

Benchmark (DPR 85603)

*Every old man I see. . .
Seems to say to me
I was once your father*

PATRICK KAVANAGH

We never thought that to live would be to see
the daughters of women we loved lovers and wives
in their own right breaking men's hearts in spite
of themselves (their tender concern) given their power
(the world belonging always to young women)

while it lasts, bearing their own daughters
to tend in time and sons to mind after
while we watching from the bench the way
their hips move, their lips and the looks in their eyes
feel their mothers warm again in our arms

mothers lovers daughters sons every
one bearing our seed regardless of how
it came through space and time quickening
their generation with our syllabus
as our fathers had our mothers and us

and theirs before that each coupling becoming
part of the general copulation each byte
informing the common wealth, lunar ovum
after ovum swimming in lustrous mother
of pearl oceans of spermatozoa

rebirthing the world while we fondly sit
elbow to elbow in morning sunlight outside
the post office at Commerce and Tombstone Canyon
smiling and nodding and passing the time of day
waiting for something to be put in our boxes.