

Maureen Boyle

Strabane is in a pocket of mountains  
the river Mourne fed by the Sperrins -  
Knocavoe, Bellcoo, Bessie Bell, Croghan  
names flowing down into the town  
too for housing estates and parks.

And to the west the River Finn flows into it  
at Lifford, its waters from the high hills  
of Donegal, the gap at Barnesmore  
which feeds the flow of river water  
and of people

come in streams from Gweedore, Glenties,  
Crolley, bringing the old language with them  
and the uaigneas - the loneliness  
of standing in this square to be hired

most only children sleeping in barns  
working for rich farmers,  
many would stay and make their lives here  
my father's family from the island of Arranmore.