

A quiet read in the country.

A country field; long dry grass stretches to a river
framed by a dense tree line,
silhouetted by a grey cloudy sky,
bare, no colour, no animals, no farm workers.

Young soldier, outstretched, leaning on his elbow,
reading.

Machine-gun, steel grey, ammunition belt loaded,
helmet upturned, ready.
The book, held in his left hand, steadied in the right;
a novel, scientific, poetry?
No one else visible, comrades out of sight.

Nothing happens often until suddenly
the foliage erupts,
illiterate peasants, used to hunger and hardship,
hurtle forth,
and rhyming words give way to the rat tat tat of an
urgent present.

He may never see himself pictured
on the wall of the Saigon war museum
amongst the debris of violence,
a quiet figure with a white book in a gloved hand

Rye Fishing Harbour

The high tide surge disturbs from bow to stern
to wake the boats from dreams of sleep in mud,
a salt sting breeze sweeps out the morning mist
from ropes and floats and pots and crusted crates,
the filching gulls hold court with haughty sway
on bollards turned with hawsers tightly stretched,
a kindling sun lights up the rising day:
the fishers slip their hands in weathered gloves

THE PK POETS

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ABOUT GEOFF MARSHALL

Geoff lives on the south coast of England and
enjoys reading and writing poetry in the
sunshine under the shade of a fig tree on his
balcony overlooking the river and watching the
fishing boats ply their way to the sea.

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the poet or the publisher please email;
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THE PK POETS SECOND SERIES

#16 Geoff Marshall



Simmons Quay Rye

Under the Sun

So -

Nihil sub sole novum

There is nothing new under the sun.

No new writing, rhythms, forms or style.

No new motives, actions, thoughts or dreams.

Nothing new.

Well -

What is the sound of a tree

falling in a forest

where there are no sentient beings?

Or several trees,

one after another,

at differing intervals

(thump, thump, thump)?

Vibrations seeking

an ear,

an interpreting brain,

reverberating,

again and again

until a sentient being appears.

Ordered occurrence in a standing world.

Fluid experience in a living world.

The wail of a new born.

The first love passion.

The anguish of loss.

Singulariter singulis senserit

Newly felt each time.

The Year of the Rat

In Saigon they were celebrating the Year of the Rat,
intermittently construed as the Year of the Mouse,

and while seeking a rat emblem I explained
to a young Vietnamese bookseller that a rat was

essentially a large mouse, and
as she grasped this crucial feature,

her eyes gleamed, she bounced from foot to foot,
and she giggled joyfully.

Now this joyful jumping is also seen
in rats learning to play hide-and-seek, where

not only do they seek, and evade detection,
they do so gleefully: they have fun, they tease the
gamer.

But to successfully play this game a rat
must first develop a theory of mind; understand

the intentions, beliefs, and perspectives
of the human gamer, and with this playful learning

it could then evolve a smarter mind,
(and they are pretty damned clever already), as,

in a discussion on climate change,
and humans' maladaptive relationship with the world,

the experts concluded, (given we don't change and the
planet implodes)
the species most likely to survive and dominate is

the rat. So as we humans scourge the earth and burn
the skies celebrate,
sip your champagne, watch and enjoy,

as rats have fun and gleefully play,
and the Year of the Rat becomes the World of the
Rat.

Santé._

Being ordinary

It used to run through my mind,
from time to time,
why this woman of mine,
would spend a lifetime,
with someone so ordinary,
like me.

Then it dawned on me,
and I began to see,
(and this is the key)
I never actually feel
like someone so ordinary,
with her.

A Changing Light

I have many books of poetry,
some bought by me,
some by my mother-in-law,
an English teacher,
who read to me Larkin and Hughes,
and I told her of Elytis, Cavafy and Ritsos,
and how I liked that they wrote about Greece,
which had sun, sea and colour,
but she was from the English North,
which didn't,
and she thought the grey North
more fundamental,
although she didn't know then
about Greek debt and austerity
and that life could be grim
even while colourful.