

Return to the Headland

There seems no point in angels
or ogres. Now I have no need
for the cartoons of guilt or shame.
The dead go where we send them.
At the crematorium I read *Do Not Go Gentle*
before the vicar's book freed
your soul or whatever it be that soars
from the husk of flesh.
The curtains purred to their close.
Outside, the long summer of rain,
grey and grey and grey blurred
over Narberth's sodden hills.

It would be easy to construct a myth.
The box jammed under
the baby-seat in the back of the car,
bumping our way up to the Headland.
Early evening. The sea green and flat,
moving and murmuring in the hollows beneath
our feet. Not a cloud.
Not one cloud shaped, though the horizon
east across Wales is dimming into grey.
The urn is some sort of alloy
like a child's toy, light and wrapped around
what we're told are your ashes.

Not in the sea—says my mother—
He was never a man for the sea—
I step off the path to the slope of rocks
and two rabbits break for cover
from the startled grass.
The stuff shakes out and falls free:
dust, ash on the stones, my shoes.
Stiff-armed, I send the empty tin
over the edge right down to the water.
A jet chalks its line high above the ocean,
pushing steadily away from night.
We turn our backs on a sky that goes on forever.

—Tony Curtis