
CAUGHT IN THE NET 61 - POETRY BY J. L. WILLIAMS

Series Editor - Jim Bennett

Introduction by Jim Bennett

Hello. Welcome to the next in the series of CITN featured poets. We will be looking at the work of a different poet in each edition and I hope it will help our readers to discover some new and exciting writing. This series is open to all to submit and I am now keen to read new work for this series.

You can join the CITN mailing list at - <http://www.poetrykit.org/pkl/index.htm> and following the links for Caught in the Net.

How you can hold a fish you've caught
gently in the current's stream,
revive it like a lover
needing stroking, needing
the brush of lips on damp skin..

from; *All Water* by J. L. Williams

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1 – BIOGRAPHY: J. L. WILLIAMS

JL Williams was born in New Jersey and studied at Wellesley College and on the MLitt in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. Her poetry has been published in journals including Stand, Shearsman and Poetry Wales. Williams was recently awarded the Edwin Morgan Travel Bursary from the Scottish Arts Trust to travel to the Aeolian Isles and write a collection inspired by Ovid's Metamorphoses. <http://jlwpoetry.googlepages.com>

2 - POETRY

The Bathtub Has Lion Feet

Hulking, white-skinned, silver-footed.

I bathe in its belly.

A blood-swollen mosquito purrs on a tile.

The thunder cloud out the French doors is a belly.

It rumbles.

It shoots out pangs of light.

The bathtub stalks the room. It is painted with jasmine.

The scent of jasmine banks up from the garden.

I am in his belly.

I rumble.

I shoot out light.

A candle blown by the fan becomes a strobe light.

He's a lion with silver feet. I am in his belly.

Maybe nothing dies.

Espionage d'Etoile

The dark shadow bobs. She watches from the corner of the wooden chamber, eyes awash with heat. Is it human or a leaf in the intermittent sun? Natural, she thinks and isn't.

Roping lianas crossed chests smeared with yellow paste – gold glimmering.
“Break an arm for the go(o)d(s).” I spelled your name with ox blood.
He wiped it out. That regarding decisions.
“We don’t discuss responsibility,” he mutters. “Crap’s for politicians.”

*You said planet of silent woods call me home. My wide feet
long for a path of dry mulch and fleur perfume. Ogle nothing.
Performance free on a lonely world and why not
all the more honest for it for once. My self the only splitting
hair amidst the dispatches...*

[Forgive no miner his raping the stony womb.
The coo-coo birds are all dead, dyed black... children
keep them in drawers and talk of how little they care for life.
Eyes of children like these make no reflection.]

[Hold this star to your face. Feel how cool it burns,
a limb of the person you love. It makes you beautiful by its light.
Let it go and it will swoop in ellipses around your head
that will centre you and also keep you moving.]

[It’s not a sacrifice if it’s a compromise and vice versa.
Who knew then black and white meant space,
ubiquitous space. What war was seems like play now, stupid
writhing. Squid in their thousands on the dry sea bed.
How powerful your hoof tapped out; pretend, pretend.]

In a small vessel of mercury I troll.
Star shadow provides cover and the menace relents.
Could you have changed though you could not see?
How anyway? And rumours of your death.

It is touch and the memory of touch that define my waking states.
Old habits. She stiffens when she hears the water pour.
Steam fills the wooden box. A hand cups her breast.
Is it my hand? If it is, she’ll know. But she’ll not show it.

Ousia

What blackness you come out of, child of memory
or mirror? If only men had eyes like horses.

I saw you dancing.
I saw you dancing with a reflection, white
feathers of your tutu trembling.

Clearer than the day, this boy’s dream,
but he can’t wake up so you
must move again pulled

by love or strings.

Not his though.
Not his any more than anyone's,
yourself even.

Secret Machines

God is a secret.
You are a secret.

The man who lived with grizzly bears
got ate up.

He became like a bear;
smelled like a bear,
danced like a bear.
His eyes though
got bright not
dull like a bear with the long sleep.

He screamed.

In each of us
is a secret machine
and a secret animal.

Glittering of Flashes

after *Don Quixote* by Pablo Picasso

As on a ship in drought his words
that leapt and sunk described
winds whose diminishment no dolphin
survived to swim. Unsettling.

Divesting traces of kelp, this horse
freed in desert runs toward death enjoying
freedom reflectionless, without mirage as
he is/i am image; See: Horse with no sea.

The done again is undone.
Armour split becomes the naked
thigh bone on whose flute
maenads drowning in air whistle ablution.

Grinning skeleton heads
revelate in a pasture of sand;
tongues on mills of flint,
cords ripping sparks from agog mouths.

Hunger Stinger

The earth gave up its office.
Dignity shed for original proposals,
naked birds and fish.

One most beautiful exclamation mark
on the charred papyrus of the universe:
man, who employs dogs and horses.

Today, as everyday, what is
is not enough. This creature
of infinite want recreates
to amplify its fear.

Dark stars plague the treatise of sunburnt sleep.

Woke on a bed of wet tissues,
one conceives a line
better than the best.

Staved off,
the end of this pitiless world.

All Water

I've been thinking a lot about gills,
how this flesh fringe can take in
water and air, how you can
catch a fish by tickling it
under its belly, wearing silk
stockings on your hands.
How you can hold a fish you've caught
gently in the current's stream,
revive it like a lover
needing stroking, needing
the brush of lips on damp skin.

And what is it we do
when we take a fish or sip,
pluck an apple, kill a man
or beast? Are we stopping
or continuing an endless stream
whose movement is toward
home or origin, whatever that may be,
whatever that may be, home,
beginning, but what or where is this?

Was it a cloud that formed
and let the first clear uvula
drop from its wet womb? Was it
first the puddle evaporating
in billion years back sun to
naked haze? Was it
first the glaze of sweat or
the pinpull of tears?

Is this why everything keeps moving, why
the circle within the circle
within the circle turns?

Because there is no soil
worth dying for (it'll
have us soon enough). We
are mostly water and all water
is a thing that seeks a home but has no home
except that carved in earth by seeking.

C. Darwin, Catalogue 3

Ships painted onto the ceiling,
old stone steps to the ocean.

In the fat Duke's foyer,
a ship docked onto ruin.

The holiness of the city.
The holiness of the ship's

uncertain longing for shore.
Duck eggs on mother of pearl.

The millpond and scent
of gardenia, the waterwheel

dredged in sand.
Inedible mushrooms. One hundred

singing children lost in a storm.
Mother's voice by the fireside

counting the days at sea.
Strawberries

melting on the vine.
Glass in the hearth. Pineapples

and feathers from birds
not yet given names.

Pandora, Midnight

Gasp
Out of which
Day makes known its song.

Unlawfully
Birds also
Turn a key in night.

Unlocked
Some kind of
Symphony or box.

Nome
for RJ Iremonger

The lion comes down from the mountain,
your name in his mouth.

He comes to worship.
He makes of his body a circle.

Your name rises up from the newly wet ground, a vine.
It moves like a train over landscape,
it heads for the sea.

A whale rises up from the sea
with your name on her back.
She carries it like a newborn, pushes

toward air.

Your name shines out of the sky,
it enters the skin.
It makes of the body a vessel of light, enlightens.

I come to you with your name in my mouth.
We kiss. I touch my tongue to your tongue.

I give you your name.

4 - Afterword

Email Poetry Kit - info@poetrykit.org - if you would like to tell us what you think. We are looking for other poets to feature in this series, and are open to submissions. Please send one poem and a short bio to - info@poetrykit.org

Thank you for taking the time to read Caught in the Net. Our other magazine s are Transparent Words ands Poetry Kit Magazine, which are webzines on the Poetry Kit site and this can be found at - <http://www.poetrykit.org/>