

1991 "The Man who was marked"

Memory poem
Meehan's childhood
in Dublin

Periwinkle - sea shells
Cheap source of protein

1. Buying Winkles

Sibilance draws attention to poverty
Internal rhyme

Colloquialism
sense of place

My mother would spare me sixpence and say,
'Hurry up now and don't be talking to strange
men on the way.' I'd dash from the ghosts
on the stairs where the bulb had blown
out into Gardiner Street, all relief.

onomat + onyamb
-dashing through streets
Alliteration
To darkness

Georgian
houses

A bonus if the moon was in the strip of sky
between the tall houses, or stars out,

Sibilance
Alliteration
Child's POV

even in poverty
it was a happy
childhood

but even in rain I was happy - the winkles
would be wet and glisten blue like little
night skies themselves. I'd hold the tanner tight

simile - sensuous imagery
Allit - poverty

supershoin
childhood

and jump every crack in the pavement,
I'd wave up to women at sills or those
lingering in doorways and weave a glad path through
men heading out for the night.

Evokes strong sense of place
women at home
men in pub

street seller
sight

She'd be sitting outside the Rosebowl Bar
on an orange-crate, a pram loaded
with pails of winkles before her.

smell
sound

When the bar doors swung open they'd leak
the smell of men together with drink
and I'd see light in golden mirrors.

touch

I envied each soul in the hot interior.

Sensuous
imagery
warmth from
pub - only men
allowed

Quite
cruel

I'd ask her again to show me the right way
to do it. She'd take a pin from her shawl -

'Open the eyelid. So. Stick it in
till you feel a grip, then slither him out.
Gently, mind.' The sweetest extra winkle
that brought the sea to me.

Feign ignorance
for extra winkle
child

Taste metaphor
colloquialism

'Tell yer Ma I picked them fresh this morning.'

I'd bear the newspaper twists
bulging fat with winkles
proudly home, like torches.

simile

Carries her
treasure home
proud of herself.