The Minister For Poetry Has Decreed
after Zbigniew Herbert

Kevin Higgins

That during the Centenary celebrations
in memory of our late revolution,
poets in each of the twenty six counties
from Kerry to Louth
will participate in evenings
of moderation during which even
the moderation will be moderate in the extreme.
Participants will arrive dressed
in their Confirmation suits, or the kind of blazer
one might wear to the funeral
of a much indulged uncle,
when hoping for a mention in the Will.
For poets of the female persuasion
Irish tweed trouser suits
will be provided. Nothing will be said
with which anyone could disagree,
or agree with too vehemently.
Everyone will stand around pretending
to be Seamus, with the best bits
subtracted. The poems we require
are those that instead of embracing
the reader too intimately –
the way couples who’ve just met each other
at bus-stops in Eyre Square sometimes do –
shake your hand limply,
as if about to be interviewed for a position
as an administrative assistant in an office
which specialises in shredding documents
for abattoirs all over the Midlands.
The Minister for Poetry has decreed.

Kevin Higgins has published four collections of poems with Salmon, the most recent of which is The Ghost In The Lobby (2014). His poems also feature in Identity Parade – New British and Irish Poets (Bloodaxe, 2010) and in The Hundred Years’ War: modern war poems (Ed Neil Astley, Bloodaxe May 2014). 2016 – The Selected Satires of Kevin Higgins was published by NuaScéalta very early in 2016.

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