Catholic Daydreams
Brendan Ryan

Lost in language
my brothers and sisters
flick food scraps at each other

as the circular rhythms
of lead and response
echo across paddocks,

the kitchens of large families
humming with Hail Marys,
the wind like a semaphore
tunnels down chimneys.

My father’s dairy-farming fingers
slip down the beads

as if each bead was a grip
on the Joyful Mystery
of ten children charging through

the Hail Holy Queen
the tempo picking up
according to what was on TV

yet after we had finished
we would often remain kneeling
heads down, studying the lino

and those Catholic daydreams