

Derek Mahon
Durham

Known throughout Britain this noble city.
Its steep slopes and stone buildings
are thought a wonder; weirs contain
its fast river; fish of all kinds
thrive here in the thrusting waters.
A great forest has grown up here,
thickets throng with wild creatures;
deer drowse in the deep dales.
Everyone knows this renowned town
holds the body of blessèd Cuthbert,
also the holy head of Oswald,
lion of England, Eadberch and Eadfrith,
brothers in battle, the bishop Aidan
and her besides the bishop Athelwold,
learnèd Bede and the abbot Basil,
inspiring tutor to Cuthbert in youth
who gladly took his grave instruction.
Together with these tombs in the minster
numerous recognized relics remain
that work wonders, as records say,
where worthy men await Judgement Day.

From a collection of translations by British, Irish and American poets with the working title, *Contemporary Poets Translate Old English Poems*, edited by Greg Delanty and Michael Matto, published by W.W. Norton in Autumn 2010.