

Raven

*Also by Alan Wall from Shearsman Books*

Gilgamesh

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Doctor Placebo

*The Shearsman Chapbook Series, 2012*

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Shira Dentz : *LeafWeather*

# Raven

Alan Wall

Shearsman Books

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## Raven and Serpent

The raven noticed the serpent  
slithering lithely up the tree's trunk.  
A beautiful garden.  
One contented couple.

Raven was astounded when serpent spoke.  
Now where, he wondered, did the snake learn that?  
Are there summer schools these days down there?  
Distance learning for winter visitors  
even those descended from an unendowed urethra?

Raven's eye shone  
bright as a moon if not the sun  
when serpent's word  
wormed its way down Eve's ear  
through her delicate intestines  
into her untried womb.

Could I do that? raven asked.  
He asked (it should be said) in silence.  
Such harmonies as rule here  
rule unvocalised.

Noticed for the first time  
how tastily the eyes of Adam gleamed

back now from the fields at last  
arms filled with red red roses  
for the lovely lady.



# Emblem

Raven has returned to emblem books.

Of all his second homes  
emblem books and bestiaries hold his preference.

There he strolls  
admires himself in mirrors of engravings  
reads how he never feeds his young  
until black feathered quills break through.  
Meets unicorn and cockatrice  
centaur narwhal and chimera  
nods *en passant* to fellow corvids. Never too friendly.

Likes to read about his preference for eyeballs  
either on the battlefield  
or on Tower Bridge where traitors' heads  
get spiked up weekly for his delectation.

And, should he leave the nearby Tower  
our kingdom falls in weeks.  
Made a home for himself in the word ravenous  
despite a host of weeping etymologists forbidding it.  
*Pruk-pruk*, he says to all that. Mr Corvus. Mr Corvax.  
Sometimes, while travelling abroad,  
he'll answer to Raben or Corbeau

or even Kangee, shape-shifting cousin  
from across the seas.

Once long ago his passport said *hraefn*.  
and once, when Mighty Corvid issued his command  
he fed Elijah who'd been telling  
dark truths to kings.  
All written out with a black feathered quill  
supplied by yours truly.

Wishes they didn't portray him so often  
striding over snow  
things being seldom black and white like that.

# Copernican

Never once doubted that the world was round  
while your flat-footed granddaddy Neanderthals  
took care they didn't look over the edge of things  
and fall.

The world designed to fit exactly in each eyeball  
ours or yours.

Something we ponder frequently enough  
while chewing.