

Our Lady of Cúm a' Chiste - Paddy Bushe

"Buddha! Buddha!" the two-year-old
Whooped from his car seat, beside himself
With discovery as we slowed past

The mountain gap Marian Year statue
At Cúm a' Chiste. I could swear I saw
The rocky hillside behind her blossom

With prayer-flags animating the air
Into quivering sutras, one taut string
Curving up and away east to God

Knows where, bellying into a blue
Sky that stretched like a miraculous robe
Over the Island of the Dead and beyond.

And I'd swear to this day I saw Guan Yin's
Thousand compassionate arms embrace
The generations of the townlands all around,

Swear I saw the prayer-flags rosary the hills,
And heard *Memorare's* and *Hail Holy Queen's*
Reverberate around us with horns and cymbals.

And I'd even swear I saw the Virgin smile
And settle herself deeper into the lovely
Carved limestone flow and fold of her robe

As we continued down the hill, enlightened.