

A northern isle

In the gloaming an owl pivots
silently on outstretched wings
over rushy marsh and stones
ragged with lichen, a wheel
that lies rotten and rusty
in tangles of tansy and ragwort,
old stems of nettle and dock.

We walk among ghosts as power
pours away off the hill,
ditches and drains in full song,
while the millrace cascades
through remnants of dam.

At brae's end, relentless ocean
grinds at an adamant coast, rips
at the footing of cliffs, with none
but the birds and the selkies
and the spy-hopping orca to see
a great tree fallen on a treeless shore.