

Seán Hewitt

Wild Mountain Thyme

Christmas day.
We're all at my gran's house,
The full, Catholic-size family,
Cramped into the front room
Like chestnuts in an oven.

Bums ache on floors,
Perch on arms of chairs,
Settle into laps of relatives.

Fields of Athenry tails off,
(Too slow,
Too sad)
Leaving us to decide on
Another song.

Granny's keeping herself busy
Making Gaelics in the kitchen,
Keeping her mind together
While we're all fixing
Absences with cream, whiskey,
Guinness, the whole room
A-glow.

A postcard with the robin
And the snow and the fire
And the misting-up Dickensian window.

Bravely, someone intones
The first notes to
Wild Mountain Thyme,
And our voices warm
And swell around
The sunken armchair left
Empty since last December,
Just over twelve months now.

Our voices warm the space around it,
Hide it amongst the blooming heather,

Warm it,
Pick around it.

Our voices warm the space.

Our voices,
Warm.