

Anseo ag Stáisiún Chaiseal na gCorr*Do Michael Davitt*

Anseo ag stáisiún Chaiseal na gCorr
 d'aimsigh mise m'óileán rúin
 mo thearmann is mo shanctóir.
 Anseo braithim i dtiúin
 le mo chinneáil féin is mo thimpeallacht.
 Anseo braithim seasmhacht
 is mé ag feice-il chríocha mo chineáil
 thart faoi bhun an Eargail
 mar a bhfuil siad ina gcónaí go ciúin
 le breis agus trí chéad bliain
 ar mhínte féaraigh an tsléibhe
 - Mhín 'a Leá go Mín na Craoibhe.
 Anseo, foscailte os mo chomhair
 go díreach mar bheadh leabhar ann
 tá an taobh tíre seo anois
 - Dhoire Chonaire go Prochlais.
 Thíos agus thuas tím na gabháiltais
 a briseadh as béal an fhiántais.
 Seo duanaire mo mhuintire;
 an lámhscríbhinn a shaothraigh siad go teann
 le dúch a gcuid allais.
 Anseo tá achan chuibhreann mar bheadh rann ann
 i mórdhán an mhíntíreachais.
 Léim anois eipic seo na díograise
 i gcanúint ghlas na ngabháltas
 is tuigim nach bhfuilim ach ag comhlíonadh dualgais
 is mé ag tabhairt dhúshlán an Fholúis
 go díreach mar a thug mo dhaoine dúshlán an fhiántais
 le dícheall agus le dúthracht
 gur thuill siad an duais.
 Anseo braithim go bhfuil éifeacht i bhfilíocht.
 Braithim go bhfuil brí agus tábhacht liom mar dhuine
 is mé ag feidhmiú mar chuisle de chroí mo chine
 agus as an chinnteacht sin tagann suaimhneas aigne.
 Ceansaítear mo mhianta, séimhítear mo smaointe,
 cealaítear contrárthachtaí ar an phointe.

Cathal O Searcaigh**Here at Caiseal na gCorr Station***For Michael Davitt*

Here at Caiseal na gCorr Station
 I discovered my hidden island,
 my refuge, my sanctuary.
 Here I find myself in tune
 with my fate and environment.
 Here I feel permanence
 as I look at the territory of my people
 around the foot of Errigal
 where they've settled
 for more than three hundred years
 on the grassy mountain pastures
 from Min a Lea to Min na Craoibhe
 Here before me, open
 like a book,
 is this countryside now
 from Doire Chonaire to Prochlais.
 Above and below, I see the holdings
 farmed from the mouth of wilderness.
 This is the poem-book of my people,
 the manuscript they toiled at
 with the ink of their sweat.
 Here every enclosed field is like a verse
 in the great poem of land reclamation.
 I now read this epic of diligence
 in the green dialect of the holdings,
 understand that I'm only fulfilling my duty
 when I challenge the void
 exactly as my people challenged the wilderness
 with diligence and devotion
 till they earned their prize.
 Here I feel the worth of poetry.
 I feel my *raison d'être* and importance as a person
 as I become the pulse of my people's heart
 and from this certainty comes peace of mind.
 My desires are tamed, my thoughts mellow,
 contradictions are cancelled on the spot.

Cathal O Searcaigh*Translated by Gabriel Fitzmaurice***Cathal O Searcaigh says:**

'-the area is Irish speaking and I was brought up speaking Irish...Irish is the language of my soul.'

'-that whole idea of home is a vitally important thing to my work. I only discovered this when I was a teenager and I went off to London. I became acutely aware then of home and became aware that I was in an alien environment... something of not being recognised, of not having a face, of not having a name, of not having a place and I realised that all of these were here.'

'-a lot of my poems have become an act of re-possession. Re-possessing tongue and tradition to a large extent.'

Suggestions for work on **HERE AT CAISEAL NA GCORR STATION** by CATHAL O SEARCAIGH

TALKING AND LISTENING - FOR DISCUSSION

In certain countries, under strict, authoritarian governments and regimes writers have often been persecuted, locked-up or forced into exile. In groups do some research and find examples of places where writers have suffered such ill-treatment. Discuss why writers in particular should find themselves targeted in such a way. Looking at this poem, what spirit reigns in the place that Cathal O Searcaigh describes? Is this 'territory' similar to or different from those places you unearthed in your research?

OR

Do you possess a 'sense of place,' a geography of the heart? If so, describe it and say what special qualities it has for you, why it is so important to you.

Points to consider:

1. In your own words write a description of the countryside or landscape depicted in the poem.
2. What does the poet say he has discovered at Caiseal na gCorr?
3. What is a refuge? What is a sanctuary?
4. Why should the poet feel justified in feeling 'permanence' in this place? What does he mean by this 'permanence'?
5. What do you think the poet's people have been doing in this 'territory'?
6. What words and images show us that by accepting his 'fate' as a poet, Cathal O Searcaigh feels he has not broken any tradition but has rather stayed very much 'in tune' with his 'environment'?
7. What do you think the poet means when he says: '...I challenge the void/exactly as my people challenged the wilderness...'
8. Look at the last line. By becoming a poet what 'contradictions' might he have feared?
9. How is he 'the pulse of his people'?
10. Look up the word 'reclamation' in the dictionary. Find its meaning. Then find out its etymology (check the dictionary). In what way does this word then become very appropriate to this poem?

Final thoughts for discussion:

Read Seamus Heaney's poems *DIGGING* and *FOLLOWER* and consider how O Searcaigh's poem might share certain ideas and features with these two poems. Consider the poems you have studied as regards a 'sense of place' and write about what they have revealed to you about the poet's place in society. How important a part do you think poets play in society?

Points to consider:

1. The poet's father was a country doctor or GP. List the evidence from the poem that would support this fact.
2. What key image in the poem does the title link up with? Explore the possible significance of the title?
3. From a close reading of the poem, write a character study of Elaine Gaston's father. Discuss his public and his private personas.
4. Explain in what way 'a thousand people' have leaned on him.
5. Explain the flash-back technique in the poem and in what ways has the poet 'learned to make the loop'?

Final thoughts for discussion:

Seamus Heaney's poem *Follower* is about the changing role within a father/son relationship. Groups might compare the two poems and discuss what images and emotions the poems share. What differences are there between the two?

Gary Snyder's poem *Axe Handles* might also be usefully included in such a discussion.

In a poem about visiting his mother in hospital, Robert Sund talks about how we 'Die daily of unexpressed affection.' On a personal, individual level, ask pupils to focus on a member of their own family and think of an appropriate and effective image or series of images that somehow captures how they feel about that person. This might develop into a poem or piece of descriptive writing.

Paradise Fatigue

Above the falling blade of the Hatchet Field a cloud
 shrouds, a star
 hums, a moon pendulums, a merlin scythes the air
 with angled wings, a wind sings in the cat's cradle
 of a transmission aerial.

Below Black Mountain a kneeling cherub with
 a fractured wing
 swings from the jib of a crank-and-ratchet crane
 in a monumental sculptor's yard strewn
 with half-engraved memorials.

Under the sign of two beaten angels hanging by a
 brazen wing
 at the place where six roads cross
 a stolen Zephyr brakes spilling
 strings of Angel Dust.

Elsewhere the wings of a broadsheet fold round the
 globe of a hazard
 lamp alternating in circuits of blips and quarks
 a quirk of light in the spaces
 between the words.

Eilish Martin

Eilish Martin says:

'-in the poem I am revisiting many of the places that I would have been familiar with in my childhood.'

'-for me poetry is a journey and through that journey I discover a great deal about myself. And it is in the process of writing that I am able to find out various things that I believe in or don't believe in. So for me writing is very much a journey in thought.'

'-it is a compulsion - it's something that you really don't have any control over. If you want to write you have to write...For me a lot of poetry is a journey and through that journey I discover a great deal about myself. And it is in the process of writing that I am able to find out various things that I believe in or don't believe in. So for me writing is very much a journey in thought.'

Suggestions for work on PARADISE FATIGUE by EILISH MARTIN

TALKING AND LISTENING - FOR DISCUSSION

We often pay very little attention to the area or town in which we live. With the other members of your group discuss the landmarks or central features of your town. Has the town changed in the last twenty years? Ask your parents/ adult friends if there are any major changes in the town in recent years. Perhaps you might like to write a description of your town.

Points to consider:

1. How does the poet describe a journey through Belfast?

2. The poet tends to use imagery associated with angels throughout the poem. Point to some examples of this imagery and comment on its effectiveness.
3. The picture presented in the poem is a visual one, but sounds dominate the first stanza. Why do you think this is so?
4. What do you understand by the title of the poem?
5. Look closely at the last stanza. What do you think it means? Do you think that this stanza reflects the poet's optimistic view of life?

Final thoughts for discussion:

Do you get the feeling that the poet has a great affection for her city? She seems to want to share her picture by giving such a detailed account. Pick out words and phrases that have a significance for you and comment on why you like them.

Turn Again

There is a map of the city which shows the bridge that was never built.

A map which shows the bridge that collapsed; the streets that never existed.

Ireland's Entry, Elbow Lane, Weigh-House Lane, Back lane, Stone-Cutter's Entry -

Today's plan is already yesterday's - The streets that were there are gone.

And the shape of the jails cannot be shown for security reasons.

The linen backing is falling apart - the Falls Road hangs by a thread

When someone asks me where I live, I remember where I used to live.

Someone asks me for directions, and I think again. I turn into

A side-street try to throw off my shadow, and history is changed.

Ciaran Carson

Ciaran Carson says:

'-in my young day it was all smoke and smog and mills and factories and work. And that has by and large all gone now.'

'-I love maps and I see maps as being a story because a map won't show you exactly how it is, a map is only schemata of the thing.'

'-You imagine that what you see in a map is how it is. But if it is only a way of explaining things.'

'-the street names come from the fact that an awful lot of the streets in that area came from the Crimean War. You have got Rumania Street, Balaclava Street, Crimea Street. And the streets themselves are like an emblem of the Empire in a way.'

'-behind how a thing is called there is a whole spin with a story behind it and a history and a yarn behind it.'

Suggestions for work on TURN AGAIN by CIARAN CARSON

TALKING AND LISTENING - FOR DISCUSSION

Our past lives have a great influence on our present existence. What we do now affects our future. What we expect to happen or see doesn't always turn out the way we expect. In groups discuss some experiences that you have had showing how you have been influenced by past events.

Points to consider:

1. How do maps tell the story of a city?
2. Maps are supposed to explain things, give you a sense of where you are. Is this the way the poet sees the map of the city in Turn Again?
3. How could this poem be considered to be an extended metaphor explaining an individual's confusion in life?
4. The poet creates a landscape which has nightmarish aspects. Can you select and explain phrases and words which create this effect?

Final thoughts for discussion:

Do you think that Ciaran Carson is successful in describing a troubled place dominated by its past? Explain your reasons for liking or disliking this poem.