

PETER BOYLE

from *Selected Poems and Micro-essays of 'The Montaigne Poet'*

*Of blindness and God's immediacy*

He folded and turned the paper, mumbling to himself and rocking in the one space of thin white light before the wall. Later they placed the folded paper, along with all the others, on a bent iron plate and slid it into the oven. And then the oven stopped. They pulled it out and unfolded the strangely shaped paper. There was no writing on it. He did not know how to write. The twists and kinks of the paper were his mnemonic – his way of impressing his story on the world because, from birth, he could not speak. And that is why the oven went out: there was no need for his paper to be burnt – it had already been directly read by God.

Immediately they went to find him in the vast underground prison that, in those days, was all that was left of their lives. They looked everywhere but neither he nor his body was found. The suggestion was then made (no one remembers now who said it) that he must have been taken up painlessly, breathlessly, in a single act of translation into the other world.