

We Were Not The Only Ones

to jostle along paths walled with woods
or through open blades of meadows
fear creeping with pointed teeth
devouring hope
air swollen with gunfire
bodies restructuring landscapes
in the amber wash of fading sunlight

we were not the only ones
listening to the clack-clacking of tracks
suffocating sardined in small enclosures
fighting for window space
gulping inhalations of passing landscapes
then crumpled like paper bags
at our final destination
in wind-whipped nights

we were not the only ones
to feel the bite of betrayal and jackbooted
hatred hear screams reach like imploring
hands
then turn to ashy voices
borne away on the wind like smoking ghosts
as silence stretched her legs
and the world grew quietly
monochrome against a vivid pink sky

we were not the only ones

THE PK POETS

The PK Poets is a series of free to print poetry leaflets highlighting the poetry of a single poet. It is intended to be a sample introduction to the work of a poet.

The Poetry Kit is a free online resource for poets listing competitions, events, open floor events, online and print magazines. <https://www.poetrykit.org/>

For information about the PK List a free critique list <https://www.poetrykit.org/pkl/index.htm>

ABOUT KRISS NICHOL

Since 2000 Kriss Nichol's poetry and prose has appeared in numerous small press and literary magazines, anthologies and online, including 5 issues of *Southlight* and 4 issues of *Open Mouse*, Poetry Scotland's online magazine. She has won prizes, been shortlisted and Highly Commended for her writing, and was commissioned to write a poem for Wigtown Book Festival Sept 2016.

In 2019 four of her poems appeared in online poetry magazine *LUNCH (Poetry Kit)*, one was published in a peace anthology by Dove Tales, and another in Scottish PEN's magazine *Penning*. In 2020 she was published in *Dawn Treader edition 049* and has 2 poems and a short story published in *Lovely Nelly : Ship of Hope* (ed Vivien Jones). She has also self-published three poetry pamphlets, *The Language of Crows 2012*, *Between Lands 2013*, *A Suggestion of Bones 2017*, 2 novels, *In Desolate Corners*, *Shadows Crouch 2012*, *Monsoons and Marigolds 2017*, and a sequence of haibun, *Ancient Anchors*, is due out September 2020.

Copies of this poetry leaflet can be downloaded and distributed free of charge provided no change is made to the content. Copyright of the contents remains with the writer.

For further details, to make comment, or to contact the poet or the publisher please email; info@poetrykit.org

THE PK POETS SECOND SERIES

#19 Kriss Nichol



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Wild Salmon

They come like frayed angels through
textured light
from streams shocked with stones
and stirring shadows
searching for a heaving space between
non-spaces
in the wet rhythms of the river.

Primeval pulses more powerful
than tides
draw elemental forces beyond
fluid containment
a freshwater freefall through water
shimmering
with pearly scales and celestial fins.

Above, veils of white or pleated water
and surfaces
stippled by rainfall, below, submerged
slithering
in the annual egg-laying; an act of finality
or requiem
for the wreckage of the spent and dying.

The future
lies with the eggs, filled with stories
of promise
that take a lifetime in the telling.

The Language of Crows

Words are a clothing of sorts
but my coat begins to unravel,
threads sliding through my fingers,
collecting in small, unseen corners,

stretching back to my beginning.
Half-forgotten memories turn over
and over in the anxious dark
and familiar smells twitch, dangling

like fish hooks, ripping my heart.
I try to separate the past into neat
piles but get tangled up in frayed
edges lingering in the ebb and flow

of conversations. I snatch, try
to hold on, but they disintegrate
on touch. And yet...
there's beauty in destruction,

in dark edges of melancholy and blood
behind the door, in black feathered wings
striking my cheek and talons tearing
at my throat. I can't sing—I speak

the language of crows.

Just a Guy

in a cell heavy with shadows
cold dread drips from your brow
tides of fear lap against your body
here the wind has no teeth to eat
the reek of sour skin as you wait
broken beaten defeated.

you remember leaving for another cellar
on a day that would have changed history
with thorn-studded blood the wet
mouth of afternoon on your face
the ache of winter in its caress
you marvelled at the height of sky

now they take you outside your legs liquid with
fear
climb the scaffold feel the punch of ice on your
skin
the noose sways in a bluster jeering crowds
fist the air eagerly await the dismemberment
you leap away fly for a few seconds then land
your neck broken deny them their sport

your name? everything that went wrong

Responsibility

the house gasps
dust won't settle
nor walls stay silent
but the world
is writing a poem
in another room