## DAN O'BRIEN

## from Survivor's Notebook: Good Friday 2

Hooked on benzos, the thrice-daily benison, I was trying to remember the stations of the cross. Did I see myself, stripped and scourged, burdened with props? I sensed Him there, at least. There were plaques in the alleys of the Old City like those in Bloomsbury and the Village that commemorate even the most minor poet's stay. We were lunching on hummus and pita with a filmmaker, upstairs in a fetid humid grotto beside the bathroom. I faced the bathroom door. Our guide announced my survival with pride; she had had cancer too. Running short on time we descended to the Dead Sea where onyx mud soothed and obscured our scars; then the plowed plains of Armageddon. The Apocrypha would have to wait. We parked and clambered up a litter-strewn hill that was the mount He sermonized from. (Disputed: there were many such hills.) I wobbled newborn upon the deck of a boat upon the mercurial Sea of Galilee. Then skirting along the chain link and razor wire fences of Lebanon Syria Jordan Palestine Egypt-sightseers spinning around the axis mundi. I'm sure I've confused the chronology. There's no way we saw everything that day. Back in Jerusalem, the Armenian Quarter, we climbed a tower to view the sublime, sinister haze of the golden dome, while a monk played piano below, something gloomy and baroque, maybe Bach.