

GHOSTS, FOOLS AND SEERS

Katja Webb David Wickham Aaron Wyatt Michael Waye





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DORIAN LE GALLIENNE (1915–1963)

SHAKESPEARE SETTINGS (*William Shakespeare*)

- | | | | |
|---|-----|----------------------------------|------|
| 1 | i | Fear no more the heat of the sun | 3'56 |
| 2 | ii | No longer mourn for me | 2'37 |
| 3 | iii | How oft, when thou, my music | 1'34 |

THREE SONGS

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--|------|
| 4 | i | The ghost (<i>Omi Okura trans. Clara A. Walsh</i>) | 1'23 |
| 5 | ii | Winter (<i>John Collinson Hobson</i>) | 2'55 |
| 6 | iii | Cranes (<i>Thomas Wade Earp</i>) | 2'07 |

LARRY SITSKY (*b.1934*)

SEVEN ZEN SONGS [□]

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|------|
| 7 | i | If you were to ask me (<i>Li Po trans. Larry Sitsky</i>) | 1'37 |
| 8 | ii | Crows the cock before the dawn (<i>Christina Rossetti</i>) | 0'35 |
| 9 | iii | Cherry blossoms are quiet (<i>Zaro Weil</i>) | 1'02 |
| 10 | iv | Beside my bed (<i>Li Po trans. Larry Sitsky</i>) | 1'09 |
| 11 | v | Come to the orchard (<i>Rumi trans. Larry Sitsky</i>) | 0'38 |
| 12 | vi | I waited and I yearned (<i>Princess Nukada trans. Larry Sitsky</i>) | 0'54 |
| 13 | vii | Snow falls on snow (<i>Taneda trans. Larry Sitsky</i>) | 1'14 |

RICHARD PETER MADDOX (*b.1936*)

FOUR SONGS FOR SOPRANO

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|------|
| 14 | i | The pear tree (<i>Dame Mary Gilmore</i>) | 3'40 |
| 15 | ii | Bargain basement (<i>Frederick T Macartney</i>) | 3'38 |
| 16 | iii | Sleight-of-hand (<i>Bruce Dawe</i>) | 3'34 |
| 17 | iv | Sonnet XVIII. Shall I compare thee (<i>William Shakespeare</i>) | 2'59 |

GEOFFREY ALLEN (*b.1927*)

TWO SONGS FOR VOICE AND VIOLA Op.76 ^a

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|------|
| 18 | i | On the Inland Sea (<i>James Kirkup</i>) | 3'30 |
| 19 | ii | On Betelgeuse (<i>Humbert Wolfe</i>) | 4'17 |

PAUL PAVIOUR (*b.1931*)

CRAZY JANE (*William Butler Yeats*)

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|------|
| 20 | i | Crazy Jane and the Bishop | 2'55 |
| 21 | ii | Crazy Jane on the day of judgement | 2'05 |
| 22 | iii | Crazy Jane reproved | 1'20 |
| 23 | iv | Jane with Jack the journeyman | 3'00 |
| 24 | v | Crazy Jane talks with the Bishop | 1'57 |
| 25 | vi | Crazy Jane on God | 3'07 |
| 26 | vii | Crazy Jane grown old looks at the dancers | 2'50 |

JAMES PENBERTHY (*1917–1999*)

PASTORALS (*Gwen Harwood*) ^b

- | | | | |
|----|-----|------------------------------|------|
| 27 | i | Feral cat | 2'32 |
| 28 | ii | Reflections | 2'25 |
| 29 | iii | Carapace | 2'43 |
| 30 | iv | Autumn rain | 3'20 |
| 31 | v | Winter afternoon | 3'03 |
| 32 | vi | A welcome: fowls and flowers | 3'25 |

79'38

Katja Webb soprano
David Wickham piano
Avron Wyatt viola ^a
Michael Waye flute ^b

GHOSTS, FOOLS AND SEERS

A sophisticated, mature body of songs should embrace the best working poets if they are truly to represent a nation's creative life. This collection contains fine poems by distinguished Australians Mary Gilmore, Frederick Macartney, Bruce Dawe and Gwen Harwood, alongside British masters Shakespeare and WB Yeats. There are also translations of Japanese and Persian lyrics, attesting to a welcome eclecticism in the outlook of Australian composers.

Dorian Le Gallienne, despite his untimely death before his fiftieth year, was a key figure in the accelerated movement into Modernism in Australian music, post World War II. He promoted new works by younger Australian composers, and, breaking with received English models in his own music, moved to predominantly taut, spare textures. Most of his songs were unpublished until 1999, when an edition was produced by Kerry Murphy and Jennifer Hill in Melbourne, Le Gallienne's home. Their edition carries this quote from pianist Nancy Weir "The tragedy of Dorian Le Gallienne's early death will become increasingly apparent as his compositions gain more familiarity." Sadly, that has not happened, with the partial exception of the four John Donne songs. Le Gallienne's is unsentimental music, as recalled by Linda Phillips: "Through the loveable and often oddly witty personality ran a strong vein of granite-like austerity which I have heard reflected in some of his songs..."

Three **Shakespeare settings** from the mid-1940s open the recital. As Graham Johnson has written, each generation of song composers must come to a new understanding of Shakespeare. Le Gallienne responds with a kind of sympathetic austerity, and material that recalls the Elizabethans, but through the prism of that dark decade. *Fear no more the heat of the sun* (Cymbeline) is reminiscent of the Finzi setting in its steady tread, flexible vocal line, sombre recitative near the end and final elegiac descent. *No longer mourn for me* (Sonnet 71) is very spare, a patiently moving chant over slow-grinding chromatic octaves, often unharmonised. *How oft, when thou, my music* (Sonnet 128) is enchantingly simple. Elizabethan dance-like figurations step gracefully over a pedal, the jaunty dots full of pathos in voice and piano; this is music of understated adoration.

The ghost, the first of **Three songs** (1957), is built on two boldly opposed textures, lean and other-worldly, well-attuned to the eighteenth-century Japanese poem by Omi Okura. In *Winter* the vocal line again eschews lyrical gestures in favour of intense compact speech. This chill is echoed in the knowledge that the young poet, JC Hobson, died on active service in 1916. TW Earp's curious poem *Cranes* is an unusual nod to Futurism, reading like a literary

analogue to the English Vorticist painters. Surprisingly, and effectively, the slow regular swinging movement of the machines finds musical expression in sonorous long legato lines, in contrast to the unromantic bareness of Le Gallienne's settings of poems about natural subjects. Earp may not have reached great heights as a poet, but is remembered for being in JRR Tolkien's and William Walton's circle at Oxford.

Larry Sitsky is consistently one of the boldest and most imaginative of Australian composers. The theatre always illuminates his work, especially the seven operas, but all of the piano music, his symphony and a range of songs for various ensembles. He is Emeritus professor at the Australian National University. He believes that composers should perform, for "without this communion with a live audience, music-making all too easily becomes over-intellectualised, sterile and arid". As a virtuoso pianist he is firmly anchored in the Busoni tradition of rich Romantic playing and opulent textures, but his **Seven Zen songs** are pared down to essentials, to a suggestive minimum. He cheekily stretches the definition of Zen to include both Rumi, the Persian lyric poet, Sufi mystic and jurist, and Christina Rossetti in her childlike direct vein. These are deft, idiomatic sketches with no false Orientalism for postcard colour; instead the viola draws simple lines like a Chinese brush painting. Sitsky conjures a notably wide range of colours within restricted means and short spans.

Richard Peter Maddox is a prolific song writer with an especially eclectic set of musical influences and choices of poetry. Born in Western Samoa, he grew up in Sydney and Bathurst. For many years he was a lecturer at the University of New England, in New South Wales, but in retirement has devoted himself to composition and performance. A little like Saint-Saëns before him, he creates vividly different styles and languages from song to song and set to set, to best suit the words. This readiness to adapt would once have attracted criticism on the grounds of lacking a coherent individual voice, but fortunately we have moved on. A composer who cheerfully acknowledges his debt to Bach, Boethius and The Beatles is a welcome ally for an imaginative singer. His **Four songs for soprano** display something of this range. Mary Gilmore's *The Pear Tree* is accompanied in its original context by this arresting tale: "When I was a child there was a young girl employed as kitchen help at Tenandra Park... Everyone liked this girl. She was about sixteen and was courted by a young man on the place. Suddenly the man disappeared, and though the girl

said nothing she was seen to droop. One night, to the surprise of the two elder women in the kitchen, it being the middle of the week and not Saturday, she took a bath “all over”, and put on everything clean, even to a white frock and flounced petticoat she had saved for special occasions. In the morning, out in the frost, they found her hanged on the big pear-tree in the orchard. Then they knew why she had taken a bath, and why she had dressed in white. “She wanted to go clean and all in white to her Maker”, said the elder women. When the moon was full, the story was that her ghost could sometimes be seen between the trees, or where she had hanged herself. “As a child, when staying at Tenandra, I used to peer out of the window at night, looking for the ghost. I never saw the ghost, but the moonlight was so white it was terrifying”. Frederick Macartney became a respected poet, anthologist and critic, but this belies the humour and energy of his best work. Bargain Basement has the graphic qualities of a fine printmaker, and this witty, free-wheeling poem is full of sharply engraved images and contrasts of colour. Maddox responds with his most chromatic and complex music, verging on atonality at times, but always gesturally tightly linked to the text and bearing the wistful comedy beautifully. The set continues with a beguiling Bruce Dawe poem, *Sleight of hand*, in a similarly gently absurdist vein, but dreamily set in sonorous, sometimes bitonal, drift of warmly voiced chords. There are many settings of Shakespeare’s Sonnet XVIII, *Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day*, but this is surely one of the most curious. Until the turn to the opulent setset, beginning with “But thy eternal summer shall not fade”, Maddox avoids conventional lyricism, preferring to explore the doubts and oppressive features of summer in the octave. The harmony is effectively shaded and gravely restrained, the set seeming to end on the dominant of *The Pear Tree*, as if ready to loop back and recommence.

For his **Two songs for voice and viola**, Geoffrey Allen takes up the instrumentation of Sitsky’s *Zen Songs*, but instead of paring down the musical material he responds to two well-known lyrical poems with a viola part that suggests that much more is submerged beneath. The writing echoes the generous pastoral passions of important English viola works, those of Walton, Vaughan Williams and Rebecca Clarke, and is often largely independent of the patient vocal line. James Kirkup’s *On the inland sea* consists of four haiku, again recalling Sitsky’s work, and also the poet’s years spent in Japan teaching English. Humbert Wolfe’s striking *On Betelgeuse* brought into being Gustav Holst’s best song, but this 2010 setting finds

a rather different austerity in the words, albeit one lit with the golden light of that distant star.

Crazy Jane dates well after WB Yeats' most popular Celtic Twilight poems, like *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*, beloved of song-writers ever since. Crazy Jane herself is one of his "masks", as he called them, allowing him a more critical or acerbic voice with which to address issues in the world. This set has Jane confronting the Church, personified in the Bishop, then "No[t] so much as a parish priest.... an old book in his fist". The foil to the pious Bishop is her errant lover, Jack the Journeyman, with whom she pursues her earthly passions, a quest for joy in madness. The poems are from a volume promisingly entitled *Words for music perhaps*, irresistible to a composer, and they inspire Paviour to his best songs, dating from 1969. They are cast in a musical language recalling, but not in thrall to, Britten and Richard Rodney Bennett. There are strong modal centres, effective prosody, carefully controlled energy in abundance and a clarity of purpose in the volleys of contrapuntal lines in the challenging piano part. There is also spacious recitative, haunting open textures, and a moving hymn-like accompaniment to the sixth song. The professionalism and consistently fascinating invention makes one regret that the songs and the then young composer were not better known. A dearth of performances and recordings, and an often atomized musical community where composers worked in isolation, like Haydn marooned at Esterhazy, restricted the full development of many.

James Penberthy was of a temperament and energy to forge musical communities, having been a driving force behind the foundation of West Australian Ballet, West Australian Opera and the arts department of Southern Cross University. He was also famously independent and cantankerous, an original thinker and great idealist. His chosen poet for **Pastorals** was Gwen Harwood, who also wrote libretti for him and for Larry Sitsky. The first poem, Feral cat, does not appear in her collected works and seems to have been a gift to the composer. Penberthy's style is typified by strong, stark ideas, muscular rhythmic gestures and patterns, here matching the poetic rhythms and ellipsis. The vocal line is often more declamatory than the more cantabile flute obbligato. *Pastorals* was edited from the manuscript, as yet unpublished and probably unperformed since the composer's death in 1999.

DORIAN LE GALLIENNE

SHAKESPEARE SETTINGS

William Shakespeare (1645–1616)

1 i **Fear no more the heat of the sun**

Fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou the worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweeps, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown of the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have:
And renowned be thy grave!

2 ii **No longer mourn for me**

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it, for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
O if I say you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

3 iii **How oft, when thou, my music**

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.
To be so tickled they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blessed than living lips.
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

THREE SONGS

4

i **The ghost**

Omi Okura (c.6–733) trans. Clara A. Walsh (fl.1910)

It is an awesome thing,
To meet a-wandering
In the dark night,
The dark and rainy night,
A phantom greenish-grey,
Ghost of some wight,
Poor mortal wight!
Wandering
Lonesomely
Through
The black
Night!

5

ii **Winter**

John Collinson Hobson (1893–1917)

'Tis the hour of candlelight,
Gone is the cold sun.
Children homeward run from the black and
frosty night.
Giants and crooked witches loom through
the creeping dark,
And the dog's bark tells of goblins in the gloom.
Falls a long and silent fear on the countryside.
Bats, that pucks do ride through the
windows seem to peer.
And the winds are whispering low of the
wicked elves
That do haunt bookshelves or by leafy ditches go.
'Tis the hour of candlelight,
Gone is the cold sun.

6

iii **Cranes**

Thomas Wade Earp (1892–1958)

All day they have been busy about man's work,
Swinging great hods of bricks with eager whirr,
But now, they, too, endure the desires that lurk
Haunting the hours of night
They do not stir.
Erect they suffer metallic agony struck to
a frozen gesture,
Each a claw twitched up to heaven
All night long they see star upon star and
these they hunger for.
Motionless thrilled with longing they vainly
try to pluck
A golden blossom down from the sky.

LARRY SITSKY

SEVEN ZEN SONGS

7 i **If you were to ask me**

Li Po (705–762) trans. Larry Sitsky (b.1934)

If you were to ask me why I dwell among
green mountains,
I shall silently laugh; my soul is serene.

The peach blossom follows the moving water.
There is another heaven and earth beyond
the world of men.

8 ii **Crows the cock before the morn**

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

“Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!”
Crows the cock before the morn;
“Kikirikee! Kikirikee!”
Roses in the east are born.

Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!
Early birds begin their singing;
Kikirikee! Kikirikee!
The day, the day, the day is springing.

9 iii **Cherry blossoms are quiet**

Zaro Weil (b.1947)

Cherry blossoms are quiet,
Unlike frogs,
Leaping to every raindrop.

10 iv **Beside my bed**

Li Po trans. Larry Sitsky

Beside my bed a pool of light
Is it frost on the ground?

I lift my eyes and see the moon,
I bend my head and think of home.

11 v **Come to the orchard**

Rumi (1207–1273) trans. Larry Sitsky

Come to the orchard in spring
There is light and wine
And sweethearts in the pomegranate flowers.

If you do not come, these do not matter
If you do come, these do not matter.

12 vi **I waited and I yearned**

Princess Nukada (c.630–690) trans. Larry Sitsky

I waited and I yearned for you.
My curtain stirred at the touch of the
autumn breeze.

13 vii **Snow falls on snow**

Santoka Taneda (1882–1940) trans. Larry Sitsky

Snow falls on snow
Silence.

RICHARD PETER MADDOX
FOUR SONGS FOR SOPRANO

14 i **The pear tree**

Dame Mary Gilmore (1865–1962)

“What you be a-lookin’ at, Emily Ann,
Starin’ with your eyes all set?”

“I bin seein’ a ghost, Amanda,
And I be a-seein’ it yet.”

“Where was it you seen it, Emily Ann?”

“It was hung on the big pear tree;

I seen a ghost, Amanda,

And the ghost it said it was me.

“Put your hand on my heart, Amanda,

Feel of the life of it there;

For the ghost was hung on the big pear tree,

It had my eyes, and my hair.”

“O moon that blanches the grass,
Why is the tree so white?”

There is a bird in the tree,

Was never a bird so white!

Was never a bird so white,

But its head bends over,

There, where it hangs in the tree,

Dead for a lover.

“O moonlight sheeting the grass,
What will cover her there?”

There will be frost on the tree,

And frost on her hair.

“O white moon turn from that tree,

Shine not so clear and high,

She was too young for frost on her hair,

She was too young to die!”

15 ii **Bargain basement**

Frederick T Macartney (1887–1980)

Not there, my dear, not there;

This way – down the stair.

Have you a line of hillocks and some white

Absurd young lambs, all wool, and light

As leaping air?

No, sir – sorry!...

Alright, don’t worry.

You keep, perhaps

Some inexpensive scraps

Of early green

Springtime sateen,

With colour partly lost

In folds of frost.

Prinked with those flowers that smell

So sweetly? – I know them well

But can’t recall the name:

I saw them somewhere a month ago.

Unfortunately, madam, no...

Ah! what a shame!

I say, I’d like a length of thin

Pale sea-water to wear next to the skin.

None? A creek, then – with embroideries

Of eucalypt trees,

The soldierly sort that gets

Dignity from its gold epauletts.

No, sir, impossible...

Oh, well –

Then, do you stock

That delicate sort of frock

Now worn by blossoming orchards, thin,

Wide and airy, like a crinoline?

No, madam, no; but I might find...
O, never mind.
Come on, my dear:
There's nothing for us here.
Thank goodness, we still have, in the Lay By
(For what it's worth
When we two die)
That remnant double-width of damaged earth.

16 iii **Sleight-of-hand**

Bruce Dawe (b.1930)
Especially I like the bit where
They take the sun away
By sliding a cloud hinged to a hill
Over it late in the day
It is so nicely done, this part,
Barely noticeable until it is, well, over...
I like particularly
The humility in the skill
That would much rather dodge
The embarrassing applause,
And under the finger-tented
Cloth gradually withdraws
Until there is only the shadowy
Stage, the hat, cloak, cane,
The tumbler of still water,
And last but not least, the plain
Gesture of reversal even now
Returning to scarves
Of the most fluid silk the world's pocketful
of doves.

17 iv **Sonnet XVIII**

William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
While in eternal lines thou growest;
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

GEOFFREY ALLEN

TWO SONGS FOR VOICE AND VIOLA

Op.76

18 i **On the Inland Sea**

James Kirkup (1918–2009)

Are clouds or mountains
Floating in the island air
Half sea, half heaven

Our boat softly swims
In falling cherry petals.
The fresh spray is pink.

Each drifting island
Leans its lonely pine and red
Maples fan dark glens.

In the amber dusk
Each island dreams its own night.
The sea swarms with gold.

19 ii **On Betelgeuse**

Humbert Wolfe (1885–1940)

On Betelgeuse the gold leaves hang in golden aisles
For twice a hundred million miles,
And twice a hundred million years
They golden hang and nothing stirs,
On Betelgeuse.

Space is a wind that does not blow
On Betelgeuse and time is a bird,
Whose wings have never stirred
The golden avenues of leaves
On Betelgeuse.

On Betelgeuse there is nothing that joys or grieves
The unstirred multitude of leaves,
Nor ghost of evil or good
Haunts the gold multitude
On Betelgeuse.

And birth they do not use
Nor death on Betelgeuse,
And the God, of whom we are infinite dust,
Is there a single leaf of those gold leaves
On Betelgeuse.

PAUL PAVIOUR (*b. 1931*)

CRAZY JANE

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

20 i **Crazy Jane and the Bishop**

Bring me to the blasted oak
That I, midnight upon the stroke,
(All find safety in the tomb.)
May call down curses on his head
Because of my dear Jack that's dead.
Coxcomb was the least he said;
The solid man and the coxcomb.

Nor was he Bishop when his ban
Banished Jack the Journeyman,
(All find safety in the tomb.)
Nor so much as parish priest,
Yet he, an old book in his fist,
Cried that we lived like beast and beast:
The solid man and the coxcomb.

The Bishop has a skin, God knows
Wrinkled like the foot of a goose,
(All find safety in the tomb.)
Nor can he hide in holy black
The heron's hunch upon his back,
But a birch tree stood my Jack:
The solid man and the coxcomb.

Jack had my virginity,
And bids me to the oak, for he
(All find safety in the tomb.)
Wanders out into the night
And there is shelter under it,
But should that other come, I spit:
The solid man and the coxcomb.

21 ii **Crazy Jane on the day of judgement**

"Love is all
Unsatisfied
That cannot take the whole
Body and soul";
And that is what Jane said.

"Take the sour
If you take me
I can scoff and lour
And scold for an hour";
"That's certainly the case," said he.

"Naked I lay,
The grass my bed;
Naked and hidden away,
That black day";
And that is what Jane said.

"What can be shown?
What true love be?
All could be known or shown
If Time were but gone."
"That's certainly the case," said he.

22 iii **Crazy Jane reproved**

I care not what the sailors say:
All those dreadful thunder-stones,
All that storm that blots the day
Can but show that Heaven yawns;
Great Europa played the fool
That changed a lover for a bull.
Fol de rol, fol de rol.

To round that shell's elaborate whorl,
Adorning every secret track
With the delicate mother-of-pearl,
Made the joints of Heaven crack:
So never hang your heart upon
A roaring, ranting journeyman.
Fol de rol, fol de rol.

23 iv **Jane with Jack the journeyman**

I know, although when looks meet
I tremble to the bone,
The more I leave the door unlatched
The sooner love is gone,
For love is but a skein unwound
Between the dark and the dawn.

A lonely ghost the ghost is
That to God shall come;
I – love's skein upon the ground,
My body in the tomb –
Shall leap into the light lost
In my mother's womb.

But were I left to lie alone
In an empty bed,
The skein so bound us ghost to ghost
When he turned his head
Passing on the road that night,
Mine must walk when dead.

24 v **Crazy Jane talks with the Bishop**

I met the Bishop on the road
And much said he and I.
"Those breasts are flat and fallen now
Those veins must soon be dry;
Live in a heavenly mansion,
Not in some foul sty."

"Fair and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul," I cried.
"My friends are gone, but that's a truth
Nor grave nor bed denied,
Learned in bodily lowliness
And in the heart's pride.

"A woman can be proud and stiff
When on love intent;
But Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent."

25 vi **Crazy Jane on God**

That lover of a night
Came when he would,
Went in the dawning light
Whether I would or no;
Men come, men go;
All things remain in God.

Banners choke the sky;
Men-at-arms tread;
Armoured horses neigh
Where the great battle was
In the narrow pass:
All things remain in God.

Before their eyes a house
That from childhood stood
Uninhabited, ruinous,
Suddenly lit up
From door to top:
All things remain in God.

I had wild Jack for a lover;
Though like a road
That men pass over
My body makes no moan
But sings on:
All things remain in God.

26 vii **Crazy Jane grown old looks at
the dancers**

I found that ivory image there
Dancing with her chosen youth,
But when he wound her coal-black hair
As though to strangle her, no scream
Or bodily movement did I dare,
Eyes under eyelids did so gleam:
Love is like the lion's tooth.

When she, and though some said she played
I said that she had danced heart's truth,
Drew a knife to strike him dead,
I could but leave him to his fate;
For no matter what is said
They had all that had their hate;
Love is like the lion's tooth.

Did he die or did she die?
Seemed to die or died they both?
God be with the times when I
Cared not a thraneen for what chanced
So that I had the limbs to try
Such a dance as there was danced –
Love is like the lion's tooth.

JAMES PENBERTHY

PASTORALS

Gwen Harwood (1920–1995)

27 i **Feral cat**

I met death in the field, cold-eyed,
Conservative business-man, soft-soled,
Grey-striped suit unobtrusive.

No boring dialogues on the nature of this life:
He wants my pretty chicks.
Does their mother have them safe?

Twilight has rustled gold
From pale wattles and water's sunset shield.
Great pines shiver.

Darkness falls on the cool cat who will wait
For feather and pulsing fur.
Darkness comes, soon or late.
For him the night is rapture.

28 ii **Reflections**

Two worlds meet in the mirror
Of the quiet dawn. The trees
Lift stem and crown above
Their own calm images.

Rest, in the heart's dry season,
Where the green reeds stitch light
To light, where water levels
Unendingly the bright

Ripple of leaf or wind-breath;
Inverts the bowl of sky
To a cup of deep enchantment,
As if some perfect eye

Saw memory and substance
As one, and could restore
In depth, in flawless detail,
Time as it was before.

Why does the body harbour
No memory of pain,
While a word, a name unspoken
In the mind cuts to the bone?

When time is turned to anguish,
Lastborn of nature, rest,
Where shade and water offer
Solace to all who thirst.

29 iii **Carapace**
Hold in the hollow of your palm
This carapace so delicate
One breath would send it spinning down,
Yet strong enough to bear the stress
Of ebb, flow, metamorphosis
From skin to shell.
Seasons have scoured
This beautiful abandoned house
From which are gone eyes, sinews, all
Taken-for-granted gifts.
I hold
In my unhousted continuing self
The memory that is wisdom's price
For what survives and grows beneath
Old skies, old stars.
Fresh mornings rim
The carapace of night with gold.
The sandgrains shine, the rockpools brim
With tides that bring and bear away
New healing images of day.

30 iv **Autumn rain**
Chill rain: the end of autumn.
A day of somber music,
A raindrop army drumming

To the plover's haunting cry.
Grief under a gold mask,
Perhaps? More likely, joy

At the delicate abundance
Stirring in sodden paddocks
To nourish generations

Of spurred grey wings. A day
For the householder to listen
In peace to his tanks filling,

Or watch the mushrooms making
Themselves from almost nothing
In their chosen place, a domed

City among the pines;
But to any eye beneath them
Dark suns with rays extending.

A day to think of death,
Perhaps, or of children's children
Inheriting the earth.

31 v **Winter afternoon**

A sun too mild to challenge
Frost in the shady hollows
Honours this afternoon
With light so sharp the gulls
A mile away flash silver.

Cold underfoot, how cold
The touch of air on hand
And face in lengthening shadows
By the dam's hoof-churned rim.
Explicit darkness stamps

And snorts. Two young bulls wheel
Away, return and circle
Like boys at play exploding
With aimless energy,
Then stand stock-still, exhaling

A sour-sweet mash of grasses.
Clear light glosses their blackness:
Taut flank, keel-curving breast,
Bold eyeball, glistening muzzle
Plumed with the warmth of breath.

No word that makes us mortal
Touches their strength, or glints
On their serene horizon:
This winter's day, this field
Where earth has set their table.

32 vi **A welcome: fowls and flowers**

Field of the cloth of gold!
Random as stars, the dandelions
Crowd in their constellations.

A day of muted brightness
But for these blazing flowers
Through which, at first by ones

And twos, then all at once,
A friendly host comes running.
Two beauties walk together,

Moorish princesses, distant
From the common flock; a few
Are glossed in autumn colours,

Bronze, sepia, russet brown.
All gather close and turn
Their sharp archaic profiles –
You should have come with gifts
To us of ancient lineage.
We scratched the dust of Egypt.

Caesar carried us North.
We voyaged with Columbus.
I walk on, empty-handed

Through taller reeds and grasses.
“O happy living things” –
As Coleridge says, the heart

Must bless them, to be blessed.
And when at last I leave,
The flock, in benediction,

Waits in the field of gold.
Seed of the seed of grasses
They fossick in will flourish.

Beyond the net of language
They know themselves immortal
As grassblade and grasshopper,
As the gods who fill their dishes.

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