



Garden – Mary Wickham rsm

All gardens are sacred, but this over and above,
its grass fed from the bones of goodness,
a green enclave for reverence and reverie,
where the spirits murmur
into the silence and the distant bustle of Dublin days.
The primary sound of Ireland is not city but water,
as it trickles, flows, pours and lashes;
here and now it soothes
rocks already smoothed by Ireland's great waters,
carried here to keep this mercy water company.
Ancient rocks from perhaps the mighty Shannon
that wends through eleven counties, no hard borders in its way;
stones are they from the Slaney, the Moy, the Liffey,
the Foyle, the Barrow, the Lee,
a stone's throw from the spirit soaked stones of
Clonmacnoise and Cashel, Lady's Island and Kells,
rocks that were old when Brigid and Patrick walked on them,
rocks of sandstone, granite, and limestone
revealing quartz-gleam in the light,
layers of time and pressure, patterns of grace and stress,
the upheaval of volcano, the sediment of sandstone

compressed with tiny ancient creatures of the oceans,
and the water-permeable, welcoming grace of the limestone:
the play and power of water engaged
with the endurance and amenability of stone.
Very much at rights with its origins all this,
but called too by the crafted orb
to consider the wider earth, the broader waters of the world-
the orb that holds tendrils and leaves and butterflies,
gaps to see the sky and feel the air-
there- put your hands tenderly through the world-
hints of creatures supple and sinuous, but no snakes, that's certain,
a globe that furls and unfurls the spirals of life
and today's tune enticed with that trace of treble clef,
as it sends the water flowing past names and memories
from many lands laden with mercy stories,
all enhanced by the delicate tiled colour of flowers,
mercy made one art to another, one stone to another,
one person to another,
past to present and on it flows.
And lest we forget,
turn and see, she who began it all
sits here at last, the bronzed woman,
giving and taking the air, inspiring still.
Go sit with her and listen.
Go sit with her and listen.