

River Corrib, which snaked off into the horizon. Strange birds dived into the cold, iron water.

But 180 degrees behind us, cars sped by. We took pictures of ourselves in front of the building, pretending that we were not actually directly in front of a highway.

Later on, I would jump the steel rail separating the highway from the sloping hill and walk closer to the structure, which was fenced off. Baby pine trees stood in rows next to the old house. The whole area smelled like Christmas trees.

One morning during the second half of my stay, I awoke on the couch at 6 a.m. to see the hazy after burn of night, when the sun sneaks above the horizon to snuff out the stars.

Every color looked electrified, determined to burn through what little light leaked out in the pre-dawn. Even the Dunne's sign looked alive — a glowing, mesmerizing green. I composed a poem in my mind and wrote it down later.

In the months before coming to Galway, I had envisioned myself writing poetry in some unspecified field, perhaps carrying a book of Yeats (I hadn't really factored the rain and mud much into these visions). But here I was at the place I had started, enchanted by the yellow light emanating from the apartments next door, by a store sign. New Jersey no more.

Ireland is *not* a postcard — and in fact, postcards of Ireland are sometimes misleading. One famous postcard features two children with a farm animal, looking sparkling clean in their Sunday best; in reality, their clothes would have been old and smeared with dirt after working on a farm all day.

Though Ireland has become many people's refuge — whether they've been there or not — one of those places in the world where people envision that everything is green and fertile, Ireland isn't an isolated paradise but a part of the global economy and international politics.

It's not a dream but a real place.

And no matter how well a pretty picture is framed, it still cuts off a world of experiences, the highways behind the hills. ■

Untitled

by Theresa Donohoe

I wonder how it is I must appear
(A scarab-beetle on the desert sand?
A figure from a vision dreamed by night?)
As I make hunching progress through the snow
Conspicuous and strange in coat of black.

I feel that they are wrong, those righteous ones
Who speak of shadows that conceal our path.
I know as I trudge forth with downcast eyes:
We travel blind not for obscurity,
But for a glow so brilliant
we cannot bear to see.

A Cry for Peace

by Mehul Gandhi

Looking in their eyes you can see the pain and struggle
You can see the many years of frustration and trouble
You can feel their hearts crying out for hope
And you begin to wonder, how do they manage to cope
What with all the repression and greed surrounding their world
The destruction and murder that have left them unfurled
The countless assassinations of innocent people and priests
You hope that this anger and violence will cease
And you can only wish for time to stand still
So they can just have one moment that's peaceful and tranquil
But just like the people, you got to keep your faith alive
Believe too that justice and freedom ... will survive