

Fun Poems from Wales

Dylan Jones who has a poem in the Welsh issue of *Agenda* and also in the Welsh online supplement here.

Gardener

Each day I rise to murder the living;
with blade & knife
and flaying yellow twine
I march through continents of gardens
creating a world in my own image.
Small, unseen things
flee or are broken;
their unique world I tear apart
unremittingly.
Are you needful?
Are nettles rising in rashes
across heaped, unbroken wilderness?
Does the bramble push
toward an unchallenged dominion?
Call me. Evenings are best.
The Slayer, The Impaler,
The Creator of Empires,
Genghis of Suburbia.
The man who waits to satisfy your desire
is daily for hire.

Redstart

Mr Quiver, Mr Foxtail,
in black highwayman's mask
edged in white – stand and deliver!

Fly-fishing on fence-posts,
dashing under derelict eaves –
your wife is the drab one

she lacks your fizzle,
your razzamatazz, your drama;
only the tails match.

Dapper Mr Slate-Back
with your under-water whistle –
wheet-wheet, whee-tic-tic

Buzzin Fly

How you talk!
The same phrase
over & over
no commas or stops -
only the relief of altitude
takes you away
till your droning
is only a hint bordering
the silence.

Master
of persistence – taming
the relentless task
round & round
with no trace of being glum -
if inks or smokes
could trail you
what crazy insistent spirographs
you'd notch up – what
remorseless tapestry of knots!
Buzzin fly- the only question is 'Why?'

Idris Caffrey's work appears in the Welsh issue of *Agenda*.

The Not So Obvious Welshman

I am an exile,
speaking a foreign language
in a strange country
where I've found work.
I didn't take with me
the tenor trills
of a male voice choir
or the skills
of running with a ball.
I never mined the black seams
or warned of hell
from a dusty old pulpit.
I was never a farmer
scratching away
at the thin soil
on the rolling hills.
But I am Welsh,
I am Welsh!
Cut me and see
the poem running
through my veins.

Eating Welsh Cakes in Newport

I sit on the cathedral wall
staring out over the bay
where the pale sun
is playing games with the sea.

The city sprawls below me
but it is not these scenes
that fill my mind.
It is the Welsh cakes -
shop-bought, dry and stale,
nothing like I remember,
the taste of so much
that has changed

Marc Harris's work appears in the Welsh issue of *Agenda*.

The Winning Score

For Shane Williams

The wing's feet
stitch a seam to the line –
zip-fast, jinking run,
linking
unzipping the crowd
who,
shrouded in the flames of passion
fashion a roaring pocket of sound.

Note: Shane Williams, a Welsh international winger, lit up the world of rugby union in 2008 when he was named International Rugby Board player of the year. Rugby Union is an intrinsic part of Welsh culture. He has become an icon of the sport.

The lines in the poem are written to mimic the mesmeric, sidestepping action Shane often displays when he scores a try.

John Barnie has three poems in the Welsh issue of *Agenda*.

About the Poet

Let's publish his
leftovers, somebody said, and
call it Gleanings; or
Scrapings, said a second; what

about Peelings, suggested
a third, or Droppings; a thin
book, like stragglers in the forest
limping among trees after

the Grand Army had passed
banging its drums, leaving
village ruins and old
women in rutted country roads.

BAARRPP!

BAARRPP! goes the Patient
Appointment board on the wall
commanding Ieuan Evans to proceed

to Doctor Griffiths, Room Eleven;
BAARRPP! for Nia Morris;
in between each call the board is blank

as if contemplating darkness,
or a message trickles across its brow
D.o.n.'t. f.o.r.g.e.t. t.o. g.i.v.e. y.o.u.r. n.a.m.e...

BAARRPP! it wakes up with a jerk
for Adam Connolly...; most look healthy,
and that girl's pretty; but some

may already harbour Dead Sea fruit within
and will taste its ashes when the doctor
reads from his on-screen notes;

BAARRPP! now it's me; my name
in ruby dripping fire for all to see,
as I lurch up quickly from my seat.

Duncan Bush has two poems in the Welsh issue of *Agenda*.

Men's Room

The beautiful stalls
And cubicles of the Los
Angeles Public

Library (slabbed gray
Marble, with good chrome fittings)
Bespeak not grandeur

But proletarian
Worth, and date from an age when
Knowledge could still be

Found in books, and came
A right. (Though why has no one
Yet written a book

Or lapidary
Monograph on *Great Toilets*
And Urinals? – Or,

Men's Lavatories
Of Europe and the U.S.:
A Personal Guide?

If ever they do,
Those of the Los Angeles
Public Library

Should claim a place – with
Tasteful full-colour plates
In illustration

Of the lovely light
That slants through the frosted glass
On mornings of heat

When it's cool in here
Among marble, porcelain
And trickling water. . .)

West 86th Street

A style I've always
Admired: that of elderly
Well-off Jewish men

Who live on New York's
Upper West Side, near the Park,
In tall apartment

Buildings with doormen
And foyers and residents'
Committees, and who

Wouldn't set a foot
On the sidewalk in winter
Without first donning

A good overcoat,
Trilby, tasselled scarf, and
Taking leather gloves

(one unworn, and gripped
lightly in the other prior
to pulling it on,

urbane, urban - just
pausing to assess the day,
the street, the city).