

Belfast Pastoral

Summer has come early. Our Golden Age is now.
As I walk to Tomb Street to fetch a book from Amazon
in a cardigan as yellow as the dockyard cranes,
everything is golden: No Parking At Any Time
painted on a garage door, Urban Clearway signs,
grit containers angry at their own obsolescence.
There's more besides: the fries in a KFC Bucket Meal,
The Money Shop, the *Way* on the end of *Sub*.

The parks are full. The Botanic Gardens over-brims
with a festival of legs and arms, everybody
sunning themselves on spread-out coats.
We lick Twisters and, more of a mouthful,
Rowntrees Fruit Pastille Lollies. We talk poems.
And this is no longer the city you've read about.

Emma Must

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An earlier version of the poem appeared on the *Honest Ulsterman* website in July 2014.