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**Three Poems**      **Nigel McLoughlin**

**Today**

sky is summer church grey  
falls under a circle of weeping  
trees and metal gush  
from the water-pump  
drowns the last birdsong and bell  
in the breeze nobody answers  
the cross stands like a shadow  
on the wall of the enclosure  
there are no longer children  
as darkness breeds from  
the east transept emerging  
from the door like a priest  
it is not hard to remember  
all the pinks sparking like granite  
blues of slates levelling in light  
on this abandoned monument  
to laughter gone and chattering  
neighbours under the stones  
the grass sleeps its way over  
and the gap is obvious  
as the missing gate

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## Joy

first blue freshens the loophole  
on which this day turns  
a trend of glooms  
blown away like limitations  
in the draught  
meaning slips into and catches  
between the sheets of billets-doux  
from this year to the last  
lifts lamentations skyward  
in a kerfuffle of tree branches  
ridged and definite as chess pieces  
when the rain sets in  
I shoulder like a wedge  
through the crush  
hold the last dragonflies  
of sky like ghosts yet to be born  
misinformed and envied  
as the clouds close over  
there is something riotous  
about the blabbermouth  
of printouts that scatter  
an accident of luck-  
filled sunshine and wishbones  
that nub the frames of movement  
as birds cross the casement  
they could be chloroform or nicotine  
shimmering in the mind  
the result of the unseen  
rat the colour of roofing lead  
slipping beneath the fence  
to wait swaying like a wand  
for mishaps and schisms

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### **Instanter**

a child slips a hand  
around a pinkie  
a cataclysm of pimento  
fast as a comet  
among the sunrise  
backing out of the garden  
into the lilt of feline  
crossing our fence  
like lightning tied  
in a bowed  
head-lamp

something disappears  
along the apotheosis of a rope  
and next door's garments  
are doyens caught on a sundial  
starlets are distant  
stop and revel  
there is no other  
reassurance