The Ha’Penny Bridge, Dublin

Cyril Dabydeen

White crown-like arches mark the bridge
   across the Liffey, this famous river--
   echoes of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, as I’m here now
   sitting close to the sculpture of two women
   who are pensive-looking, or just poised,
   handbags by their sides, as others hurry by
   over the bridge while I watch and wait

   Or it’s my being dismayed, though
   not for those walking along to *Dublin Woollen Mills*,
   from the crossway & my having just come
   from St Michan’s Church & seeing the 800-year-old mummy,
   or hearing about Wolfe, drawn-and-quartered,
   such suffering: Ireland’s turbulent century ahead--
   I calmly say to myself

   But the women in stone seem far from it now,
   with a terrible beauty their own I yet have in mind--
   my being here in Dublin, because of journeys
   we must undertake, or at whose behest
   while we continue in more than stone--
   facing up to what’s yet to come--
   in places we only expect to be in, for a while.

   *(Aug. 14, 2003)*