



# the book that will not close

for Campbell Wilson



though you may wish to run the river  
while the thermometer said cold as ice  
water being water asks that you know  
how to swim it even though you have to  
realise that what you recognise is rogue  
asks you to measure scales of heat or chill -  
that what you thought was flow now may  
be ice - yet not as safe as what its surface

tells you to believe - in such a way we  
move through fields of learning, hoping  
all who must attend will open eyes to  
every silent echo found between old  
sandstone pages (they may have frozen  
in their history the fabric of such human  
hungers as the many generations who  
have gained within their shelter means

to think or say the live mechanics of  
those breezes blowing through such  
grammars as we need to stay secure  
within the dark domain of numbers  
which ensure that all the necessary  
planes and angles sit and fit together) -  
could this be all we have to learn?

gheibhear anail naomhachd  
sgaoilte ann am meuran craoibh  
sàmhchar eadar oiteag 's beuc  
fois dha'n t-sùil a tharraing ceist  
mar ubhal shùghmhor as a geug

iarraidh a h-uile sgoilear deònach  
leus a dh'èireadh as a' ghrunn  
a bheireadh stiùir gu tuigse dha  
mu mar a thà an sgeul 'n a dhàn  
ri h-innse le cur thairis sunnd

oir mar a gabhar buaidh air éisdeachd  
caillear smachd air sùil is cluas  
is caillidh sinne neart nam bann  
a thà 'g ar cumail dlùth dh'an duan  
a dh'fheumar innse do ar clann

a breath of sacredness is found  
spread among the limbs of trees  
silence between breeze and bellow  
ease for the eye that drew a question  
as succulent apple from its branch

every eager scholar will desire  
a flame to rise out of the ground  
that might give a guide to knowing  
how the story that's within a verse  
is to be told with abundant warmth

for if the audience is not won over  
command of eye and ear is lost  
and we'll lose the bands of strength  
keeping us bound closely to the song  
that must be passed on to our young

thon tree wis unnerstuid tae be  
ane brattach o the wey we thole  
ilk wather aw the tides can thraw  
yet ken its saul tae be sweet caller  
springheid o aa wir dim-rive kennin  
hou thare's hechtin o guid fouth  
fae ilka beuch branch or sprig

but tree is tree an wi fu time  
will grow an gie due hairst  
athoot the bounded braith o man  
an yet, it haes the pouer tae gie  
aw fowk the cannie pliesur o  
its siccar, soond an hinnie beildin  
but gin ae tree maun hae its end  
ye hae tae howp this ane is made  
intil as mony leebraries o buiks  
as aw wha ken the wecht o dule  
be takken wi yon bricht lowe o licht

an gin this tree becom ane leebrary  
o buiks, ye'll wiss tae skare its wilin  
flesh an bane wi ilka wean wha kens  
the pleisur fand in lattin wards tak  
leevin braith an shaidae am mak thaim  
threid thair wey intil ilk aiver mynd  
gin ye maun staund afore the croud  
tae tell the tale o hou ye foond  
sweet aipples in a sheaf o buiks -  
ye ken this hairst can bide for aye

poem by Aonghas MacNeacail