

Poetry Series

Gwilym Williams
- poems -

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Gwilym Williams(1950ish)

poetry published in *iota*, *pulsar*, *poetry salzburg*, *ink-sweat-and-tears*, *the recusant*, *poetry monthly*, *bank street writers* and various forward press imprints and elsewhere, *jbwb poetry* and short story competition winner (3+ times) , Poets Against War Poem of the Month, etc., etc.. My poetry blog is at (a Poetry Kit selected site) .

Ahmad Nadalian

Ahmad Nadalian
Citizen of Poloor
And its fishless rivers,
Carver of the fish
Of the Horaz River
And the Caspian Sea,
Is walking
Through the Damavand
Filling his basket
With stones.

What he hopes
To draw
With his chisel
And hammer

Is your attention.

Gwilym Williams

Ants (Austria 1914)

Cutting summer grass
Egger-Lienz peasants
with long curved blades of
steel flashing fresh
in the summertime sun
releasing the grass
clover and wild-flower smells
and the dark dank smells of earth
when one swished point
grazes the hidden nest
of ants -
and leaves
its scar upon the ground.

Some stop work
to see them running
crazily around.

The rest
swish on -
bend their knees
dip their shoulders.

Gwilym Williams

Cold Sweet Tea

Boys, who can barely write, kneel
deep down, miles out to sea beneath
black-ribbed sands, before
the coal-face and pneumoconiosis.
Stripped to the waist, mine's as thin
as a pit prop; a crab-shadow clawing
for coal to make a rich man richer.
From time to time he swallows
cold sweet tea from a tin,
observed by a sleepy canary
and a blind pit pony in the light
of a Davy Lamp. When the clock
strikes I prepare his sink;
water, scrubbing brush, soap.
Listen for his footfall. The house,
within spitting distance of
the shaft, is going to its knees;
coming apart at its dusty seams.
Buckled and sagging, it creaks and
groans with each subsiding night.

Gwilym Williams

Crows

It's Fall
and from the north
come waves of carrion crows,
jet black
and glossy
flapping in for the Winter -
all set to crow-crowd
the Zentral Friedhof
and the Tiergarten.

There's a modest wringing of wings
and some peering from high windows
by hooded brothers
who like to make a little fuss
on observing newcomers
marching over their ground
their stone grey beaks
relentlessly turning soggy leaves
in misty parks and gardens
poking around
in the Vienna fogs
prodding for this and that.

Gwilym Williams

Deus Absconditus

Sunday in Wales

and small white clouds are drifting over
the bleating sheep grazed on the hills
like prayers on the way to heaven.

The pessimistic metaphor R S Thomas (poet)
is preaching from the black pulpit -
painted black by his own hand:

'The Supreme Being will doubtless
fail to join us. Deus Absconditus.'

His flock has dwindled to a faithless few;
gloomy country folk with nothing more to do.

The hymns will be softly sung
and strangled in the wind's knot
before the church gate.

The sermon will be short
and unmemorable.

The muttered prayers
will barely move the grim lips.

Not one voice will reach those white clouds.

Gwilym Williams

Dyl' An' The Cat

It's late
but I see them now -

Dylan -
corduroy trousers
turtle-neck
brogues

breathing beer fumes
like a dragon

smoking
Players' cigarettes

Caitlin -
barefoot
and carolling
wild Irish songs
polka dress
dancing
in the seashore breeze

yes, I see them -

swaying
now along the boathouse path
under
the leeward leaning woods
along
the moonlit water

'home
this night
with happy hearts'

Gwilym Williams

Masai Warrior

Walking in the bush
on the red earth
wrapped in a red blanket
the Masai Warrior is at peace
with nature;
high forehead,
proud happy strong,
smile like a sunrise,
many wives and laughing children.

Behind him run messengers
with bulging eyes -
full of holy books and good advice.

The new road
will soon be rolled out
like the extensile tongue of the chameleon
to thunder
with jeeps and trucks
bringing -
cattle ranchers
ostrich farmers
genetic-crop growers
a shanty town
with fast food
a bar
and a gas station.

Gwilym Williams

Mavericks

In the lunatic asylum where I live
there are no mirrors or clocks
and it's not so easy to cheat at cards.

I shuffle the deck
and palm the ace of spades -
hidden in my cloud
of carcinogenic smoke.

Tomorrow I'm playing Groucho Marx
who listens to unseen violin music
and spends his nights
at the opera.

With Groucho I always deal
straight
from the top.

When I'm playing God
I leave
the dealing to Him.

He deals
as he likes.

Gwilym Williams

Old Fox

Old fox, hard as nails,
thin, arthritic, rheumatic,
septic eruptions on sore feet,
keen nose and sorry bag of effluvium and entrails
up for the erectile, hard frost, and somewhere to go.

Lakeside path, snowdrop, primrose,
daffodil, an early bee,
an ermine's fur turning brown,
an effusive gushing of butterflies,
gold-finches, flycatchers.

Two seasons in equilibrium.

The rest is fusion.

Gwilym Williams

Old Man

Old man
fringed now in your blue land
long under the sea's spell
stubborn in your old stone house
clamped to the coastal cliff like a limpet
away from the madness of the multitude
can you recall a people
racing south on rafts
from an island's rumbling wrath
to seek
these honeyed hills of Xaghra
and build this Temple of the Giants?

In these ambitious ruins
amid these giant limestone blocks
carved with cunning patterns
do I see an ancient poet's verse?

Gwilym Williams

Old Soldier

There are long
heatwave days
when nothing happens.

An old man
with pale eyes
in a crumbling head
sits stiffly silent
on a wooden bench
at a wooden table
in a clearing in the woods;
picnicless,
expressionless;
a blank page.

An old soldier
barely alive -
quietly sitting.

Gwilym Williams

Orwell

We seem to
getting there -
slowly and surely.

Consider my dog
Orwell -
man's best friend
today
computer-chipped
behind his ear
in front of my very nose
before my very eyes
with a chip
the size of a grain of rice

- no longer
able to go astray.

Gwilym Williams

Pouring The Poetry

The poetry is like tea.
I serve it strong
or weak;
as you like.

With
or without
sugar
saccharine
or acid
by the moonshaped slice.

With
or without
a spoon.

In the big cracked mug
of the trucker's mate
or the rose-petal chalice
of the spinster.

It's all a fresh outpouring.

Best drink it hot.

Gwilym Williams

Servus Servorum Dei

By candle-light
moon-visaged and sedulous
in a deserted scriptorium
amid the dusty scrolls
there works alone a ghostly monk,
sedition with scrivener's palsy,
scratching his sempiternal script
with a dry quill
onto the pitted parchment,
senza sestertius.
May his shadow never grow less.

In midnight's fog
scullion soldiers work in stony silence
to the clanking of spades
and the shaking of shackles.

At sunrise the sharp-faced sexton
will toll the bell.
Servus servorum dei.

Gwilym Williams

Telling Directions

R S Thomas is it?
Famous poet?
We're Chapel here...
Well my husband is.
'nglish he is, that man Thomas;
Lived in Cardiff I believe; once
Painted a church as black as night.
I can't say I liked him very much;
Mind you, I haven't actually read him,
But I've heard things you see.
Welsh, you say? And lived here?
We're Chapel here...
No need for windows in a chapel,
The buggers can't read, he used to say.
And him a priest.
Nominated?
For the Nobel Prize?
I suppose, you could ask
in the village post office -
She's...'nglish.

Gwilym Williams

The First Time...

Mother died quietly
at peace and in bed long before
the four children were born.

Suddenly she found herself
on a new plane of existence
in a new dimension beyond gravity
formlessly floating somewhere
looking down on her own body sleeping
and her own mother weeping
and the doctor gone.

This so moved mother
that she immediately slipped back
into her physical body
and came back to life.

This was in the days
before computer games.

Gwilym Williams

The Monster

A monster has appeared
in the woods
a mechanical bird
the yellow crane
poking its greedy neck
through the dense canopy
its big beak
searching for food.

The crows rush to investigate
black policemen
flying in from all directions.

After a few minutes
two report back
the monster will be rendered
harmless
a human being is already
grappling with the controls.

Gwilym Williams

Tommy The Cat

Tommy came through snow and ice
one morning recently to place a mouse
upon the step - I think it was for me -

He placed it there with dreadful care
for the mouse was dead you see
and then he licked the mouse all over
as if to say: you'll see it's clean
and then he went away...

What could I do to say 'thank you'
to Tommy for this kindly thought
for when he comes around next time
what will he think if there is naught

Upon the step where the mouse was placed
and so I raced off to the shop
and came right back with a rattle box
marked 'Croccantini con Manzo'

I poured those nibbles into a tin
and left it there on the step for him.
He came along the very next day.
He ate the lot. And went on his way.

Gwilym Williams

Toy Soldiers

I barracked my soldiers in
A Quality Street tin
And every so often I took them out
And on the floor I marched them about.
They were hollow
And made with tin and lead
And poisonous paint in gold and red.
Their arms and legs and heads fell off
And in the end only one was left.
This was the drummer
And he marched alone
For a few weeks longer
Then he too was gone.

I buried them unceremoniously
In the top field
Beneath the old tree
And when I got back home
I took out the Meccano Set
And built a bridge with that instead.

Gwilym Williams

Walking With Bukowski

I guess that was buk's last job
honkin' them over
the harbor freeway
crossin' them over
by san remo
his warty eyes blinkin'
in the blindin' steel and gas
crawlin' all day
on the freeway
jammin' up the place

say, you might read a passage to me
from buk's new book
the last night of the earth...

you'd like the feel...
the black and red cover...
the acid-free paper...

Gwilym Williams

We Sing The Body Electric

What say you my reader there
under this electric air
that sings between us
and carries my immortal words
and rhymes
over and above the songs of
trilling birds and
through mysterious space
and time;
are you and I the one and same
in some unholy supernatural game
enjambéd just as those singing birds
whose words each dawning
trill the skies?
My song this day is sung for you -
you who seem to be
as much a part of me
as all those
trilling birds
and humming bees.

Gwilym Williams

Who Speaks?

Who speaks for the schizophrenics;
those poor creatures inhabiting
the shadowy world between reality
and unreality roaming the cream
corridors of the world and its
mental institutions?

Who speaks for the forgotten ones
in the window-barred electric-shock
world of the psychiatric ward?

Who speaks for the blank-eyed pacing
in the corner and the grinning ones
with bees in their heads gibbering
and twiddling in their moon-mad
existence?

Who speaks for the dangerous ones
tucked-up in their strait-jackets?

Tell me dear voice - Who speaks?

Gwilym Williams