

The Minister for Exams

When I was a child I sat an exam
The test was so simple
There was no way I could fail.

Question 1. Describe the taste of the moon.

It tastes like Creation, I wrote,
It has the flavour of starlight.

Question 2. What colour is Love?

Love is the colour of the water a man
lost in the desert finds, I wrote.

Question 3. Why do snowflakes melt?

I wrote, they melt because they fall
onto the warm tongue of God.

There were other questions.
They were as simple.

I described the grief of Adam when he was expelled from Eden.
I wrote down the exact weight of an elephant's dream.

Yet today, many years later,
for my living I sweep the streets
or clean out the toilets of the fat hotels.

Why? Because I constantly failed my exams.
Why? Well, let me set a test.

Question 1. How large is a child's imagination?

Question 2. How shallow is the soul of the Minister for Exams?

Brian Patten

