

## 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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