

Remembering Steven

A saw him the day.
Nearly didnae recognise him.
Forgot the age difference.

He must be well o'er fifty by now.
His hair's that *nearly* grey; like it's been sprinkled.
Short, when it used tae always be long.
— Suppose it was the seventies.

All of a sudden
A felt yanked out ma
Existence, like in one o they
Arcade machines,
Where the big claw comes doon.

Don't know why a should be.
Nae reason tae be.
God have a no enough tae be goin on wae.
Wae two kids an a man thinks the day's half as long again

A wee funny dart across the road,
Between the traffic, only his legs workin.
He looked tae me like he'd put the weight on in the middle.
His cheeks are aw filled oot now,
Like a member o the hamster family.

His hair used to be black like a crow an his eyes
— a used to say they were *sapphire* blue.
He talked so good it was like music.
He became the theme tune tae ma life.
And even though a was just a daft wee lassie at the time,
A thought he was like a god.

One o ma kids is about tae go tae university next year
And the other one's goin up tae the secondary,
So a don't have time
For ghosts.

He used tae have one o those mobile discos.
This was the early days, doin pubs and clubs.

But a felt a pain inside when a saw him
A real physical pain
Steven Daly
— *Daly's Disco Delights* it said on the side o the van.

We had been bangin about the gather for ages.
He gave me a job helping at the gigs.
The first time we did it was in the van.
In fact, mostly it was in the back of the van.

He was always dead worried about
The under-age thing.
But when a told him,
When a told him he was okay.
If it was a girl we'd call her Maureen.
And a boy would be Steven.

But that first breath o fatherhood was soon choked oot.
A told ma Ma and Da.
Ma da was gonnae doo him.
— Then he was gonnae jail him.

In the end though
They aw agreed,
The adults,
Tae keep it quiet.

The nurse had told me
At the scan, early on,
She was sure it was a boy.
But a didnae say tae anybody else.

An after they killed him,
ma wee Steven,
A thought in my daft lassie way
That we should be goin tae the cemetery,
Somethin like that.
But we didnae.
Need tae get you better an back to school, they said.
Back on the rails.

So a've had tae bear witness for Steven's life
Inside, not in words.
He's never alone.
Never a day.

The kids sometimes wonder
Why their mum
Buys flowers
And why she sometimes cries
On a certain day in each
Of the years they've known her.

I saw Steven Daly today
Crossing the road,

And I remembered my first child,
And I wished a bus had hit him.