Croagh Patrick

After hiking out from Westport
to the base of the mountain
and lunching on Guinness
and shepherd’s pie, it seemed foolish
to have come so far and not make
the climb. You decided to wait
at the bottom near the coffin ship
monument, so I ran most of the way
up, not wanting to keep you waiting
too long. I passed pilgrims climbing
barefoot, crawling on their knees,
performing rites at various stations,
ascending on a different plane.
At the top I met our Argentinean
friend and we posed for photos
at the highest point, the Atlantic
glistening in the distance behind us
beneath rare blue summer skies.
Running back down, I met you
two-thirds of the way up, having
changed your mind. I turned and followed,
heading back up for the second
unplanned ascent. We circled the chapel
and sat silently for half an hour
meditating and absorbing the view
before descending and hiking back
into town as the sky turned to dusk
and Croagh Patrick disappeared
into the darkness and distance behind us.
February 11th, 2011
the people oust a dictator
in just eighteen days
without resorting to violence
The revolution is televised
live on Al Jazeera
as the crowd dances and sings
in ecstasy and euphoria
Civilians embrace soldiers
paint graffiti on tanks
Children are lifted into the air
flags waved in jubilation
and the people just can’t stop
smiling, struggling to believe
that they succeeded at last
that their perseverance
has prevailed and Mubarak
has fled to Sharm el Sheik
Victorious protesters shout
over the music of liberation
into cell phones transmitting
their message live via radio,
This is the happiest day of our lives!

Nathanael O’Reilly