

Hugh Dunkerley

Return

After the vast body of North America,
the Atlantic's four-hour absence,
these islands are like a child's drawing,
the patchwork fields,
the land worked over and over.

As the plane banks,
I hold the South East
in my eye: the bulge of Kent,
a white cliff somewhere near Hastings,
and in the distance, the glistening Thames.

How small it is, this archipelago
nudging Europe's hip,
one foot in the Channel,
its granite head swimming
with memories of the Norse,

Ireland like a deflated football
kicked again and again
for the sheer hell of it.
Dig anywhere
and you'll find something

human: musket, handaxe,
fibre-optic cable, the numberless
bones of the dead. London
comes up to meet us
sunlight seething off a window,