



### **En Route**

I took you to my town in the countryside,  
first time outside of the Big Smoke.

This is a country fractured like a broken biscuit.

Yours is undermined

tunnels in the Somme stretching sore lines under the earth.

There is one main street here

ten pubs

one hundred churches.

You snap the pumps and I stoop to pick

up our receipt for two soup-and-sambo combos from the hotel purpose-built for city weddings  
and hen parties for women something like me but whom I shrink from beside you.

There are old men looking at us through windows and leaning against walls

who know that you will never become one of them

with your soft g's and your unnecessary haitches

your steps down this one main street which you will retrace

past the pumps and the pubs to a plane and then Paris

while I scuff patent leather here and eye the old men

who know that these crumbs which sustained them will have me starve

who shut up shop and watch me

linger.

Aoife Meagher, Dublin, Ireland