

DANIEL TOBIN

## The Lift (Dublin)

He must be ninety if a day, and lives  
 one flight below us with his ancient wife  
 who looks a little younger—eighty-five?  
 Lazy mornings we meet them on the *lift*  
 after our late night up or late night out.  
 He squeezes in with his folded walker  
 and she follows, having taken his free arm  
 protectively, guiding him past the doors  
 that lurch shut behind them.

### *Elevator*

we say where we are from, as though pulleys  
 were in the word, no choreography  
 of bodies—saints, angels, the deity—  
 bright ascensions into the empyrean.  
 How long have these lovers been together?  
 Fifty, sixty, maybe seventy years,  
 having lived through most of the century  
 on this island drenched with rain and history.

Visitors here, we smile and make small talk  
 neighbours in name and only for a time,  
 a couple less than half their age and foreign,  
 knowing nothing of their lives except nods  
 and greetings, shared words in different use  
 like passing lives acknowledged and missed,  
 this slim room bearing us indifferently down.