**A mural for ‘Kitty’ Wilkinson** *by Philip Dunn*

Liverpool’s Saint of the Slums.

A mural on Catherine Wilkinson

Would magnify the treasured civic tale.

What colours though for the wash house saint?

In chapel stained glass windows we’ve a guide.

Think blue for her mangle, her cellar boiler, bronze,

And caustic white for the chlorinated lime;

Then the Georgian slums, the Cholera year,

And Provident house – her blessed laundry.

She would be late at times with laundered sheets:

And may have been a final visitant

In Clontare Court, Cook’s Court, or Gladstone Street.

Three washed-out women might well form the scene?

It can’t depict their family’s shared clothes:

One has boiled six shirts, four bed ticks\* are next;

Some chaff left in the ticks lies on the floor.

And they had neither possing sticks or pegs.

They’d hardly have a crystal stream or hedge.

But render these as emblems centre stage:

The hallowed running water – *not* from the pump,

Three tubs, the drying lines, and kitchen stove;

And at its heart, her door in Denison Street.

Her tell-tale hands, what might be made of those.

What have they done with toil and suffering.

I’d want to hear her Derry tones, her words

On savings schemes and mending bath house towels

And Protestant pride; but we scarcely have her life.

\* tick: a mattress stuffed with straw.