

## Sexton

Boys. Just boys.  
Woken in the dark hours  
to dig numerous graves  
or to stoke the furnace  
for a sister, a brother,  
a cousin. They did not know  
who left their whisper.

Today these boys  
are on their last hill of life.  
They have sealed this knowing  
on the pounded nails  
that echo as they lowered  
their relations.

Old men  
tattered and torn but  
not shattered and shredded  
took these burdens  
to the Old People.  
Released these stories  
where they slipped into the  
landslide of their pain.

Black cassocks and red miter  
protect these midnight secrets  
buried beyond reach.  
This history never revealed  
but still known.

Other black robes  
Sit, in judgement.  
dictate  
lives to penitentiaries,  
children to the state,  
erect walls  
that my people never had.

We have learned to swallow  
Europe  
where torture chambers  
refined on their own

came here  
to rescue us.

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Parliamentary Poet Laureate**