

ERIN MCGREGOR

DISPATCHES TO MARGARET FROM ACROSS THE POND

yesterday I went into Kiltarlity
where pots of begonias and geraniums
line the sidewalks
I thought of you in springtime
poking the dirt around your babies
coaxing them up
with dreams of red and pink and green

but I'm on the high hummocks now
squelching across the heather and fen
searching for the bits that did not
make it over, packing
the old wounds with yarrow and moss
as if it weren't too late for all that

did you eat the lemon shortbread
I left on the counter?
each night as I fall asleep in strange beds
I see you, sending me off at the door
Jim standing behind you
like a bent and sturdy stick

there is fog today
or at least you think so—you cannot see
the other side of the lake
another September rooting down
you must tell Jim to cover the tomatoes
steel yourself for winter's sting
but you are so tired
and wouldn't it be nice to fold into the mauve
of those fading hills?

before I left you told me how much
you missed your mother
nearly fifty years dead and still
the ache tugs, here, in the winds of Ballachulish
what this hunger receives
I miss you like that already