

## GEORGEHAM

TO HENRY WILLIAMSON

And in the evening cows come,  
Heavy uddered, hobbled like dogs  
By the slung dugs they bump with  
Each back-track and clack of hoof  
On the hard road to the sheds.

I watch them, like this moment's river,  
White on black, back on back, go tidal  
To the sea, and the slow easing  
Of motherhood. Time resettles itself,  
A plaque of heat from the pub door,

The distant ostinato of the fruit machine.  
The fullness of this evening strains  
Like a chanter, or the weep of milk  
Already dark and dried on the road.  
There is no easing this, no hiss

Or suck of vacuum cup will tap  
The moment's steady alchemy of pain.  
For I am revisiting this place again,  
Digging out the old proofs to make  
Fresh pictures. Not you, hesitant

At the church gate in the gathering  
Dark, but another goes in with me now,  
And I, not she, guess at the things  
You saw to fear. Death leaves us lonely  
Under earth; it's that infects us.

And so, not, "Wish you were here" because  
You were; not, "Hoping this finds you  
As it leaves me" - certainly a little sad  
That, at the end of all these things,  
Pain couldn't be an imago and grow wings.

**Kevin O'Keeffe**