

Cycling to IKEA

I went for curtains.
Beige, I thought. Linen.
I would carry them home
in my handlebar basket.

But as I pedalled along Airport Road
what unfolded
in front of me was
the fabric of a city's hem:

great warehouses and hangars,
Phoenix Natural Gas,
bird hides numbered 1 and 2,
an improbable hairdressing enterprise.

And beyond the Abercorn Basin
the cool white limbs
of a wind farm being born
or the pipes of a giant organ

transplanted from the Ulster Hall
blown out of all proportion
or a grove of silver flutes
silently fingering airs.

I put these treasures in my basket
and in the gaps between them stuffed
storage boxes, Tupperware,
a small blue lampshade, meatballs.

Cycling back at dusk
past that hairdressers (*Hairport*,
I thought, they missed a trick)
I also acquired:

black ticks of birds
like affirmations
alighting on the surface
of the Lough, then taking off;

kids in uniform
their headphones
echoing the gantries
at Harland and Wolff;

the sunset streaming
tangerine and pomegranate
caught for a handful of minutes
in the window glass of Citibank.

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