

The Last Rites Hotel

Here in the dark of the Last Rites Hotel
doors swing askew on hinges,
keeping time to the rock of bedsprings
where joy is had for quarters, even pennies.

Hotplates perform daily miracles,
and everywhere grease is rife.
There is the bottle which will hold off
the night. There is the crack in ceiling plaster
where despair seeps through like a stain.

I have had my fill of spuds and gravy,
I have drunk the red glow down into my guts,
and now I am back in the streets,
holding firm my course in the jostle and sway.

What I want is a fair day, and no more
voyages on the Polar Bear which breaks the ice.
I want embraces which will never let me go,
and to wag until my sorrow's wagged out.

But what I am left with is this: a souvenir
from the Isle of Man, one that ripples
like sail or scar on the sea of my heart.

ERNEST HEKKANEN