

Safe

I am safe
Within the confines of my hushed house
Warming my toes
And lavishing lovingly prepared food on my appreciative cat.

I am not safe
Within the confines of my unquiet mind
Anxiously scrubbing
And waiting for the worldly woe to break through.

And where are the well springs of atavistic fear
Arising unbidden
And shaking through the comfort of clean sheets, warm baths, full belly
A regular income?

1930s Northern Ireland
Some deep shell shock of shame and shaming
Stained my mother's life,
Shook out the solidity of joy
And left a presentiment of perpetual pestilence
To plague us down these long years.

Edwardian London
The sad sickness of tyrannical terrorising
Of defenceless children
Whispered of discretely in later years
Never to be overcome by those who had no way
To hold themselves as they aged
Spilling it out in volcanically destructive rage
To shake the foundations of the lives that came later.
Small child enveloped in the magma of others' mania
I did not know how to protect my heart.

And deeper, darker, older fears appear
The fields, marked with plague pits
Shady copses, agonised trees
And intensive, aggressive agriculture
Make a record of the reality
Of lives marred by the stench of death
And fruitless, barren years
And years of waiting
For the world to turn
And the Earth to yield her blessing.

Blind and unfeeling
We ignore the past and stumble on
Lost without its comprehension
To steady us in compassion

Empathy, resolve.
The world can turn
Perfect love drives out fear
And we can heal the wounds that hold us
In the grip of an unresolved history.

To feel safe
We must acknowledge, love, nurture
All of the wounds within.