Strange fish come from this river, thumping down upon the bank; old tires and a town being two species. Let’s consider first the town—one thousand people not the worst nor yet the best, although our churches claim us to be both and that conviction flames here like a single flower: we have sinned—Christ will erect us higher than the wind!

We’ve believed too much. Imagination’s lost: God is a widower, the Holy Ghost gone to a greener pasture, Jesus walks a pastel province, where he talks protestant Latin, yea and thou and thee in sermons about cigarettes! Unfree, we’re each the other’s beadle, we confess our neighbours’ sins with awesome silkiness.

God’s not the central figure. Emptiness—think of a hollow that no wind can press full of dead leaves and dust nor freshet fill, think of a mine abandoned, a dry well.

Breathe on your image now—a dog thrown crying into whatever hole and weeks in dying. This is a place where such cold thoughts contrive animal form and move as if alive.