

*Troll*

*When morning spills blue in our room  
her body shines softly stretching  
like the crowing rooster;  
she rises from the corner  
stumbles away dragging her chains  
behind her.*

*She washes my feet  
washes my eye  
combs my hair  
feeds me slowly  
wiping the dribble  
from my cup of a chin...  
she smiles...  
her chains clanging softly  
behind her...*

*and she does a jig  
sings a tune  
plays a harp gaily  
she smiles for me  
dresses me  
with her chains clanging gaily  
behind her...*

*At night she lies gently  
twists and turns mechanically  
when I am through; sweating,  
she rolls me off, letting  
me sleep this; king this hero  
while she walks to her little corner  
with her chains clanging behind her*

*She obeys commands  
she hears my demands  
she will always stand  
beside me  
with a waiting hand  
she moves each strand  
of hair that obstructs me...  
she strains a smile  
it will be for a while  
this servant who waits upon me.*

By Kwane Dawes

*Poem for the Fat Girl at the Salad Counter*

Wobbling precariously on six-inch heels  
She explains to her friend about low calorie  
meals

About lettuce  
tomatoes  
coleslaw  
(and carrots)

Radishes  
celery  
green peppers  
ham salads

Counting the calories with a weight  
watcher's eye  
She ignores the boiled potatoes, vegetables  
and pie  
Being served to the girl with a beautiful  
complexion,  
Long legs, slim hips - a study in perfection  
And she curses her Maker, her Destiny, her  
Fate  
For giving her acne and a slow metabolic  
rate.

Mark Stevens

*Dublin After Dark*

It's so easy  
(In retrospect)  
To write this fraudulent verse  
Because very few of us have the guts  
To say what we mean  
(And I'm no different, though I  
wish to Christ I were)

But the little girl on O'Connell Street  
Wearing a cheap cotton dress  
- even though it was mid October -  
Tight lipped, bruised and dirty  
Holding (outstretched) a soggy  
cardboard tray...

How can I tell your story to the young men,  
Who piss in the cups of blind beggars,  
and laugh as they stumble home after  
closing time?

By Mark Stevens