

## Dennis O'Driscoll

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### *Intercession*

God and humankind meet on uncommon ground.  
They just don't speak the same language.

He plays hard to get.  
They try to smoke Him from His lair with incense.

They flatter Him with glittering vestments, prayerful  
patter, gilded portraits, po-faced processions.

Both sides operate to incompatible agendas.  
Priestly mediation fails to close the widening rift.

Their loudest pleas, tempered by  
musical settings, fall on His deaf ears.

No, they can't hear what He is saying either.  
No, they can't see His side of the story.

The generation gap that separates them  
reaches back to the pre-galactic universe.

He thinks in terms of infinity.  
They urge research to prolong human life.

He casts His pearly gates before a chosen few.  
Before the rest, He raises hell.

His commands are not their wish.  
They long for riches, youth and beauty.

He bestows gifts of osteitis, earthquakes, infant deaths.  
They shake their fists, proclaim their disbelief.

## *The Call*

When we call on God, we always find him out,  
away on business maybe, lost in a world of his own,  
performing miracles for distant universes, volunteering  
to undergo humiliation all over again on another  
planet's equivalent of a cross to which his credulous  
disciples pin hopes as a drowning man clings to a spar.

He is otherwise engaged perpetually, his line busy,  
the menu of options never offering access to the top:  
we are fobbed off with white-collar staff, parochial-  
minded men who handle his clients like constituents,  
intermediaries undertaking to pass on our petitions,  
insisting the final decision falls outside their remit.

We are disillusioned by this failure to meet us face  
to face, his abdication from fair play when all we ask  
is mercy for patients sweating feverishly through blue  
surgical gowns, a softening of his line on chronic pain,  
reform of whatever law ordains that those dealt a poor  
hand must suffer the consequences for life, a birth scar.

Is it conceivable that he still dotes on the very hairs  
of our skeptical heads, eavesdrops on every arbitrary  
phrase, like some benign celestial Nicolae Ceauescu?  
Or is he no longer on speaking terms with mankind,  
dismissive of the species as a bad day's work, leading  
his campaign trail to more docile outposts of his empire?

Has he ceased believing in his mission statement, lost faith  
in his epoch-creating role? Can this universe have spun out  
of his control, his conglomerate diversified so much that  
a personal touch, a hands-on customer service, is unviable?  
We want him to summon a mass gathering like an extraordinary  
meeting of shareholders, feed facts to the multitudes this time.

If he has died, where are the oozing wounds to which our doubting fingers can be applied? What are the chances he may rise again? Once, his beatific smile graced all our houses like an ancestral photograph or the graven image of a president in public buildings. Now the blanched patch left in its place must be covered up, the wall painted over, a hall mirror found to occupy that space.