



Three Poems

Elaine Gaston

Citation: E. Gaston (2021) Three Poems. *Sijis* 11: pp. 461-465. doi: 10.13128/SIJIS-2239-3978-12902

Copyright: © 2021 E. Gaston. This is an open access, peer-reviewed article published by Firenze University Press (<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/bsfm-sijis>) and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

Competing Interests: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

As a student, in the very early 1980s, I lived in Buenos Aires in order to immerse myself in Spanish or ‘Castellano’ as it was called at the time in Argentina. I was studying French and Spanish and one of my special subjects was Latin American literature of the twentieth century. This was an optional year where I could live and work in a relevant country. While I lived in Buenos Aires I taught English and drama. I was studying Borges and someone told me that sometimes, if you were a student and rang on his apartment, he might invite you up. They told me where the apartment was. I was fascinated.

I was also studying Neruda along with many other authors from throughout Latin America. The course was still fairly new and I don’t recall one single woman on the bibliography of that particular reading list for us to choose from.

In Ireland, still, when people say “I went to America” they invariably mean USA. This lazy shorthand, which swallows Central and South America’s claim to the word “America”, is explored in the poem “After Muldoon” within the wider context of the last US president’s term when the culture of fake news became prevalent.

I also include the poem “Search” referencing the Irish placenames and townlands where I grew up. While local people often continue to use townland names, the names themselves were replaced by numbered post-codes in the 1970s for official purposes. Hence the references to BT53 in the poem. In addition to replacing the townland names with numbers, much of the actual physical landscape of the townlands was physically lost recently when replaced by roads and construction.

“Search”

Say it again.
Carrowreagh.

The townland of Carrowreagh
In the parish of Drumtullagh
In the union of Ballycastle
In the Barony of Cary
In the County of Antrim
In the Province of Ulster
In the country of Ireland.

Look again.
Carrowreagh.

Ballinlea, *search*,
Carrowreagh, *search*,
Croshan, *search*,
Drumtullagh, *search*,
Kilmoyle, *search*,
Drumnaheigh, *search*,
Drumtullagh, *search*,
Lisnagunogue, *search*,
Lisnagat, *search*,
Islands of Carnmoon, *search*,
Islandmacallion, *search*,
Islandboy, *search*,
Templeplastra, *search*,
Templeogue, *search*,
Cullyrammer, *search*,
Killyrammer, *search*,
Kilmahammogue, *search*,
Lisbelnagroagh Mór, *search*,
Lisbelnagroagh Beg, *search*,
Croagh Mór, *search*,
Croagh Beg, *search*.

The results cannot be found.
For all of these
try BT53.
For more,
try BT54.

The back field, *search*
The top field, *search*
The meadow field, *search*

The water meadows, *search*
The hay field, *search*
The potato field, *search*
The barley field, *search*
The rushy field, *search*
The stony field, *search*
The green field, *search*
The yellow field, *search*
The tilled field, *search*

The hilly field, *search*
The river field, *search*
The sheugh field, *search*
The white field, *search*
The mill field, *search*
The pasture field, *search*
The fallow field, *search*
The ploughed field, *search*
The corner field, *search*
The lower field, *search*.

*The results cannot be found.
Did you mean the motorway?*

Uncle Andy's field.
Sayers's Barn.
That lovely bit of bog at the Frosses.
Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh.

*If the page cannot be found
please check the deletion log
and click on the link:
[www.why was the page deleted?](http://www.why-was-the-page-deleted.com)*

Say it again:
Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh, Carrowreagh.

“After Muldoon”

“América no invoco tu nombre en vano”

Pablo Neruda

For Ulster read Ulcer
 For father read feather
 For ladder read leather
 For islands of Carnmoon read islands in the moon

For appointment read disappointment
 For discretion read discrepancy
 For tidy read redd
 For disorganised read throughother
 For mess read hames
 For stubborn read thran
 For sly read sleekit

For preserve read perverse
 For reserved read reverse
 For conserve read converse
 For Wexford read Loch Garman
 For field read filed
 For Uncle Andy’s field read roundabout
 For Sayers’s barn read motorway
 For bend in the river read culvert
 For culvert read concrete
 For eels read_
 For corncrake read_
 For curlew read_
 For bluebell read_

For 1984 read 2017
 For upright read upside down
 For test-case read text-book
 For American read North American
 For tweet read twit
 For 2 + 2 read 5
 For fact read fiction
 for read read read
 for América read Neruda.

“Meeting Borges”

Feels like a dream
in the labyrinths of my mind
as I walk the grid
of streets in the centre
of Buenos Aires. *Porteña.*
The flat above the bookshop.
The doorbell. *Sube.*

Venetian blinds in the half-light,
books, a wooden desk,
leather armchair. *Estoy estudiante.*
Reading Shakespeare. His signature
on the Complete Works and *La Cifra.*
The magic code.

Years later I wake up
in the centre of Belfast
at a door, a code, an old library.
Subo.

Stacks of books,
narrow corridors,
a journal.
I open it at the predicted page
his poems in translation,
the deciphered code.

