

London Grip New Poetry Winter 2011 features poems by:

*Maggie Butt; *Margaret Hollingsworth; *Mike Barlow; *Merryn Williams; *Deborah Tyler-Bennett; *Martin Figura; *Neil Curry; *Thomas Roberts; *Donald Atkinson; *Martine Osborne; *Martyn Crucefix; *Jeremy Page; *Robert Nisbet; *Helen Ivory; *James Norcliffe; *Leah Fritz; *Ruth Bidgood; *Alice Major; *Shanta Acharya;

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Editor's introduction

Since the re-launch of London Grip a couple of months ago it has been gratifying to receive a steady – but manageable – stream of submissions from excellent poets in many parts of the world. We are pleased to present some of these poems in this winter selection of London Grip New Poetry. Others have had to be held over for the next posting in spring 2012. We continue to welcome new work, of course – preferably in batches of no more than three poems – sent to poetry@londongrip.co.uk. We will also be pleased to consider offers of reviews of recent poetry collections.

Our masthead picture, by Howard Fritz, reflects the fact that several poems in this issue are either about film or take a somewhat cinematic point of view. Indeed the whole posting has the flavour of a Hollywood epic: locations range from Italy through British Columbia and out into the cosmos; and we also travel through time to visit 19th century London, Jerusalem circa 1000 BC and the dawn of the universe.

Maggie Butt : Etruscan cemetery, Orvieto

Neat rows of tombs, unsealed and long defiled
gape wide as slack jawed skulls, while tides of green
have lapped into their rocky coves, a wash
of moss and fern and ivy in their humid hearts.

Town of the dead, with swept, paved streets;
a downward flight of steps behind each door.
Town of the loved, of houses built to last
a thousand years, to withstand earthquake,

war and the slow mounding up of earth.
Town of gods long since eclipsed, snuffed out.
Town of echoes and a hush of leaves,
a whirl of wings, a bird's lament, the twitch

of lizard in dry grass, the ghosts who ask,
What did you do with my love? I laid her here
with oil and spice. I built a home and carved
her name over the door. A town of eyes

at my back, whispering and whispering,
Where has my love gone? Where
has she gone? Overhead the careless
blue, and underfoot the stone-heart earth.

Maggie Butt's poetry has been widely published in magazines and her three collections are *Lipstick* (Greenwich Exchange, 2007), *Petite* (Hearing Eye, 2010) and *Ally Pally Prison Camp* (Oversteps, 2011).

Margaret Hollingsworth : Galiano Island, B.C.

1. Jenny watches

Jenny watches charcoal eyed,
shrinking, a smudge against the lilac bush.
We dip into the jar
scoop handfuls of Elizabeth
throw her on her garden and
return for more.
Jenny watches, dry lipped, expressionless,
so this is how the rich guys talk to death,
this carnival, five women and one man
a picnic table a stone jar,
Elizabeth, our friend,
pale flakes and small white bits of bone.
Scattered.

Elizabeth.
She left herself to science and science
gave her back to us in a stone jar
in spring, her plum tree
flowering fluting pink, her garden
sharp green, new nettles, briars,
hiding small wonders, violets, hearts-
ease, forget-me-nots.
A stand of late narcissus winks,
planted before she lighted on
this place.

We toss her ashes in the air
scream as they drift to earth,
laugh, joke about her quirks,
her strange intelligence,
sing songs, read poems, repeat her name.
An eagle hovers overhead,
she's here with us, we shout.
The table breaks and tips us on
our backs. She's here. She's here
we chant upended, rapturous
while Jenny watches, charcoal eyed.

2. Her house

Her house, a rat trap, broken boards
the windows never shut, no locks,
unplumbed, belongs to Jenny now.
Jenny who was breathing in the lilac's scent,
who viewed our capers wordlessly, while
listening to the white man's yells and screams,
Jenny careful, Jenny
private, weeps and dreams.

Elizabeth went native people say,
living hand to mouth, trashing
her home, land un-reclaimed,
returning to the way it always was.
But Jenny knew. This place was not a gift,
this place was always hers,
Elizabeth was close, but even she was
only halfway there.

3. For the taking

Take what you like, she wrote,
we six are sifting through her living room
not much to take so I
choose the shorter Oxford dictionary
volumes One and Two brand new
inscribed to Beth with love from Bob
rejected gift
(one of her many word-blind men).

For years I've never opened it
until today, when looking up the origin of
spook (unknown)
a corny picture, two red roses
on a vintage card falls out,
the message on the back, clearly addressed to me,
is in her round, unfaltering hand,
I'm standing here before you
I don't know what I bring
If you can hear the music
Why don't you help me sing?

Margaret Hollingsworth grew up in Sheffield and London. She visits London frequently and currently lives in Toronto. Formerly a professor of Creative Writing at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, she is primarily known as a playwright and has written for film and television and published a novel and collection of short stories. She is currently working on a poetry collection.

Mike Barlow : The Four Houses

I was born in a house of weapons,
the dank yawn of its hallway,
walls hung with mayhem:
rapier, broadsword, axe,
shellalegh, mace and pike,
the fixed grin of the hari-kari blade.
Or the blood-tang in the gun room,
the glint of a spent cartridge,
crosshair shadows in the attic.

I was weaned in a house of words.
They swaddled me, coddled me,
stood me up, cut me down to size,
coaxed me through my first steps,
let me fall. I stood back up again
alone, learned to pit my weight
against theirs, second-guessing
sugared syllables, blunt meanings,
needle-sharp insinuations.

I was trained in a house of mirrors.
Everywhere I went the world I saw
saw through me. My lack
reflected back from every angle.
So I learnt disguise, the beard,
camouflage of confidence,
smoke screen smiles, the frown's
parry, the slight shake of the head
you could take for yes, or if you wanted, no.

I live in a house of companionship.
The game of chance is played out here.
It brings me to my senses.
What there is to learn I learn from others.
What they pick up from me
I've no idea. We rub along
under the same roof, its sniper's attic,
obsolete accoutrements,
tricksy mirrors, armouries of words

Mike Barlow won the National Poetry Competition in 2006. He has published two collections, the first of which *Living on the Difference* (Smith/Doorstop) was short-listed for the Jerwood Aldeburgh prize. A pamphlet, *Amicable Numbers* (Templar 2008) was a Poetry Book Society pamphlet choice. His third collection *Charmed Lives* is due out from Smith/Doorstop in the spring of 2012.

Merryn Williams : Big game hunters

The zoo is open-air, and has no boundary;
you are welcome to stalk your quarry, and take photographs.
These animals eat, drink, mate and suffer in public;
home in, then, on your prize exhibit, the big beast.

It's female, good-looking of course, say under forty
(old flesh won't do). So go after her, start flashing,
catch her at all angles, cause discomfort, if possible,
stub out your cigarettes on her bare skin.

Anybody can vote, or blog. Your photographs
provoke endless discussion. Do you think she did it?
Is she looking her best, or not? Do you believe her
or him? To escape, she must flee to darkest Africa,

but you'll go after her. They're priceless, these pictures,
and what you've been through to get them! Splash past the flamingos,
alarm the grazing zebras, never stop chasing
that milk-white doe, whose horns are of pure gold.

Even if she dies all may not be lost. You could have her
stuffed, kept in a glass case at your favourite watering-hole,
and after a few drinks you could point proudly
and say, 'She squirmed a little. But I caught her'.

Merryn Williams was the founding editor of *The Interpreter's House*. Her latest work is *Effie: A Victorian Scandal* – the story of Ruskin's wife

Deborah Tyler-Bennett : Self, Dissolving

Which am I? Do I inhabit *Jasper-Ware* plaques
mythologizing life's events? Pretty
posthumous-prints, improbable, imagine fey-limbed boy
encountering bare-knuckled city!

Haydon and Severn caught me
(sketches dark as mourning brooches)
Which am I? Take harder look, eyes have it?
Something waylaid sidles past.

Imposing truths: Deathly life masks.

What of silhouettes, scarring
plain ground as a poem scars it?
Brown cut, pasted, corked features,
cravat's Byronic edge, its lava-cameo.

Fill colours as you go.

Which am I? Sawdust muffled street ballads,
hooves not engines. Across the *Heath*, gypsies arguing
the toss, brick-maker, pot boy, and the ladies, lap-
dog snappery, spun-lace fears.

Shadow-puppetry, candle's winding-
sheet, misted choleric Thames,
thumb smudge, breath vaporising
glass, oiled palms imprinting balustrade.

I'm ink, encountering pristine page.

In 1819 Keats wrote to Fanny Brawne that he felt himself to be 'dissolving'. The objects in this poem, from plaques to pictures, are all from Keats House, Hampstead.

Deborah Tyler-Bennett's first collection was *Clark Gable in Mansfield* (King's England, 2003). Her second, *Pavilion*, set in Brighton and the world of the dandy came out in 2010. 2011 saw the publication of *Revudeville* (King's England), and the chapbook *Mytton ... Dyer ... Sweet Billy Gibson* (Nine Arches Press). The poem above was written as a result of a Poetry Lives Here residency at Keats House, Hampstead, in 2010.

Martin Figura : Hair

She sat at the mirror and snipped
until all there was, was a shock
of blue-white scalp. She gathered
what she could from the debris
and placed it in a cup.

Something in the way he lifts it
from the mantelpiece suggests
emptiness, as if he were an actor
in a play.

Martin Figura : Bird

Sleeping with her was like holding a bird,
the soft beat of its frightened heart
in your palm.

Sometimes you left the window open
and she would look out, the breeze
running through her feathers

You spun honey onto a silver spoon
turned it over and over, measuring
the sweet weight of it.

Martin Figura's latest book is *Whistle* (Arrowhead Press) which won the Hamish Canham Prize 2010 and was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work 2010. Martin's previous book *Boring the Arse off Young People* is published by Nasty Little Press

Neil Curry : How it seemed to him

There was a pale moon
that night, as pale,
so it seemed to him,
as the necks
of young girls on the beach,
when they lift their hair
for the heat.

Neil Curry : Shades

Once it had been the colour
Of her parasol that caught his eye,
Its lining of the deepest indigo
Calling to mind an Italian night time sky;
Now the night time sky above Bellagio
Called to mind the colour
Of her parasol, covering
The world in deepest indigo.

Neil Curry's Selected Poems *Other Rooms* is published by Enitharmon Press.

Thomas Roberts : New World

For Anna

It happened in the heel of the night,
when the expanse of your mother's eyes
registered a stir in your awakening,
the two of us on top of the stopwatch
through hours which just seemed to stretch,
like, I imagine, the plains of Kansas.

When the hospital trip was inevitable,
we lurched from our chairs with the taxi horn
into miles of slow motion over speed bumps,
then stalled momentum until you appeared,
your face at once the colours of rhubarb
from the exertion and surprise of it all.

The frenzy dissipated to check-ups
carrying happenings from elsewhere,
but from those first moments of privacy,
as you blinked through a stretched yawn,
a charge like, I imagine, that of a farmer
shin-high in a thousand acres of corn.

Thomas Roberts is a poet based in London where he also works as a lawyer. He is originally from County Antrim in Northern Ireland.

Donald Atkinson : Herb Robert

Walking the cloy of the town off his feet,
he passed a tethered horse that envied him,
harrumphing trails of its hot breath over the wall.
Then a mother coming down the path with her child in a push-chair
slipped him a tired smile, while the infant
took him in steadily as they approached.
Chrysalis'd in its space-suit,
it seemed to look out at him
from fathomless deeps of certainty,
rocked in the swell of generations.

Must he himself
have once looked out like that?
What would it take
for him to feel the same certainty now?

He would have to shrink
to the span of a tiniest flower
held in the palm of her hand,
turned between finger and thumb:
so occupy her gaze,
be wholly beheld.

Donald Atkinson : Siblings

The white sheets flapping on the line
were a pure sacrament of the sun
they'd soaked up so much light;
but we reefed them in like sails,
to be shaken out between us
with the crack of a soft whip,
pulled straight by their corners,
folded with finger-and-thumb from left to right,
and walked across, into her steam-dimpled hands.

*Turn the mattress top-to-bottom-and-over,
smooth out the under-sheet, tuck it in,
plump up the pillows, spread the quilt,
and fold it back with the top sheet, ready.*

At each day's end,
and to our very last,
we're looking for a bed
she taught us how to make.

Donald Atkinson grew up at random, mainly in Sheffield and Enfield, and after university followed a career in teaching – mostly English & Youth Theatre, with a bash at headmastering now and then. His poetry was first published by Jon Silkin in STAND in 1985. Three years later he won both the Peterloo Poets and the Cheltenham Festival TLS poetry competitions, whose judges included Carol Ann Duffy, Tom Paulin & Fleur Adcock. He won the 1990 Aldeburgh Poetry Festival Prize for best first collection with *A Sleep of Drowned Fathers* (Peterloo). In 1994 he was awarded First Prize in the Sheffield Thursday competition, judged by E.A. Markham & Mimi Khalvati. He has published four more collections, all from ARC, the latest being *In Waterlight* (2004).

Martine Osborne : A poem to my future self...

I wanted to be alone in the forest.
I went there just for that reason.
To get away from the crowd. The people.
Not just the difficult ones. The annoying.
But the ones I love, the ones who love me.

I wanted to be alone in the forest
Not to see a soul.
But then I saw you.

I was surprised at first. Surprised
Not to be irritated. Not to find
Your presence unwelcome.
You were smiling,
You looked pleased to see me.
You looked, in fact, a bit like me.
So, actually, I was pleased to meet you
And you had something to give me.

I hadn't thought I needed anything.
I'd come into the forest with nothing,
I'd come to be alone.
But you gave me something I needed.

I'm not sure what it was now,
Perhaps it was only a smile.
But it was then that I noticed the table.

It was a big, old oak table standing in the middle of the forest.
And there was food on the table and something to drink.
Something I'd never tasted before.
But it was fizzy and delicious
And we ate and drank
And then – I'm not sure what happened
To you. But I went home.

I went home to those I love. And
To those who love me.
And that, I think, was the first good day.

Martine Osborne is an Anglican priest with a ministry in London and has written for many years. She has published three novels, *Mother Love*, *Baby Love* and *Getting Even* (Piatkus Books) and a number of children's books – most recently *Hamilton's Hats* (Macmillan, 2007) which was illustrated by Axel Scheffler.

Martyn Crucefix : Ivy tunnel at Kenwood

Its lushness aspires to the poisonous gloss
of the nightshade threatening Brandham Hall

so no bread of life though the shape it makes
is a hollowed-out loaf that forces grown-ups

to dip their heads to duck not to flirt
with the apparent hovering impenetrable dark

that hangs where angels might be supposed –
instead dusty greys claw at thinning hair

and terrify children for a few years at least
though return now and its squat shape seems

no more than a nose-tickling claustrophobia
its train-set scale hardly merits more

than a second glance as our children grow tall
making their own way to bright talkative space

Martyn Crucefix has won numerous prizes including a major Eric Gregory award and a Hawthornden Fellowship. He has published 5 collections, including *An English Nazareth* (Enitharmon, 2004) and *Hurt* (Enitharmon, 2010). His translation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* was published by Enitharmon in 2006, shortlisted for the Popescu Prize for European Poetry Translation and hailed as "unlikely to be bettered for very many years" (Magma).

Jeremy Page : Visiting Anita Wronski in Berlin

We weren't invited
but after the distance we'd trekked
through snow the like of which
they'd never dreamed
she could hardly turn us back.

And so we stepped into
the welcoming glow, all
stamping feet, rubbing hands
and catching breath
after a mere half hour
in the ice-bound city,
and Anita greeting us
like her longest lost cousins,
grasping us to the stove-like warmth
of her breast and serving us
runny scrambled eggs
and schinken, with heavy slabs
of thick black German bread.

And the girls come back to life,
sensation returns to fingers, toes,
eyes shine, while I sip hot, black coffee
and outside the pavements
grow heavier and heavier with snow.

Anita Wronski is a café in Prenzlauer Berg.

Jeremy Page's most recent collection of poems is *In and Out of the Dark Wood* (HappenStance 2010). His translations of Catullus's Lesbia poems were published by the Ashley Press as *The Cost of All Desire* (2011).

Robert Nisbet : Ella Fitzgerald Fancied Our English Teacher

No, not the other way round. *She'd fancied him.*
And me and Mavis knew.

That year we did *Of Mice and Men* for 'O' level
and we gave Sir hoolie. Me and Mavis would start it,
Sir, Sir, what's a cathouse, sir? And he'd smile
his wandering smile, *Isn't it past your bedtime, girls?*
Even Moran the Moron, we'd stir him up, old Moron
would start on anything. In *Of Mice and Men*,
the swamper's lost a hand, has a stump of wrist,
and Moron got a week's-worth of double meanings
from that stump. And Sir would smile, he was floating.
Moran, leave your nattering, boy.

Then once, we'd been to see *Macbeth*
and Sir drove me and Mavis home. He played
those Ella tapes, oh God that husky voice,
and we knew. So next time Moron took the piss
- *Sir, what's this mean about the Vaseline?* -
Sir smiled, wasn't flustered, and me and Mavis knew,
knew he was off there, that husky voice and him,
bewitched, bothered and bewildered, you might say.
Sir's Manhattan Island.
No grotty schoolkids there.

Robert Nisbet had 100 short stories published between 1973 and 2004 and has had 50 poems in magazines in the years since. His collection, *Merlin's Lane*, is forthcoming from Prolebooks.

Helen Ivory : The Family at Night

We were rag-dolls after school
and passed long winter evenings like this:
father in his armchair with an unlit pipe,
mother in the kitchen pretending to eat,
my sister and I with our small occupations.

We saw little with our button eyes
and spoke even less with our stitched up mouths.
We played at playing till it was time for bed
when mother sewed our eyelids down
so we could get a good night's rest.

We always woke as our human selves
to find the downstairs rooms had altered too.
A chair unstuffed, a table's legs all wrong,
and, that one time, kittens gone from their basket;
the mother's bone-hollow meow.

Helen Ivory : Dinner and Dancing with Mr Halfpenny's Cat

I see the dead walk past like a cine-projection
from the window of my childhood house:
Mr Halfpenny with his cat on a leash,
taking her just as far as the corner;
old Bert with his crooked back
and the impossible weight of his shopping.

I am twelve years old and I have padded out
my bra to fit the second-hand ball-gown
bought from the hospice fete.
It is Sunday again. I watch the corner
for my grandmother – the steamed-pudding in her arms
and see the street flicker as she comes into view.

I make my entrance to suitable music
and the dead all sit on hard-back chairs,
some dolls and bears placed there, to make up the numbers.
After dinner it appears my dance-card is full;
I take to the floor with Mr Halfpenny's cat
as he shadows us slowly at the end of the leash.

Helen Ivory's third Bloodaxe collection is *The Breakfast Machine*. She is an editor for The Poetry Archive and edits the webzine Ink Sweat and Tears. She is also a visual artist and regularly posts new work on her blog: <http://www.helenivory.co.uk/>

James Norcliffe : FIN

from a sequence called Poème Noir

Finally FIN drags a shroud
of darkness over the body
sprawled on the wet stones.

Moments before that FIN had
flicked a contemptuous butt
over the parapet and into the river.

Now FIN brings the music to a stop.
Strings hover like blowflies,
intensify to a whine then die
as FIN makes us stand in the light
reach for each other and begin again.

It's hard now to remember those
first moments before the shadows
arrived, when the car was as green
as a cucumber in a cool green morning
pulling on to a tree-lined driveway;
the black dog lolling in the sun,
looking up to sniff catharsis in the air
long, long before the credits rolled.

James Norcliffe is a New Zealand poet. He has published six collections of poetry, most recently *Villon in Millerton* (AUP). He has also published a collection of short stories and number of fantasy novels for young readers, most recently the award-winning *The Loblolly Boy* published in 2010 in the US as *The Boy Who Could Fly* (Egmont USA) and its sequel *The Loblolly Boy & The Sorcerer*. His work has appeared in *The Literary Review*, *the Cincinnati Review*, *The Iowa Review* and many other journals.

Leah Fritz : Michal at the window

Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. - 2 Samuel, 6:16

Pan to Michal at a window
her shadow falling.
(Does David look up?)
Voice-over: Lord knows
the hidden thoughts of women...

Fade to a younger Michal
watching Jonathan dance
to David's harp
she in the shadows
of her father's joy.

David the hero aiming his shot
to fell Goliath and Jonathan
in one motion. Cut to David
playing the harp as the old king
dies contentedly.

Under Michal's window the ark
of the covenant passes
and David plays the cymbals
freeing his legs to dance
a soldier's triumph.

Is the shadow of the Lord
who blessed the slaughter
of Goliath's avengers
that general twilight
which obscures her own?

Camera on the ghost of Saul
at Michal's side, remembering
how David seduced
them all, save Michal.
Close-up

on her face in shadow.
Cut. Nightfall. By candle-light
soldiers guard
the tent of the Ark
of the Covenant.

She who despises may not enter,
but neither shall David,
who waits outside.
The Lord gives his word
to Solomon, the tender child.

Since her arrival on these shores in 1985, New York born writer, **Leah Fritz**, has had four collections of her poems published in Britain. Her next volume, *Whatever Sends the Music into Time: New and Selected Poems*, will be published by Salmon in 2012.

Ruth Bidgood : All Manner of Things

There was no-one to be seen.
The long lane led to silent houses,
an ancient garden-wall straggled over
by greenery, red-lit by apples- all still,
all plunged into midday depth,
fullness, of sun.

Stone steps into shade
felt like movement waking, as they climbed
to the churchyard's wide sunny circle
bordered by shadow, aged graves aslant
as if tipping into sleep- and at last
soft sound -swish and clink of an unseen river
in trees below sanctuary at the silent church.

This place, forgotten in a wrinkle
of a small country's mountains, felt
as though it could hold encircled the life,
through millennia after millennia, of a world.
Tectonic plates had shiggled and slid,
continents parted and joined, ice ages come and gone.
A long-dying sun burning on towards doom
seemed here in September to cherish
and be cherished.
Like the whisk of warm grass on skin
a hardly-formed thought brushed by-
might everything so embraced
indeed, ultimately, be well?

Ruth Bidgood's most recent collection, *Time Being* (Seren, 2009), won the Roland Mathias Prize for Literature and was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. She lives in Mid-Wales.

Alice Major : The muse of universes

Once in a trillion years
the muse of universes
claps her hands. And, with that shock
of light, reverses

an aeon of drift, dilution,
the outward-rolling wave
of dark and the illusion
of end times.

A new draft, she orders
and the universe erupts
into rhyme, fields and forces
echoing. She rebuts

formlessness, sparks stanzas
from an alphabet of particles,
spells out what matters, what
radiates, what tickles

the fancy into galaxies
with gravity's feather pen.
She unrolls the scroll of space,
says, *There. Now try again.*

"The Muse of universes" takes off from 'brane theory' and the idea that the big bang may be born from the repeated collisions of two branes that collide, slowly separate and then re-collide.

Alice Major : The jeweller god

Out there, off-centre in Centauri,
a dim diamond sun is set
in the deep kimberlite of space.
Its core of transmuting carbon
crystallizes slowly, carat by carat,
under gravity's contracting purgatory.

Other stars end grimly in an iron limbo
or collapse to a nothingness so intense
it pulls the black cloth of space-time as a shroud
around them. But a few, the rare elect,
shrink to this white-dwarf twinkle
perfected for the god's ring finger.

Alice Major has published nine collections of poetry and a collection of essays: *Intersecting Sets: A poet looks at science*, recently released by the University of Alberta Press. The two poems presented here come from a sequence *The set of all gods*. Three of her collections have been shortlisted for the Pat Lowther Award (given annually to a book of poetry by a Canadian woman) and she received the prize for her collection *The Office Tower Tales*. She has served as president of the League of Canadian Poets and as the first poet laureate of her home city, Edmonton, Alberta. <http://www.alicemajor.com>

Shanta Acharya : Prayer

Praise the sun, powerful yet unwavering
in its journey across the sky, light pulsing
through clouds, mists; life sustaining.

Praise the earth as it moves on its axis;
inner and outer cores holding on to each other,
partners on the dance floor, steady as they go.

Praise the stars in the constellation
for knowing their place, yet blessing all migrations;

Praise the moon always true, waxing waning,
constant in its daily transformation.

If the sun and moon should doubt,
the world would immediately go out.

Praise day and night, mere limits of our perception;
death, a release from our earth-bound vision;
after death there is resurrection, union –

Praise plants sun-facing, light-changing,
breathing in carbon, green deities in meditation,
giving us oxygen; expecting nothing in return.

Praise water in all its forms, giving taking -
glaciers, seas, rivers, lakes, rain, flood, tsunami,
steam, sweat, blood streaming through continents of bodies.

Praise the sky, air, ether; let the universe arouse our minds
to worlds beyond our thoughts, words, deeds.

Praise every species in our planet
masterpieces each of evolution -
rich, rare, wild, keepers of infinite secrets.

Praise the eye of the guest – clear, observant.
Praise the giver of life – almighty, benevolent.

Shanta Acharya was born in India , educated at Oxford and Harvard, lives in London . An internationally published poet, the latest of her five collections is *Dreams That Spell The Light* (Arc Publications, UK ; 2010). www.shantaacharya.com