

Like father figure like unlikely son
the elder of near the younger of distant
yet very Irish background
the loves of their lives a mother and her daughter
glamorous as goddesses
in the eyes of their beholders

their momentary consummations
more or less spiritual
proving each to his own satisfaction
that as long as the moment lasts
man and woman coming together
are identical with God

the daughter deliberately conceived
in her infant brother's crypt as soon
as practicable after his death
on advice of an Armaghman
that certain steps being taken
certain phrases said in time

reincarnation could be coaxed
even into the same womb,
the daughter for her beauty named
after the heroine of love
true but doomed by the dark powers
to celebrate her love and lover

by joining him in a matrimony
of agony and untimely death
— according to her mother people called
an Anglo-Irish Minerva after
she played the title role in Willie's
Cathleen ni Houlihan; who called

herself the voice and soul of the crowd;
took herself to be Maeve returned
(though having a horror of physical love
no warrior-queen ever had);
confessed she never analyzed
personal things very deeply

at least not consciously; knew
she said she wasn't the leader type
because she couldn't plan ahead; felt

inclined toward the triune; gave birth
three times for two comrades-in-arms
playing out in their own lives

the dramas of spiritual revolution
blood and soil nationalism
against the three-headed god
of materialism — Marxism
usurious Liberalism
vulgar and venal Democracy —

twice for the Boulangist remembered
most for a certain failure of nerve
when it came time to carry out their
assassination-suicide pact
who told their daughter then pubescent
that given the kind of woman she was

her best bet would be to become
a rich man's favorite mistress,
then once for that brute of an Irishman
who abused both mother and daughter
before becoming heroicized
by firing squad and Willie's poem;

had with her from childhood she said
a grey spirit lady she had long trusted
for sound advice in public matters
but banished from her confidence
after overhearing the lady
whisper she despised and killed newborns.