

# Time to Listen

Poetry Day Ireland 2020

With Cavan Library Service  
and writer Heather Brett



## Not an Obituary

*A gift for Philip*

I

Someday,  
one of us will be informed of  
the death of the other  
and in that first long moment  
when the world will seem to fall away  
and it's just ourselves left, miniscule,  
standing absent on some overhang of limestone,  
the earth's floor thousands of feet below,  
and light a startling grey,  
with not even the snatched cry of a starling  
to oppose the silence -  
a breath  
that the other has rescinded,  
will be taken, held  
held until the blood sings out, cries  
that the heart has swollen  
and is hurting, trapped behind the ribs,  
beating furiously -  
and finally, innately, released.

II

Adjournment then,  
between here and not –  
time enough to shape  
some small shining thing, pliable  
as a burnished want; something  
warm – perhaps with feathers,  
greyback pewter;  
small formed, a talisman  
of blunted swell and rise,  
etched runes visible  
bound in skin the colour of rain.  
This could be our child, our time  
forged in metal, a curio for all  
the life we never shared.  
I offer you this seedling,  
this oval amulet, take it:  
In some other time,  
we'll use the breaths annulled  
to coax life

Heather Brett