

Dipping

We are heading for the lake,
the grass banks down beneath our feet
and below a coda of stretched water plays.
My six-year-old grips my hand in his,
hugging his toy boat with the other,
the soft urgency of his trot oddly
in sync with the regularity of my pace.

The ground dips with my thoughts.

I am at the lake's edge,
not this one in front of me but
another lake – a past lake -
where a red plastic ship
- Woolworth's cheapest - bobs wobbly
at the end of a clutched string.
My father stands behind me.
Tugging on the thread,
I turn to look at him.
He gazes unseeing over the water,
looking for something beyond it
and beyond that – absconding –
in an encrypted dream
- his dream: my nightmare.
His absence returns me
to my now sinking ship.

I stoop to steady my child
who is about to launch his boat;
his smile rides the careless ripples
as the craft courses on a cracking breeze.
I look up to see my father
distant across this lake.
Neither waving nor blessing,
he raises a brief hand of admission
then turns on himself
to merge with the landscape.

My boy sails happy.
My nightmare: his dream.

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 who is also a member of the PK Poetry List. The PK List is a free to join community of poets who share their work using email and the internet. Information about the PK List can be found on the front page of the Poetry Kit Website at www.poetrykit.org. We are grateful to acknowledge that this series is inspired by "The Bards" leaflet series from Atlantean Publishing.

ABOUT GOL McADAM

Gol McAdam lives between Kent and Yorkshire. She has completed the MA in Writing Poetry and her work has appeared in a range of anthologies and journals. Her poems have also been commended in four poetry competitions. Other writing includes academic texts and radio and television drama.

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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 #13: Gol McAdam



('Going Back' by Alistair McAdam)

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The Boy In The Balcony

A screening Of 'The Jolson Story'

I am seven and sitting in the balcony
of a cinema with my grandfather.

From the screen a song carries us
to outside a Burlesque House
then swift inside to a comic on stage.

He fools with a cello and calls for us
to sing to his accompaniment.

My grandfather (he's seen this
before) nudges me and winks:
his past scores fast on my present.

Cut back to the old theatre gallery
where a boy in the packed seating
starts to sing along. No one joins in.

Everyone listens. The cellist shouts
"Give that boy a spotlight!"

Then the applause.

The film continues: it tells the tale
of a jazz singer's rise to fame

(a fairytale)

But I am stuck with the boy in the balcony.
Stuck, singing unheard in the darkness,

waiting to be accompanied. Waiting
for the man with the cello to shout.

Childhood Haven 1950

The thicket's track
The squat cottage

The bubbling paint
On the viridian door

The smell of candlelight
The glow of lavender bags

The love of a maiden aunt

The Angel

Some come running but
cunning he came flying.
White wings arched against
the blighting of the night.
Holiness honed to a bullet
of feather for flesh and bone:
piercing home full tilt
to land to my limbo where
wings akimbo he stood.

I thought to turn away but,
caught in his unfurling, he
enfolded to hold me taut.
Thou wilt Thou wilt
Behold Behold
He spoke in conundra.
Biblical innominations,
incantations falling as prayer,
massing to move
through a glass darkly.

Park Zephyrs

A winter sun. A bright wind.
A path branching to a lake.
Coots and moorhens
flailing on blown water.

The whirr of *Bugaboo* wheels.
The gusty play on apron and hood.
My son's hands at the push handle
his father's hands.

Now a father himself he strides
proud-booted on asphalt
then pauses to watch penned goats,
a gesture on behalf of his sleeping child:

a prevailing bluster of first buds
breezing into the life to come.

My Mother's Room

Though robbed of her spit and polish
the room remains much as she left it.

Her purple housecoat hangs on the door
its folds faded to lilac by sunlight.
The bedside lamp shades a closed book,
an old till receipt marking her page.
The counterpane, lovingly spread, stays
unruffled by the grief of her sleeping.
The wardrobe, closed and full, rises;
a bastion of forgotten fashions.

Shrouded by dust, the dressing table
still spells out her moments –

a trinket box hosting her cameo brooch
and a long since broken string of pearls

a pomander slow to evaporate
tinting the air with her perfume

a silver brush camouflaging
gun-metal hairs in its yellowing bristle –

the misty bloom on the triptych mirrors
waiting for the wayward finger to draw
an arrow-pierced heart of fidelity.

A lone cobweb floats and touches
soft against the cold window pane.

A dead wasp decays on the sill.

Brother Francis

- white hair
cherub face –

tells me today
he has seen Christ

in me

I am embarrassed
and look down

the slouch of the socks
at his ankles
makes me cry