



GOING HOME BY WATER

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Calves, Sligo

Clustered together under sheltering oaks,
still leggy, heads top-heavy, eyes
too wide for the waiting world,
they look improbable, too many and too small,
a failed perspective on the springy turf
one bolder than the rest nudges a root
another hesitates beside a wall
they're splashed in farmyard colours -
black and marbled red, clod brown and grey -
their knobbled knees still white
as mother's milk demure and scrubbed,
they wear bright yellow ear tags,
oddly punk, a badge that's cheerful
even when the sun's behind a cloud
something in their spines seems poised
for flight - a yelping wind, or birds, could set them off
skittering across the unknown earth
they're strangely silent

nuzzling grass, or staring down their nose
they look like first day schoolboys, sent
from their homes too early,
sticking together in a vast green field
not yet sure, hoping
that maybe everything will turn out all right

Sleeping Dog

for Teelin

Such utter limpness
could mean the worst
only now and again
an eye skids seeking out
new prey behind
slit lid and one
soft paw lifts moving
to the beat of music
only he can hear

