

NEIL MCCARTHY

No More Drink for Tom Thumb

“Isn’t it fine for you,” he said raising
the glass to his lips—
an almost magnetic force.
“Ye’ve the life, oh ye’ve the life.”
The glass approached the runway of
the bar and made a perfect landing.
A dozen more sets of eyes focussed firmly
on their drinks.

Maternal instinct.

You have to watch them, in case
they run away.
And they do.

It’s not the most convenient thing
in the world to be running after your pint, away
out the door, down the street, especially in winter
and the rain crashing like bricks
outside and before you know it
you’re drinking nothing
but water.

Oh we’ve the life—the
prophets and the scholars, the employed
and the unemployed. Out of the frying
pan and into the fire,
from the dole queue
to the bar. How erudite and well read
we are—*Ulysses*, the Bible,
Playboy and the Jobs Section of the local.
Maybe next week.
Maybe fourteen to one.

Sure land me another plane
there will you like a man!
One for the ditch a smart prick says
as his elbows slip tipping the
glass and knocking his blood all over the runway.
No more drink for Tom Thumb said
the voice in the control tower.
They had to carry him
out to the taxi. Messy.
Doesn't know enough from enough.
Ah sure he'll know it all right in the morning.
So
will
we.
Isn't it fine for us?
We'll have one more. This is the last one!
Another one there and I'll
sort you out tomorrow. Fourteen
to one? Lend us a fiver.
This is definitely the last;
for you, for me, for the
liver and its misery, sing us a song
and we'll all leave together and crash
outside the door like bricks.
Then say a prayer
that the rain might show some mercy.