



Poetry

Kingaroy Peanut Company

Eoin Kelly | Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown Libraries.

All day we watch the husks of peanuts
conveyed in thousands from silo to silo.

Since the opening of the peanuts
has been mostly automated,

the shells department specialise in observing
their transportation to pulping. Most of us are grateful

for the mechanisation of the plant,
but there are those, as in all silos, who long

for the past—to feel the rush of the fibrous shells
against their palms—to run their fingers

over the great cascade of peanut season.
At first they lobbied, protested, picketed

outside the foreman's office under a sun
hot enough to fry an egg.

But it was not long before they returned to work
given the heat and pressure

of the town's peanut economy.
Though you can tell what they desire

by how they still mope around the plant.
Of course some peanuts slip

through, still fat in their casings,
curved with potential.

You should see their faces
when they break the seam.

The feeling on their calloused fingertips
of a peanut ready to offer its returns,

its golden reticule, its dying star
hidden under the pale flesh,

the flaky coat brittle as wings.
The sound of the hull ripping

is melodious and nourishing
as the rain that fell on parched soil

and set its life going.