

This Is Not a Poem About Offerings

This isn't a poem about a deserted beach
or crashing waves on a stony shore.
This is not about listening to the distant cry of gulls
or relishing the sticky feeling of sauce on my fingers
as I eat fish and chips wrapped in newspaper.
This isn't about looking south toward the mountains
that glow pink as they reclaim the setting sun.

Nor is this about the time we stood next to the coffin,
waiting for the monk to model our next move.
Or how thick incense smoke caught in our throats,
traveling into our sinuses to create stinging tears.
It's not about how Richard pulled a coffin nail out with
his teeth
while our son held tight to the tray of steamed buns and
lotuses
or how our daughter turned away and sobbed "Grandpa"
as I stared at the coins placed over his eyes.

And this is certainly not about how mum was in love
with her Devilled Sausages
or how she would cut them up to resemble knuckles,
their pink squishy meat forcing its way out of their skins.
It's not about her calling us to the table
where we sat with plates of overcooked meat in front of
us,
soft white bread already buttered, ready to mop up the
leftovers;
pungent puddles of brown sauce on our plates.

This is not about my father standing in our garden
or his khaki trousers smudged with soil.
He does not look out over the fence at the setting sun or
bend down low
To gently poke holes ready for this season's beans.
I've never seen him use a handkerchief to wipe the sweat
off his brow
or wave me over so he can present me with his offerings
of carrots, tomatoes, or pears.

It's not about any of these images, in particular.
It's about my life and the places and people in it
and how it is all tied together by rituals.
It's about the fear of losing those we love
despite their shortcomings and how sometimes
the people that we adore the most
are the hardest to write about.

THE PK POETS

The PK Poets is a series of free to print poetry leaflets
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magazines. <https://www.poetrykit.org/>
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Katrina Brown grew up on the Wild West Coast of
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Katrina is an active member of Taipei Writers' Group
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Her published writing includes;

Short Stories:

Bitter Pill (Taiwan Tales, Lone Wolf Press, 2014)

Bound (Night Market, TWG Press, 2015)

Children's Books:

Let's Play! Autumn (Crescent City Ltd, 2005)

Let's Play! Winter (Crescent City Ltd, 2005)

Articles about life in Taiwan:

Links can be found at <http://bit.ly/TWGKatrina>

Katrina's Author Blog:

<https://katrinaabrown.wordpress.com/>

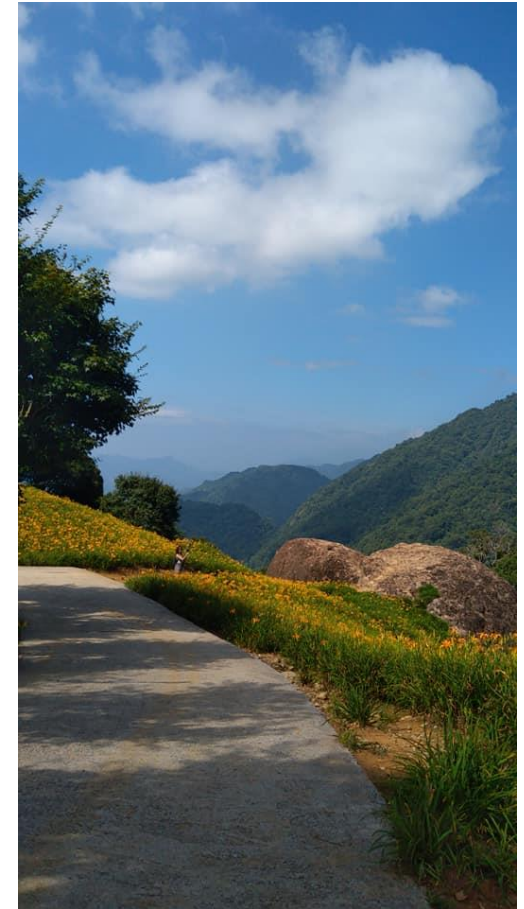
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For further details, to make comment, or to contact
the poet or the publisher please email;
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THE PK POETS

SECOND SERIES

#8 Katrina Brown



Day lilies, Chihkeshan, Yuli, Taiwan
Photo Credit: Katrina Brown

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Lo-fi

| | | | |
|------------|-------|----------|--------|
| looking | fine | glass of | wine |
| low lights | on | favorite | song |
| whiskey | shot | drink a | lot |
| rhythmic | beats | tasty | treats |
| handsome | guy | feeling | high |
| lean on | in | skin to | skin |

small bar

big city

lo-fi

Guangzhou

We are out together this morning,
fulfilling my wish to look at the temples.
You buy me a rose off a beggar girl
and I hold it tight, letting it brush my cheek
as I remember when that touch was you.

*Last night, I asked you
if filial piety was the most important thing.*

We are surrounded by young panhandlers,
chanting in unison "Take our roses!"
But you turn them down and they
spit and snarl like dragons.
You take my hand, a necessity as we
sprint for safety across the cobblestones.

Our sweaty palms together, we are laughing
like children but we have to grow up sometime,
and you want no more of this fairytale,
and let go.

(*Inspired by Kilpeck - Fleur Adcock)

Conversations with Haumapuhia

Tāne's footsteps echo above the rain,
demanding harmony from the orchestra,
as his feathered followers perform their rehearsed
daybreak song.

All else is quiet on the lake-front;
the violence of last evening's thunderstorm
has settled like a dewy memory upon the landscape.

Plans have been thrown into turmoil.
The lake is not co-operating –
there will be no hike today.

Scaling mountains can be less challenging than a debate
with the patriarch,
and, I, too, sometimes choose water from the wrong
spring.
Today this van, like your lake, holds me in.

Haumapuhia, great flailing taniwha.
When, defeated, you turned to stone,
was your heart the first to go?

Senryu 1

Outdoor campfire sparks
dart like little fireflies
through the frosty night.

Senryu 2

Feathered Ruru calls,
Invisible in darkness,
Treefrogs harmonise.

The Weight of the World

The weight of the world was like lead
Determined to crush me until I broke.
Trying to look toward the sun,
I couldn't stand against the gravity.

Determined to crush me until I broke,
Politicians, economists, religious groups.
I couldn't stand against the gravity
So I fell to the ground and wept.

Politicians, economists, religious groups
Buzzed like locusts above my head.
So I fell to the ground and wept.
Mother Earth whispered, "Observe."

Buzzing like locusts above my head,
New shoots growing at my knees,
Mother Earth whispered, "Observe.
The tiniest of us can make a difference."

New shoots growing at my knees,
Trying to look toward the sun,
The tiniest of us can make a difference,
Though the weight of the world is like lead.

Senryu 3

An icy jetty.
Stars glitter below my feet.
Moon looks up at me.