

## 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](mailto: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