

Poetry contents

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TEXT poetry

Maggie Butt

Naming of Things

There is a sweet redemptive joy
in the simple naming of things:

crisp apple
light on water
sleeping child
new mown grass
ploughed field raked with frost
fish-bone clouds high in a china-blue sky
fragrant down on a baby's head
metallic taste of rain

As if by naming they are made anew
to cradle in my hand.

Maggie Butt teaches creative writing at Middlesex University, UK, and is the chair of the National Association of Writers in Education. Her first poetry collection, Lipstick, was published in 2007. M.Butt@mdx.ac.uk

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TEXT poetry

Christopher (Kit) Kelen

a temple visit

hear the bowl-beating monk
his night chant
fragrant as spring

the sutras are like ice in my hands
the vanishing truth of the world

the body knows the pains of hell
yes poetry is pure, it's bliss
but give me a pension - I'm too old for this

Christopher (Kit) Kelen's most recent volumes of poetry are Dredging the Delta (a book of Macao poems and sketches), published in 2007 by Cinnamon Press (UK) and After Meng Jiao: Responses to the Tang Poet, published in 2008 by VAC (Chicago, IL). Kelen has taught Literature and Creative Writing for the last nine years at the University of Macau in south China.

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Jeff Klooger

The Modern Text

Life's like that, too: you can't read it
straight through from the beginning to end.
Again and again
it pulls you up, pulls you back
into the past you never knew you had,
those casual, off-the-cuff prophesies
that all came true, the themes
announcing themselves in your own mouth, but foreign,
the way your true self always is,
a joke, not meant to signify
but merely amuse.

Or perhaps it spits you up on the shore
of a life ten years your senior,
with nothing of yourself but a child's memory
and a child's hunger, and the obligations
of a stranger. He keeps
his life to himself, his friends
don't know you, and you fumble about
for some way of beginning again
at the beginning.

Isn't that the way of it?
Or do some manage still to live
in the old way, knowing
from year to year and day to day
what comes next, how the plot turns
on their dreams, and their last words
already second nature?

Jeff Klooger has had work published in a number of Australian literary journals, including Meanjin, Overland and Westerly, with more to appear in Famous Reporter, Retort Magazine and dotlit. He has a PhD in social theory and philosophy from La Trobe University.

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