

**JACQUELINE GOLDBERG****SELECTED POEMS  
1988-2018****DUBLIN**

I have purchased a travel guide to Dublin.  
It explains about its historic center  
and breathtaking spots around the bay.  
It accounts of Celtic legends, mild winters,  
centuries at a glance.

It is known that I will never go to Dublin.

Nor will there be time to return to Vienna,  
to the Jewish cemetery in Prague,  
to the Villa Savoye, in Poissy.

Bram Stoker was from Dublin.  
Oscar Wilde was from Dublin.  
James Joyce was from Dublin.  
Samuel Beckett was born in south Dublin.  
Handel premiered his Messiah  
at the Fishamble Street Music Hall.

They are magnets, though I may never understand Dublin.

There aren't any airplanes departing from my bed.  
The jail is the country.  
The country, relentless.

I wear a throat of thorns,  
seismic and incurable hands.

Just now I am writing a book about my trembling.  
The disease is a literary genre:  
suffering is so well liked,  
the transparency of bitter syrups.  
The guide tells of a ninety-minute walk  
through literary and Georgian Dublin.  
It crosses over squares, runs through a stretch of the Grand Canal.  
I don't see any hospitals.

— Mauricio, how much is a ticket to Ireland?  
— I don't know, it is cumbersome to find out on Sunday.  
— Let it be. I will never go to Dublin.

It isn't enough to wake up with a book between your legs.  
Best to read oneself in the object.

Noon sweeps papers on my desk.  
I gather the absurd, the tempered, certain noise.

Someone cries.  
Perhaps the child with cancer one floor up.  
Perhaps the pianist two floors below.  
We are in captivity,  
each in his own still life.

«All of old. Nothing else ever.  
Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.  
Try again. Fail again. Fail better»,  
writes Samuel Beckett in *Worstward Ho*.

I hate how awesome Beckett can be.  
I deserved to be from his Dublin of castles and lighthouses,  
but I was born in a city of black earth.

Bliss is dim.

I go out, I undertake what I can.  
I look normal, I have a broken tooth.  
There is so much that is not known about me.

Thus, the cuss words.

«Go out, go away», the brothers write.  
Here, I can't take it any longer.  
My wings are burned.

I learn some about tarot.  
I leave it. It scares me.  
I only know that my card is The Tower.

I dreamt that I leapt into the void.  
I didn't write down anything. I don't remember a thing. Or do I?  
I drove on winding road,  
the car flew over,  
I knew that I would die, I wasn't afraid,

I appreciated gifts and pity.  
I woke up.

The Tower.  
I must shut myself in it and write.  
Write.

It's the end of a way of life.  
Maybe it's because I'm going into my fifties,  
since I've lived half of them away from home.

A lot torments me:  
old parents, a son who becomes a man,  
the forenamed germ of the worst.  
Right here, on my keyboard, my bones.

«First one goes suddenly» [Beckett again].

We allowed a kilogram of potatoes to rot,  
they bloomed, softened up.  
And them so expensive, so scarce.  
It was carelessness, insolence.

The rottenness is so vast.

So much dust in the cracks is bad luck,  
hair everywhere, a broken cup.

«All of a sudden, he returns».

I quote Beckett. Again and again.  
I like his truncated language.  
I have a book with his face:  
ugly tracks on his forehead.

Delayed tears.

I take good care of the edge of my eyes.  
Old age is horrendous in such a poor language.  
I can, if anything, slow down the process.  
Creams help both compassion and skin.

We will end up behind a mask.  
And the mask in between the knees.

Darkness is so clear.

Everything so useless. Almost everything.

St. Thomas Aquinas claimed  
that four are the causes of suffering  
and many others of sadness.  
It is good that there are figures:  
seven deadly sins,  
nine circles in Hell,  
eight steps to make onion soup.

For Areteo of Cappadocia, melancholy  
—four are its types—  
is an «anguish of the spirit fixed to thought without fever».

Fever the satiety. Fever the gag.

Picturesque villages wait not far from Dublin,  
mountains, desirable rural mansions.

The guide shows a traditional kitchen  
at Newbridge House.  
Brittle, overloaded.

Dublin is as far as the islands of my country,  
the triumphs of my country's landscape.

For now, it is Sunday.  
The door is half open.  
Outside is suffocation without a map,  
A movie with wolves.

Everything improves under confinement.

If I go to Dublin,  
if one day I go to Dublin,  
if I were to go to Dublin,  
I will buy Saint Brigid's Cross,  
a Connemara marble stone,  
a Celtic inspirational pendant.  
I will look for embroidered handkerchiefs  
for the tears on the way back,  
a glass bottle from Waterford,  
the whiskey of perennial oblivion.

It is not that I know much about Dublin.  
Everything is in the tourist guide.

Even the schedule of religious services  
for 95% of the population, which is catholic.

I will not pray in Dublin.  
I will not pray for the diseases to come.  
My prayers have become so meticulous  
that I don't recognize who disregards them.

John Updike  
—who wasn't from Dublin but from Pennsylvania—  
mocks literate Dublin,  
that of the round nameplates everywhere:  
«Look wherever you look, the ghost of a writer».

Suspicion is laborious, especially that of the poem.  
It chokes on a dog's bark, stump in wells of musk.

We have to remain human,  
grow headlong, confirm the obstacles.

We must continue sharpening the pathos,  
to be where we can't be,  
dare to fold, purge, certain infinite.

The wind returns, I ignore it.  
I have shut down every crack,  
I feel my temple,  
the impediment remains in its place.

— Eva, how much is a ticket to Dublin?  
— Give me an hour and I will find the best route.  
— No. It doesn't matter. I will never go to Dublin.

The noises of the street are rotten blood on my temple.  
I no longer menstruate.  
Did I say that I don't menstruate?  
In half an hour of surgery I got rid of a uterus,  
with it ages of masonry,  
the only brave place I ever accommodated.

Nobody misses my mammal prowess.  
I am ungraspable vein,  
I make lists of forbidden words,  
I am touched by the crude version of myself.

I will never go to Dublin. Nor to Iceland.

It's not an omen or a promise, flutter or consolation.

I will no longer go toward more despair.  
The splinter has stopped penetrating.  
I persist in a ditched disenchantment.

I have opted for chin pains,  
elbows like crickets, a lamented wisdom.

I will be a nomad in my bed.  
I will believe in calming potions  
so that beloved words return, gone ones.  
Crosses without place, cardinal bitterness.

I bid goodbye. I will make a trip.  
So much desire curses.

It will not be surprising, then,  
that I walk through the snowy streets of Dublin,  
that I sleep on a bench in Iveagh Gardens.  
And there, without abacus or trapeze,  
I scream longings, from which I wanted so much to flee,  
yearn for the one I was when I still wanted to flee.

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#### **RARE GIFTS**

They smell so bad,  
people who come out to tell  
of snow from another life.

So like certain lovers,  
bleach, cheap *aguardiente*, salt.

They smell like rare gifts without sparkle,  
like men and women that no one expects,  
to the edge, desert.

It is known by their pores,  
their crowded pupils,  
The open, the stolen.

And because all of us, slightly,  
smell like evil.

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**PROFILE 20**  
(2016)

**THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD**

Blood feeds negative omens,  
wrestles with the useless steadiness of the spindles.

Blood is atonement.  
Whether you see it or not.  
Whether you smell it or not.  
Whether you chew it or not.

Its overflow must be the most haggard day.  
It invites certain power  
—physicians and murderers know about this—.

Centuries have lied about lineage.

Overestimates sword edges,  
knives, daggers, scalpels.  
Tells about a dry hum.

It must also be flower.  
Hot or cold, it makes no difference.

Is there confusion  
in whom aspires a death without bleeding?

Everyone deserves a blink,  
some gauze and puddle.

Let's talk about a blood  
that doesn't stop flowing,  
that's sufficient to light.

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**WE, THE SAVED ONES**  
(2015)

**ZDZISLAWA BOGUSZ**

How did we feel?

That is not a question,  
it is a pain.

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**ANIA FUCHS DE HORSZOWSKI**

While I waited, by my side, on the ground,  
there was a baby,  
a baby wrapped in sheets.

He didn't cry.  
He was alive but didn't cry.

They ordered me to pick him up,  
we knew that he was going to die.

Young mothers abandoned the babies  
thinking that maybe others would pick them up.  
Or thinking about saving their lives.  
Did they think?

I had that baby in my arms  
for a few minutes, not many.  
He wasn't crying, I didn't see his face.  
Or maybe I saw it, I don't remember.

Then a Gestapo came,  
He said to return the baby to the ground.  
I don't know how I did it.

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**LEMONS IN SYRUP  
(2014)**

LET'S SAY I BECOME ADDICTED TO CERTAIN BIRDS  
that the carcass lessens my sorrow  
that all farming ends  
in licking over a falcon  
a vulture

a hawk

nocturnal raptors  
less meaty and terminally ill  
they also comfort through omens

the bird has to be resuscitated with sea salt  
then protected by healthy fire  
I mean boiled  
in fricassee  
minced  
provincial bird salad

the ravage matters  
the crude peak that belies the indulgence

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I AMBITION A DEFINITIVE CONCOCTION

elixir of solitude  
that couples equal measures of brandy and camphor  
vodka and methylene blue

that shows miracles  
like certain greenish wines  
liqueurs macerated in poor coffins

nothing overriding or humming  
categorical or antediluvian

something like a scalding drink  
that launders so much disappointed wakefulness

•

HUNGER IS WHERE WE FORGOT IT  
measured in false lengths

under a light different from clays

motionless does not quiet down  
water in lizard broths

its slander  
its thaw

chants with smoked virtues

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**BLACK POSTCARDS**  
(2011)

**THE PLACE OF PRECARIOUSNESS**

On the desk  
lies the picture of my uterus taken out,  
a mess that says so little  
of its possession and its fibers.

I have tried to spend time in front of the image every afternoon,  
convinced that this sacrificial mouthful  
was once gripped to my womb.  
That its smooth and shiny surface  
slipped away from me in just a few hours of surgery.  
That, hereafter, it will be gentleness.

I still feel bites in the abdomen,  
fatigue when I back away.

It is hard to lash out against certain outcomes:  
wounds are not dams,  
they do not cradle,  
they do not regress.

Maybe I will reproduce the image on a varnished postcard  
and give it away to my friends.  
On its back I will write:  
«pyriform uterine body of 7 x 6 centimeters,  
on which fibromatosis was diagnosed  
adenomyosis and proliferative endometrium  
extracted from Jacqueline Goldberg,  
on Tuesday February 21 of the year 2006».

Let it be seen.  
Admired.  
Detested.

I care about its compliance as a remainder.

It is about an essential portrait,

endless port of origin.  
My old jaws.

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**PREDATOR VERBS**  
(2007)

**POETICS I**

Finally the most horrific stories are decanted  
and a precipice flows from hesitation.

This way, the other is poured on us:  
from anguish to spaciousness.

Identity is in the skin of the book,  
not in the arguments,  
nor in meager antonyms  
that we undress of future or tiredness.

•

**POETICS II**

I never saw sown fields of saffron,  
or their bastard complaints.

Much more red was the omen than the blindness.

The manuals never warn of  
the outcome of an offender when the weather clears up.  
They stop in fictitious names,  
twist a world without favors.

Not so the books of poetry,  
that don't cease, don't convey, don't favor;  
mass of tensions,  
haggard stony ground of the tribe.

•

**STATE OF EXILE**

There is a string of emancipated verbs, without sky.

Everything is mine. The foul smelling and the lightweight.  
I kneaded it all, I bit it all, I cradled it all.

Mine are the inaccuracies,  
the mud that doesn't subside,  
the threads of blood that coagulate the home.

Mine is whatever dispoils,  
sap of one greedy afternoon,  
crumbling bones in the womb.

I take the minutiae to disgust, to the exile of myself.

The losses won't pull evil away from me,  
they won't make me generous or timely.

If I go I will carry everything,  
assemble fear in another port,  
I dirty myself for new hopes.

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**HEALTH**  
(2002)

THE DYING MAN SUMMONS US  
to recapitulate his life

forced as he is  
to breathe himself until the end  
his confession is a second hand one  
lacks the will  
to conceal certain loyalties

in the vastness of a farewell  
the truth is always a scandal

•

THE FAMILY WAITS ON A TIGHT ROPE  
in the polished womb  
of an emergency room

awaits a complaining litany  
to be disarmed afterward

many days brewing the pain  
the stubborn pain

and the patient who doesn't die  
nor improve  
nor exasperate

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**EVE**  
(2000)

IF THERE WAS A MAN  
only one man for later  
and eternity

corrected in his minimum condition  
discarded

if he remained for never again  
postponed to stumble over  
the infinite fragment

if he existed and we saw each other  
and he would explain to me the secret that keeps him alone  
lighted and alone  
full of confinements

if he existed  
and I could go far away  
not yearn  
get closer, unique  
alone without words

•

UNTIL VERY RECENTLY  
I dug trenches in strategic places of my skin

on the chest  
from which terminally ill crows migrated

on my nipple  
to water down the rotten milk

on the left thigh  
 where never again there should be extra smoothness

on my fingers  
 bold clubs  
 which, then, had the sad audacity  
 of calling the caress

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**SUNSTROKE IN MIAMI BEACH**  
 (1995)

THE BALCONY IS A PIECE OF COLLINS AVENUE  
 a view  
 reduced to extremes  
 that no one notices  
 during lunch

we watch its jumble in bathing suits  
 arrange towels  
 tunafish sandwiches  
 diet cokes

become paralyzed at the dry shot  
 of an airplane over the bay

•

ISAAC BASCHEVIS SINGER  
 spent winters  
 at the Surfside Tower

we would see him looking out  
 two floors down  
 in checkered shorts and a T-shirt

a nurse

pushed his walker  
 on certain stretches of the beach

at the time, I couldn't have guessed  
 that the Nobel laureate chewed gum  
 and no longer wrote

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**BY DINT OF CITY**  
(1989)

I DESTROYED SILENCES  
to bring myself  
to be in pain peacefully

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WITHOUT A RIVER  
without a home  
or backyard  
to wait for you

•

I BELONG  
on the other side of the knife  
to the memory  
of certain modesty

my journey is the drunkenness  
of the soulless

wound ready

flesh thrown to the gods

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**«LUBA»**  
(1988)

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I TAKE ON HER INHERITANCE  
of crumbling ages  
the sad trades of neglect

her dead ones

•

DIALOGUE IN DAYTIME HALLWAYS  
root  
memory that I am

•

THIS YEARNING OF MOURNING HURTS

of gathering feathers at dawn  
in alien courtyards

desire to be her

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LUBA DELIVERS ALL I AM  
stalls her roots

she suffers anew

*TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY CONSUELO MÉNDEZ*

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