

Eye Bath

I take it between finger and thumb,
hold it to the light,
admire its perfect ocular shape,
curved glass panels like tiny windows.
I tap it gently, a reassuring, resonant note
wait for it to distil its memories.

My father on Summer Sunday mornings,
bathroom window ajar, birdsong and blossom
fill the space, tips back his head
to bathe irritated eyes in soothing liquid.
It's like a baptism, this strange ritual,
as he emerges, lash-soaked,
tears streaming down his cheeks,
the miniature chalice still in his pincer grasp.
Later, I will march beside him in the band,
keeping time as he plays the tuba
in praise of God, whilst my mother stays at home,
clashing cymbals that make no noise.

Bat

Out of suburban shadows,
out of the night heat
of summer's longest breath,
a bat
on my pillow, breathless

That was it, really.
Just a pause,
a miniscule shiver
at the recollection of emblems

except for a stirring
in the underbelly of reason
that curled in on itself
waiting for the time
when we already knew it was beginning.

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.

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ABOUT SHIELA ROE

Shiela Roe has written stories and poems since she was a child. She has an M.A. (Dist.) in Creative Writing from Bolton University.

Recently, she was delighted to celebrate her first publication success when two of her poems (one of which, 'Mind Set' is in this leaflet) were accepted for an anthology: *Gazing at Gaia 2017*. She lives in Cheshire.

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

#9 Shiela Roe

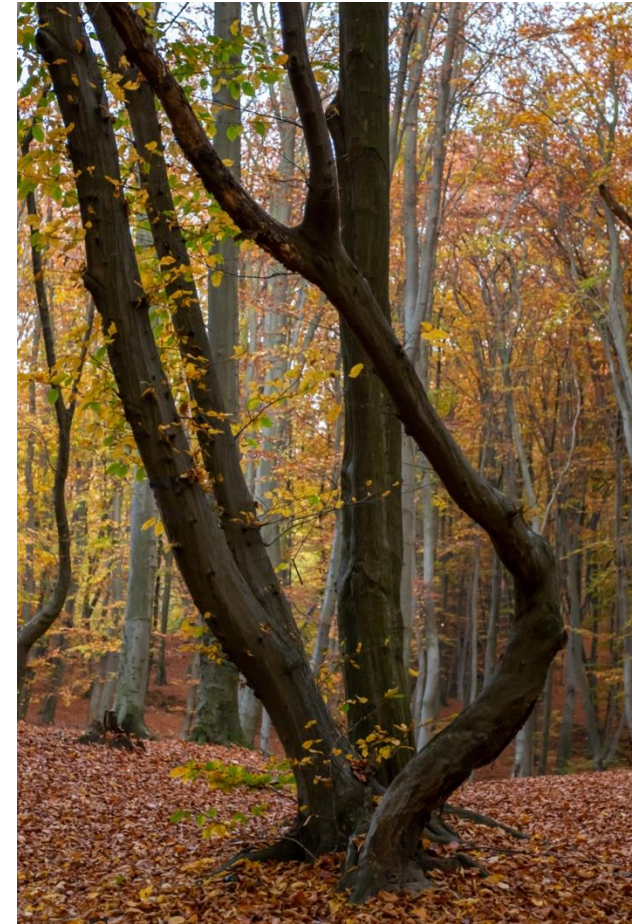


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Mind Set

In the Twisted Wheel Club
on Valentine's Night,
a fan of football picked a fight
because he didn't like the colour of your tie.

You brushed your sleeve, as if a fly
had landed there,
and we slipped, side-stepped around his bulk
to pass him by

but his mirrored image
chased us through the catacombs and rooms
and when he grabbed your arm, you stood your
ground,
faced him down, and Buddha still, your eyes locked
on to his

But you were never Al Capone,
only a gentle question lay in your expression,
as giant-like in strobe light and dark
colours twisting in the twisting dancers
you stare, intent to know the reason why
he struts and swaggers so.

Maybe you're right

you say, loosening your Windsor knot,
and you spread your hands and smile,
and he smiles too and a space was made

when two young men made friends that night
in the blare of music, in the dark and light
in the twisted passageways of the Twisted Wheel

on that night of love, on Valentine's Night.

Need

I search among the misericords
the crowded blaring effigies.

I see women in black genuflect,
and behind a lattice-work
of fingers, whisper torn hearts
to a Madonna, whose marble gaze
only sighs a resignation.

I long to understand
why candlelight commemorates a grief,
why sunlight through glass
turns red as blood.

When my mother died,
I found a wooden crucifix
hidden in a drawer beside her bed.
I still ask her why in dreams.

In my solitary white space,
only you can lead words one by one
out of the darkness.

Ladies

While Mummy cried in the bedroom,
we sat at the top of the stairs
and played 'Ladies on the Bus.'
We clutched plastic handbags,
our hands adrift in over-sized gloves
we'd taken from Grandma's cupboard.
We talked incessantly, our faces close,
our child bodies leaning in,
mimicking the postures of women
exchanging confidences,
crowding out the sound of sobs,
urging our imaginations to fly,
just like the kites we watched in the park;
sometimes their tails snaked too close
to the lake and dipped in the water,
but they always managed to turn and
soar upwards again trusting the wind.

Dying to be Thin

Please help me not to see her tissue paper skin
that stretches like pink bubble gum across her
tangled bones;
she thinks I haven't noticed that she's dying to
be thin.

I penetrate those olive eyes. I long to reach
within
that mangled mind, and turn her secrets to the
light.
Please help me not to see her tissue-paper skin

once plump and curved with smiles, pale as
cream muslin;
the stubborn lips that used to munch and crunch
and grin.
She thinks I haven't noticed that she's dying to
be thin

for she sees folds of fat, not the crumpled
urchin
who is clever at excuses, says 'I'll eat it later.'
Please help me not to see her tissue-paper skin.

She stands before her mirror, poking, probing,
looking in
at the fat, unfriendly stranger, smug behind the
glass;
she thinks I haven't noticed that she's dying to
be thin.

The birthday cake I baked for her grows
mouldy in the tin;
her skinny body snakes in disgust to see it
there.
Please help me not to see her tissue paper skin;
she thinks I haven't noticed that she's dying to
be thin.