

**Aidan Rooney**

## **Rigor**

All I can say to her in her language  
is: this will pass. The tremors run through her  
as if the earth had started up a dance,  
then she dozes again under my hands,  
good for nothing but their light-press weight.  
Her too-small infant coos in the next room.  
*Sa a ap pase*, I want to soothsay  
in a more inarticulate Kreyòl  
when the rigor roils again and her eyes  
reopen into mine. Glazed. How can fear  
appear so beautiful? There is nothing  
more to say, so I say: *Dòmi, Couche*.  
*Couche, Dòmi*, I say again, when we drop  
her and her baby home – an 8-foot cube,  
corrugated tin, US AID  
wrap round bamboo stakes – and go over  
the medications she will need to take,  
counting out the days – *demen, aprè demen* –  
till she is well and I will be long gone.

## In Acadie

There is an interior here new world  
blow-ins like myself don't enter often,  
a dark sky reserve one can paddle round  
like a first person. I like how round here  
they will say, *I'm going up the valley,*  
the way we would go – our home on a road  
that took a fair dip out front – *down the North.*  
We'd make a list. I'd to hide the butter.

The Home Depot an hour up the valley  
has everything every Home Depot has  
to put up a house, and then some, *mod-cons*  
you'd call them. Onward, an airport. You'd land  
in for the best, one-month summer around,  
this only the half of it. You should see  
the holiday home, not the one you saw,  
once, really, only. You came across as

lonely for your own home. There's a county  
near here, funny – Clare County – like back home  
but backwards. We never knew if it was you  
after it or both of you for the saint.  
I've a friend in Clare, she speaks a mix of  
Mi'qmaq and French, English like ours. You'd love  
the wild life: porpoises, given the tides,  
owls, wolves, the odd howl from who or God knows what.