

PHOTOGRAPH OF A PASSERINE IN SONG

His roosting songfulness —  
the whisper of his wing music —  
I am songless at his far-carrying  
flight song.

Rose breasted, large eyed,  
he gives a call not heard at any other time,  
beginning with a single, begging note,

a sub-song of about seven notes,  
then turns away his head,  
holding up his beak a day's length  
to clouds at different levels in the foliage.

Thinking of MacNeice's 'the drunkenness of things being various', it is appropriate to include a funny poem in this address. The removal of Seamus's remains at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Donnybrook, in Dublin, was an overwhelming occasion emotionally for all of us there. The poet Paul Muldoon delivered the eulogy, which was very witty in a style typical of Paul, he being a poet of consummate wit and erudition. Prompted by this, I endeavoured to compose a poem in the manner of Paul Muldoon. The poem is based on an anagram of Seamus Heaney's name. This name has always struck me as distinctively symmetrical, the 'ea' in 'Seamus' repeated in the 'ea' of 'Heaney'. This is an interesting link back to the name of Yeats, also containing 'ea', an alphabetical

curiosity indicative of the rhythms and rhyme that Heaney inherited from his great predecessor.

A PAULINE VERSE  
*For Oneginus*

I warned Paul, now that we know  
The latest half-rhyme for dear Seamus,  
Wasps, leaves and berries at Lammas,  
The twittering of gathered swallows,

I would twitter all his name means,  
The golden means in what was his name,  
From ah to Amen, amass and ame,  
Amuse and Amy. From ash to Ashe

And ashes to ashen, assume to aum.  
From ease to easy, cheu and emu.  
From ham to hay to hey to hen,  
From he to hue to hum, human

And Humc. From hymn to hymen,  
No less. From eyes to Enya.  
From mane to manse to may  
To May and many, from my

To mash and mesh and mush,  
Meas and Mass, mensa, mens  
Sana, Manus, mess and messy.  
Muse ever. From nay to neem,

To Nessa, same to same to say  
And seam, Sean, seem and seen,  
See and semen, sea and shy,  
Shun, shame, sense, sans and seamy.

From snamh to sauna, she to sheen  
To Sheena, Shauna, Sue to Susan, Susy.  
From sum to sun, us to use, yea to yeah,  
Yeah, yeah. From yam to yes and yum:

From hem to Esme. Suas  
To anuas. From Una to Esau  
To Aeneas. From me  
To Shaman.

The Beatles come in here; when we were young, Seamus sported a 'Beatles' hairstyle, which looked very well on him then.

I wrote many poems over the year following his passing, a passing that was very gentle for him, but not for us who remained behind. The following is called *To The Source Person*, which Seamus was:

#### TO THE SOURCE PERSON

*'Poetry is preparation for death'*

Death was your final gift to life,  
not a hymn to extinction.  
The black earth appears on the surface,  
The deeper ground promises the earth.

Part of it is decaying, part nascent,  
Like opening up a new heart  
Darkened to elephant gray —  
Have the places left you along with me?

The horns of the moon have met four times  
Since I lay with you upon beech fronds,  
Trying to fall out of love. Beeches  
Inscribed by you preserve my name

Into the anonymous murmur, the cup-marked  
Stone whose eyes can never be met.  
Some women have horse shadows  
Since words deserted you

Like a city without a park. If you  
Could roam London as an aerial spirit,  
The gossamer roof of the museum  
Would look for your story.

There are compressions and explosions of space  
As the underground people we knew  
Take up the world-work,  
Sleep downstairs on the window-sills.

In the following poem, the name 'O'Heighnaigh' is the Irish-language version of 'Heaney'. 'Driscoll's Sleeping Beauty' is the name of a packet of blackberries as they were once called, recalling the blackberry as a fruit that features significantly in Seamus Heaney's poetry. The poem surveys his development from a peasant rural