson's work explores in a variety of ways.

In 'Calder', a prose poem from *At Least for a While* set at 'the Venice Biennale of 1952' in the exhibition rooms of mobiles and stabiles, the speaker experiments with the stabiles by pushing against them, because he is 'seized with a desire – not to uproot them, no, never that – but to make them move, even if only a little' (*ALFW*, p.25). The stabiles are described as 'more Romanesque than Gothic', evoking the two styles of church architecture that dominated Europe throughout its most prosperous and expansionist historical period. They represent the inflexibility of the 'grounded, well-planted' traditions that he doesn't wish to upend, but rather to touch and move. This desire to be both 'stabile' and 'mobile' – between rootedness, being earthed, and movement – signals a structuring tension in Hutchinson's work that extends to his relationship to place as well as to ideology. In order to live at the site of this tension, when the speaker in the poem says, 'I tore myself away' (*ALFW*, p.25), the metropolitan connoisseur of humanity, the *flâneur*, reveals the split at the heart of this existence. Many of the hatreds that Hutchinson found painful he associated most especially with the repressive atmosphere in the Ireland he fled as a young man, and he noted that 'to give joy free rein', he had to 'leave home, not just home but homeland', to escape the 'puritanism' of the 'prevailing late-forties atmosphere' he associated especially with Ireland.² Hutchinson's work has always been difficult to place in a national tradition, not simply because it encompasses a wide variety of styles, influences and interests, including translations, but

because of an insistent transnationalism that does not set up anywhere else as an idealist opposite of Ireland's repressions, but understands elsewhere as equally bound by its own discriminations.

In this essay I would like to argue that, above all else, in placing Hutchinson we must attend to where and how he loves. During his long writing career, although primarily based in Dublin, Hutchinson has written from homes, however short or long-lived, in various European cultures, and as such his work cannot be easily accessed through frames in which poetry primarily becomes relevant or meaningful through topographical anchoring. Unlike many of the twentieth-century poets celebrated today, Hutchinson's work is not grounded in Irish places to form a corresponding symbology for his work. Instead, although affiliated to a recognisable and politically imbued set of Irish places, his work ranges across cultures and although the location may vary, there are persistent settings that do not, and this is more emphatically the case with *At Least for a While*, in which a retrospective framing of his earlier work appears to take place. The stage set of the tabled formalities of food and drink at 'sidewalk cafes' (*ALFW*, pp.18, 20) becomes more emphatically revealed as the portable structure of his poetry's very form: 'the sunlight flooded front bar' (*ALFW*, p.11); 'a counter / with room for five' (*ALFW*, p.40); 'the table' (*ALFW*, p.36); on a 'bar stool' (*ALFW*, p.29); a park bench (*ALFW*, p.47), of shared public space: 'drew up a chair to my table' (*ALFW*, p.33); 'we shared, in the nearest pub, a narrow table' (*ALFW*, p.63); 'Two of us on a bench at the only table' (*ALFW*, p.64), 'one man / behind the counter, four / regulars sitting around' (*ALFW*, p.65). The tableau of the table, the coffee, the wine, the pint shared or partaken of in companionship, is the transposable theatre of his poetics, just as the restaging of compassionate reach across tables and counters expresses his work's own shape-shifting form.

Hutchinson's relation to history and literary lineage is equally unconventional, and his work, although it engages with the work of many other writers, does not seek to make a place for itself within existing national literary traditions. Instead it seeks to alter the very questions to which the current answers hurt, frighten and beat Hutchinson and others whose lives are not lived at the 'exact centre' (*ALFW*, p.17). Although Hutchinson writes in a culture in which family persists as one of the key literary and critical metaphors of history and identity, there is little fascination with antecedents in his work; in fact there is a striking absence of family attachments, of parents and grandparents. Indeed it seems as if his work self-consciously refuses pre-existing historical and topographical stanchions and his aesthetic appears to

exist, as if 'held in place / by some invisible support' (*ALFW*, p.17), or as a sculptural 'drawing in space' (*ALFW*, p.25). On closer inspection, however, a sustaining filament comes into view, but it is not where we might expect it to be in a literary culture with an emphatic interest in lineage.

The desire for autonomy is also propelled by a profound desire to belong, but not to communities that cohere around hatred for those made outsiders by virtue of how and who they love or how they look or pray. The conflicting desires for belonging to self and to others, 'at least for a while', are explored when love is re-placed in the bodies of lovers and back into discourses from which it has been excised. This key animating dynamic in his work beholds the body as the place of love, as the contradictory site that is both source of pleasure for the lover and yet also always other and unreachable, and it centralises the ambivalence of boundary and the deep possibilities of thinking beyond the intractable genitive imperatives of territoriality to understanding place as connection. In 'The Right to Love', love forms the philosophical and political core and the poem deliberately effects a facing away from an aesthetics of national identity that does not include Hutchinson's right, as a lover of men, to love and live in peace. The poem, about a young Derry woman tarred and feathered for falling in love with a British soldier, stages a radically different movement to Seamus Heaney's celebrated poem on the same subject, 'Punishment', in which the tarring and feathering of young Belfast women who fraternised with British troops is, in the final lines of the poem, understood from the point of view of the 'group' which demands this 'exact / and tribal, intimate revenge'.³ 'Punishment' has elicited interpretations that emphasise collective bonds over intimate relations. In contrast, Hutchinson's poem is a moving plea for intimacy and touch to prevail over the demands of tribal loyalty to discriminate against those who will not reproduce the tribe – either at the level of bodies or at the level of faith. In this form of tribal reproduction, miscegenation and queer desire have no place, having the wrong and no outcome respectively, and thus threaten to disrupt the imperatives of racial purity that form the clannish bonds. Here the right to another's body as the territory and sign of the tribe, as the validation of history and forebear, is understood as an horrific and violent act, and the poem's repetition of the phrase 'the right to love' reaches for 'a world of love beyond / even her own people's agony and hope / even beyond her own' (*CP*, p.219).

Heaney's resigned accommodation between his own horror at being witness, either in reality or by being culturally implicated in the torture, and his understanding of the community rage towards women

constructed as 'betrayers' is effected through the connection of victims across a historical narrative that provided an uncomfortable rationale for such violence: 'history and "the unforgettable photographs of these victims blended in my mind with photographs of atrocities, past and present, in the long rites of Irish political and religious struggles."'4 It is precisely this appeal to history that Hutchinson's work resists by locating 'peace' within one and the Other, but notwithstanding the striking lack of attention to forebears, as well as the explicit rejection of tribal imperatives to a collective that occludes and excludes difference, Hutchinson's poetry is not without kith. Instead kindred souls, and even those not so kind, make up Hutchinson's kin. Thus, relational attachments in his poetry are not vertical and historical, but horizontal, forged across geographically diverse spaces, over bar counters, across sidewalk café tables, over food and drink, over the sacrament of friendship and the passing grace of a stranger's kindness or care extended to one unknown. This reach encodes an ache for embrace that suffuses his work as powerfully and as insistently as the 'blinding brightness' (*ALFW*, p.30), the 'radiant' (*ALFW*, p.47) afterglow of love, of refracted light that recurs throughout his some sixty years of writing. His careful, thoughtful, gentle lyrics of connection and disconnection make up some of the most moving love poems in contemporary poetry, and this is not the love that one is born or bound to by duty or obligation – as in a family of origin – but a study of the ethics and responsibilities of found love and desire.

Hutchinson's work is profoundly about the bonds created from the erotics and ethics of friendship and sex. Indeed, Philip Coleman argues that it is the centrality of love itself that configures the transnationalism of his work: '[t]hrough each journey the common theme is love – "Always, the aching pull of it" – and it is this, finally that has compelled Hutchinson to range across cultures throughout his career as a poet.'5 The importance of such transnationalism is set out in one of Hutchinson's earliest poems, "Indian Lemon Linen ...", from his first original collection in English, *Tongue Without Hands* (1963). Named after Pádraig Pearse by his parents, Hutchinson's concentration on the name of 'Kinsolver' in this poem opens several questions about the role of naming in creating kinship. The poem makes 'Kinsolving' the focus, not of an etymological dig in order to unearth its source (for Kinsolving is a name with an unknown origin, with neither a genealogical starting point nor an originating claim) but of a diachronic web across cultures. 'Kin' becomes a puzzle to be 'solved', not as a set of inheritances, but as a way of linking across languages

when 'sol' is added to kin from both French and Spanish:

The Spanish word spelt 'sol' means sun,
 the French word 'sol' means ground,
 and you'll not find the power of one
 till the power of the other's found. (CP, pp.32–3)

Through the interplay of three tongues in the name of the man who has a 'plot for upside-downing / the ways of truth', Hutchinson hands us a torch-bearer to take us through the rest of his work. 'Light' and 'ground' are embedded into the present progressive act of solving kin, and the importance of travelling lightly, being irradiated through pleasure and intimacy, assumes as much importance as the ground, the land and the anchor in seeking community. This key contradiction between the need to travel lightly and to be grounded is most insistently expressed through the recurrence of references to golden light and sun, figured as the transformative presence and energy of love itself.

The complexities of sexual love are modestly but compellingly explored through euphemism, punning and associative echoes, and sexual pleasure is alluded to through the imagery of light and vivid darkness. 'Radiant', a delicate and touching prose poem, bears witness to the sexual joy of another, and his respectful acknowledgement of 'no undue details' serves as a coda for the portrayal of love in his work:

Sitting on a park bench in Gala Placidia, listening under the Mediterranean sun to a young man from Wexford rhapsodizing about his second night with a new girlfriend. A tale of the night on a bright afternoon.

This time, he said, was even better than the first (a week ago).
 He gave me no undue details but he looked radiant. (ALFW, p.47)

The 'tale of the night' on a 'bright afternoon' is an example of the characteristic use of light and dark for visual and textural effect in Hutchinson's work. Hutchinson's evident anti-racist sensibilities ('look as tranquil and offer as much courage / as a black child playing with white in a Paris gutter' [CP, p.15]) and a clear erotic attraction to people with dark hair and skin collide in his work, so that rather than code or bury the lure of darkness, Hutchinson refigures it to challenge the over-determined binary associations of light and dark in post-Enlightenment European culture. The Driscoll poems seek to de-couple the nomenclatures of skin differences and the exoticism of difference by dramatising the ways that desire and identity are mediated. *Chiaroscuro* is the framing and defining visual note in Hutchinson's

work, as the most noticeable visual pattern across all of his collections is the deep shadows and contrasts of light and dark. The recitation of black and white works *against* the inherited moral codes of emphatically opposed darkness and light in Enlightenment-led modernity, in imperial discourse of race and in Judaeo-Christian symbolologies.

One of his later poems 'A Full Length Portrait' brings the characteristic provocations and evocations of light and dark of Hutchinson's *oeuvre* fully into view in its longing descriptions of 'the handsome and well-built / young man from Benburb / stretched out stark naked / in all his young magnificence' who covered his modesty with a 'big, bright orange' (ALFW, pp.23–4). Orange and gold function as signs for sexual efflorescence and joy, for emotional engorgements and burgeoning relations. Thus, when the human body comes into focus in 'A Full Length Portrait', it functions as a filter for Hutchinson's readers to read back through his body of work to bring the modest sexual allures and codes of colour into focus:

He'd a fine wild head
of jet-back hair but
when it came to
much further down
the painter painted only
a flash, a glimpse, of black,
for the big round golden orange
was like a sunburst:

'In the dark circumscribed forties' (ALFW, p.24)

Here, sunburst as sexual delight casts its beam wider than the artist's studio in which the portrait was painted and onto the cultural and sexual repressions of a highly censored and sexually repressive Irish state. Sexual delight is understood as politically illuminating when the painted body enacts a coy semi-striptease, and the blackness gestures to another darkness that is paradoxically enlightening. Black hair remains one of the most consistent images in Hutchinson's work, operating metonymically for the black hair elsewhere on the body, which is rarely revealed in a sumptuous poetry that nevertheless achieves its sensuality because of 'no undue details'. The black hair of the head acts as a sign in a concatenation of bodily areas of light and dark, gesturing along the semiotic of somatic shade to another head of pleasure. But Hutchinson does not repeat the ideological hierarchical pitting of black and white against one another, with blackness

functioning as the disowned and split-off site of the unbridled lust and desire of repressed white cultures, because as whiteness and blackness both function as texturally and textually seeping and inviting locations of radiance, darkness in the compound 'sundark', each a discreet reference to desire, love, physical delight and pleasure:

[...] we both went back
 to rise in a sundark room.
 (Rise and fall,
 fall and rise,
 rise and fall
 in a sundark room)
 (*CP*, p.118)

In keeping with this discretion about sexual pleasure, the human body makes rare appearances in Hutchinson's work. 'A Full Length Portrait' remains a rare example of a whole body surveyed, as for the most part embodiment in Hutchinson's work is suggested by angles, planes and edges. At some level, despite his thematic daring and emotional experimentalism, he seems to remain an old-fashioned post-*Renaissance* portraitist, with a humanist focus on the head, the eyes, the face, mind and the hair.

However, the limits of humanism are tested by the presence of even more prevalent 'backs' in Hutchinson's work, the 'turned backs' that symbolise the turning away of the homophobic and the exclusions of heteronormativity. Equally the back functions as an object of erotic delight, tracing an elongated El Greco line, along 'talls' and 'longs' down which the eye travels to 'that vividness' (*ALFW*, p.24) as well as metapoetic gesturing towards the 'reading back' we must do through Hutchinson's work. For *At Least for a While* acts as a key to the personal and intimate geography of his poetry, and brings the inclines, tilts, thresholds and detached body parts of his earlier work into full focus, as when the cerebral accent on the head and mind as well as the gaze is fleshed out to become the whole body in all its relations. Like the interlocutor in 'On the Crest of the Bridge at Portobello', the reader is invited, with the speaker, to relish 'your whole being through your eyes feasting' (*ALFW*, p.60), while fully sketched bodies arrange the relations of black and white, to others and ethics in 'Black Tide' (*ALFW*, p.54). The 'silent nakedness' of the 'ten living white bodies' lying 'face down on a black beach', show another 'back' – a crying back about the atrocities perpetrated on the natural world by multinational oil companies. These bodies 'made for loving', 'scream outrage', but

'with breast, nobilities, / "the best-loved space", with beauty, / cleaves through the black ugly dreck of greed / to love the beautiful insulted land, and people' (ALFW, p.55). Many of the backs in his work also speak of the spurning body of cultures that fear difference, and this derision takes the form of cruel laughter, sneering, as well as explicit violence. There are also many accounts of queer-bashing where the perpetrator turns his back on his own homosexual desires as well as the humanity of the speaker on the receiving end of his fists. In 'A Man Goes for a Walk; Runs the Gauntlet; and Finds Beauty', for example, the speaker, his 'back still bleeding', recounts running for his life from 'five lusty throats', who gave chase because of his 'full beard' as 'all over Europe beards were still *verboden* / (the '60s and freedoms-for-a-while still far)'.⁶ While here the speaker avoids touch, contact from the fists of the 'Men: / of Menace', the hands that abound across his collections express a desire to form intimacies that unmake the hateful 'goat-*meigeallach* apings', the 'animal cries' the 'relentless and loud, goat-noises' (ALFW, p.14) that are the soundtrack of (self-) hatred. Although Hutchinson's first collection is called *Tongue without Hands*, it is paradoxically full of hands, open palms, fingers and sometimes balled fists presaging the overwhelming importance touch assumes in his aesthetic.

On happening upon a 'blessedly, blissfully empty street' where 'no more darts of derision pursued me', the speaker encounters 'the most beautiful, spherical, / enormous object' that filled his 'astounded gaze' that transforms his fear and exclusion. This encounter, somewhere between the beautiful and the sublime, is Wordsworthian insofar as an ordinary object – a 'concrete mixer' – reaches out to touch and lyrically arrest him in a mediation of its beauty. 'A Man Goes for a Walk; Runs the Gauntlet; and Finds Beauty' is also reminiscent of the modernism of Marianne Moore, whose steam-roller famously irked W.B. Yeats: this metal and utilitarian sphere, encircling and 'gyring', although recalling 'the cool-green copper domes of Dublin', does not call him home, does not produce '*Heimweh*' in him (ALFW, p.14). This obvious reference to Freud's uncanny delimits the sublime possibilities of this moment although it behaves ostensibly as a sublime embrace and an object animated as if from nowhere 'turning turning no one behind it'. The poet is not returned to his body of origin, instead the maternal space, likened to 'a cauldron', the 'grey North Sea', a 'veena', becomes a suspended aesthetic that saves his life. The churning cauldron, the terrifying matrix that cannot be 'homely', eventually becomes home, in 'Syllabics', the closing poem of *At Least for a While*, when the partially

accepted embrace from the aesthetic object in 'A Man Goes for a Walk; Runs the Gauntlet; and Finds Beauty' is fully received:

Even a man of seventy-nine
 lying alone in a single bed
 in a still house can be visited
 by a feeling of perfect comfort,
 not needing to shift around too much,
 at surprising ease in the small hours
 with mind and body, even himself –
 at least for a while, once in a while.

Here, the previously reluctantly responsive 'stabile', or partially fitting 'concrete mixer' becomes a containing object, a still house, a home that holds in 'perfect comfort', a perfect fit, in which agitation may cease, at least for a while. Hutchinson's work is haunted by a conflicting desire to be embraced, accepted, and comforted by the object world that he so powerfully animates and imbues with his own emanating kindness, and fear of such a hold.

Touch is also the central movement in 'Amlwch', but rather than a meditation on the reach of an object, it reflects upon the visceral and transformative touch of another's words, a tongue with hands. The poem, which interacts with W. B. Yeats' 'Among School Children', and through that to 'Leda and the Swan', powerfully reveals the centrality of an ethical disposition of love as a fundamental responsibility of the poet that emerges throughout Hutchinson's work. Although 'Amlwch' and 'Among School Children' are both written from the perspective of men in the autumn of life, they differ in their politicisation and aestheticisation of love, embodiment and desire, not simply because of personal and historical differences between Yeats and Hutchinson, but also because of a radically different understanding of intimacy. Hutchinson orients the Irish lyric away from the politics of reproduction underwriting the Yeatsian lyric, the '[h]oney of generation', to muse instead on the physically transformative realm of love. Yeats's famous poem is about the failure of philosophy to account for the pain of unfulfilled desire and the mysteries of aging and life, as well as about the ultimate disappointment involved in worshipping an image of love rather than the reality of those who inspire that love. Despite its acknowledgment of this failure, however, it can also be read as an intellectually deft and over-coherent means of continuing to avoid relationship through elaboration of the self's inner life and 'quarrel' at the expense of the people in front of him, who serve as a device for abstraction.

In contrast, Hutchinson's poem is about being open to being touched and transformed by others, fundamentally by love. The poet is not in Ireland, but in Wales, on the isle of Anglesey, connected to the main coast of Wales by a land bridge, and close to the ferry port of Holyhead, one of the main portals for traffic between Ireland and Britain. Whereas Yeats' visit to the schoolroom was as a 'sixty-year-old smiling public man', in an official and evaluative capacity to a model school of the new State, the speaker in Hutchinson's poem visits the school library, the space of texts, as a poet: 'reading poems, talking about poems / and about being a poet' (*ALFW*, p.52). Interior monologue and the narcissistic short circuit of object fixation is displaced by dialogue in 'Amlwch'. 'Leda and the Swan' ends with this question, 'And how can body, laid in that white rush, / But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?'⁷ whereas in 'Amlwch', the poem ends when a young girl, evoking both Leda and the schoolgirl reminiscent of Gonne, poses a 'sudden blow' as 'all of a sudden' she staggers to her feet:

But all of a sudden, at the back,
at one end of a dark row,
a tall girl rose to her feet
with her golden hair blazing.

Yeats projects onto the children in front of him a vision from his inner life, from his own set of symbols and abstractions. Whereas Yeats' 'heart is driven wild' by a vision abstracted from and projected onto 'one child or t'other there', in contrast in 'Amlwch', the 'young voice' of a 'tall girl' who 'rose to her feet' 'went clear as a knife to [Hutchinson's] heart'. As Yeats wonders if Gonne 'stood so at that age', in the Hutchinson poem a 'tall girl rose to her feet' and spoke, whereas the child that 'stood before [Yeats] as a living child' was the sum of his own frustrated desires, and remained a vision, a vehicle for philosophical musings about life, age and desire. The tall girl penetrates the body of the poet, in a reversal of the rapacious swan penetrating the imagined Ledaean body of the schoolgirl, and thus in 'Amlwch', the body of the poet becomes the site of transformation, not of the nation, but of his poetry, by allowing the living being in front of him to stop him in his tracks and move him elsewhere. When the schoolgirl asks '[d]o you want your poems to change the world?' the poem's final three lines give this enigmatic answer:

Knowing all the time there was only one answer,
and only one word could give it.
So I gave it. (*ALFW*, p.52)

The Yeatsian question about knowledge and power is transformed into a question about love, while the body as site of desires bigger than the self, the self as part of the currents of life – currents that in themselves have no morality, but which present as cruelty or kindnesses in the humans through which they are passed – is affirmed. Here the circuit of libidinal energy is affirmed as the lot of the human open to receive and pass it on.

This is no humanist obsession with the human, but the human as part of a network and web of energies that criss-cross the wider world, but without subsuming the individual to the pattern, to the web of discourses that traverse us. In Hutchinson's world view, changes for the good come not from the grand designs of tribes and groups and categories. Revolution in Hutchinson's world view is not imagined on a grand scale. Like Wittgenstein, for him changing the world is done in small ways. Hutchinson's 'Manifesto' is not the exhortative tract produced by an earnest or idealist modernist, nor does it articulate the totalising and universalist political vision of a social revolutionary. Revolution for Hutchinson is much closer to Adrienne Rich's vision of a 'revolutionary poem', which 'will not tell you who or when to kill, what and when to burn, or even how to theorize'.⁸ Thus, the enjambment on 'revolutionary' gestures back towards a quiet and humble validation of basic human kindness and love:

Universal courtesy –
now that would be
revolutionary. (CP, p.274)

NOTES

1. John Goodby, *Irish Poetry since 1950: From Stillness into History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p.75.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Seamus Heaney, 'Punishment', in *Selected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p.72.
4. Seamus Heaney, 'Feeling into Words', in *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968–1978* (London: Faber & Faber, 1980), pp.57–8.
5. Philip Coleman, 'At Ease with Elsewhere', review-essay of Pearse Hutchinson's *Collected Poems* and *At Least for a While* in the online journal *drb* (*Dublin Review of Books*). Available at http://www.drb.ie/more_details/09-09-28/At_Ease_With_Elsewhere.aspx. Accessed 17 August 2010.
6. 'Beard' is urban slang for a woman who acts as a gay man's 'cover', assuming the public role of his date or lover so that his sexuality may not be apparent or discovered in situations where, whether for reasons of employment or physical safety, it would be dangerous for him to be open about his sexuality. See also the March 2006 'Draft Additions' to the entry for 'beard' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'A person who pretends publicly to be involved in a heterosexual relationship with a homosexual person in order to help to conceal that person's homosexuality.'
7. W.B. Yeats, 'Among School Children', in *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.142.
8. Adrienne Rich, 'What If?' in *What Is Found There* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1993), p.241.