

Tessitura

Tessitura

Julie Sampson

Shearsman Books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2013 by
Shearsman Books
50 Westons Hill Drive
Emersons Green
BRISTOL BS16 7DF

Shearsman Books Ltd Registered Office
30–31 St. James Place, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB
(this address not for correspondence)

<http://www.shearsman.com/>

ISBN 978-1-84861-239-6

Copyright © Julie Sampson, 2013.

The right of Julie Sampson to be identified as the author
of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyrights,
Designs and Patents Act of 1988.
All rights reserved.

Acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the editors of these publications in which the following poems have appeared; also to Chrissy Banks, Genista Lewes Mary Maher and the Fire River Poets, for their encouragement and constructive skills.

Also, to Bob Mann who introduced me to M.P. Willcocks and her writing;
and to staff at Mount Edgcumbe for their assistance with finding
Edgcumbe (formerly *Edgecumbe*) family-trees.

Cyclamens and Swords for 'Chervil'; *Dawntreader* for 'Nuthatch'; *Equinox* for 'Musbury W/rites'; *Exeter Flying Post* for 'Imagining Translation'; 'Margaret Beaufort'; *Her Mind's Eye* (Pyramid Press, 1996) for 'Fabulous bee'; *The Journal* for 'Anne Edgcumbe Dowriche'; *Mary Webb Society Journal* for 'Viroconium'; *Otter* for 'Somewhere'; *Ouroboros Review* online for 'Ballerina's Song of the Earth'; *Great Works Online* for 'Up on Yannadon', 'Unfinished Business' and 'Summer garden scrapblog'; *Poetry Monthly* online for 'Salix-fragilis'; *PQR* for 'Horizons', 'At Inchconnachan', 'Arachne' and 'Atropos'; *Shearsman* magazine for 'Outside there is a grene tree', 'Triune' and 'Rhys and Plath'; '1894'; *Suspension* online for 'Swell Wood'.

'Fran Skating on the Manor-Pond' was runner-up in the Exeter Poetry Prize 1999 and appeared in *Making Worlds; One Hundred Contemporary Women Poets* (Headland, 2003).

Contents

DOPPLER-EFFECTS

her eyes will green

Arachne	11
My wheel	12
Somewhere	13
Contextual	14
This is to let you know	15
Salix-fragilis	16
Swell Wood	17
Viroconium	19
Linlithgow & Mary Queen of Scots	21

blue-scape

Julia's sea-scape	23
Crag	24
Horizons	25
Pleiadian Doves	26
For those who say there are no more poems	33

TEXTUAL GROUND

Ashwood's garden	39
1849; Dean Prior	40
Summer garden scrapblog	41
Nuthatch	43
Redwing	45
Conference Table	47
1894; Fran Skating on the Manor-Pond	48
Culross visitors	49
Ballerina's <i>Song of the Earth</i>	51

shaping a phrase with a flint-tool

<i>Devon Women</i>	54
Cornubian Island	55
That skeletal tree	56

Take the thought	57
Musbury W/rites	58
Imagining Translation (Margaret Beaufort)	59
Anne Edgecumbe (Dowriche)	60
“Outside there is a grene tree” (Mary Lady Chudleigh)	61
Woman Clothed with the Sun (Joanna 1 and 2)	62
Up on Yannadon 1906	63
Wings (M. P. Willcocks — Novelist, 1869-1952)	64
Triune	68
Rhys and Plath: Cheriton and Court Green	71

CHANGING THE REFRACTING ANGLE

Fabulous bee	75
Chervil	77
Unfinished Business	79
Perdita	81
Atropos	82

NOTES	84
-------	----

for Luke, Andrea and Jamie

DOPPLER-EFFECTS

her eyes will green

Arachne

comes from a place
(beyond) where there is
space here
black (drab) fields spindle trees
spiders in her mind
shoes clogged in earth
Her crops are few yet
she bulges unbeaten desire for the whip
of history retracing steps out of mud
releasing Ariadne's thread
when she will bloom her eyes will green
to a throbbing sky
she will spin
on her axis
her cobweb dress tied with a golden sash—
over the horizon an ocean swells

My wheel
turns

moorland vistas up by
Hannaford

behind its frames
fibres
twist

flyer of time
rotates

I, spinner,
left holding the yarn

(Susannah Gidley Abbott,
Dean Prior, 1741-1823)

Somewhere

in the lining
of her head
a sepia photo, unframed,
of what her poem could be about.

In the study cobwebs
trespass over Virago books
high shelves where baby spider
plants suspend in air
her mind is sifting spaces
sewing gossamer thread
through nooks and crannies
amongst rows of women's books.

Now intent on fetching scissors
snipping ties and spinning
this imaginary yarn
of enchanted craft
she will lift her head
brush back a strand of hair
and follow spiders with that pencil,
trailing desolate landscapes
over fifty sheets of unlined paper.

Somewhere
in Devon
a run-down cottage, framed
in an old oak doorway
Father stands, his cheeks amazed
by frost,
proudly bearing in armfuls—
the last of his spring cabbage.

Contextual

I don't want annotations
for
this poem
will be
the key
simplicity

white hyacinths
sigils across grass

so
no notes
in margins—
only flowers

This is to let you know

that when I
moving with
this poetic line

saw your eyes
open upon mine
I shut the book
and ran with the page onto the open moor

Salix-fragilis

As usual
I drive through the night
my mind on you

moon is gold, full blown
hair flecks invisible
across my face.

Ghosts flicker over these marsh levels
and through the window
soundings of the armoury
of a long-ago war.

Our finale was as civil
you'd think of me
I of you.

Why should our meetings
be such as this
through liminal September evenings—

when sun and moon hover in twilight,
selves of other selves dissolve in vapours
and the lone hound
howls behind the skeletal crack-willow.

Swell Wood

Framed from the cut-out hide
little egrets gently rock their young
sky-high in heron nested ancient trees—

wind moves us
 away
from the mainstream
down the winding path
to this Other—
a dimension rustling under feet
with secret dormice in
their hidden hazel thicket

we should turn back—
the hectic road's waiting
to scoop us in its flow

but something draws us
 on
 and
further down the track—

Enchanter's Nightshade
lines the path—a galaxy of daystars
 white stones
from fairytale that led the children
to the cottage—

we must find the heart
the tick of the place
and talk of how a Circe
might lie in wait for us
 round
that next corner
where are tree-giants
ash oak and lime—

may we
be changed—
our beat chime in time with the wood.

—Watch us squirrel to the top
through the canopy out
of the scene
to the sun.

Viroconium

*'The past is only the present,
become invisible'*

(Mary Webb)

I'm sure you saw her
—braided hair—*golden lights*
rim her face and the ring
you found at the edge of the field
after a mere hour-glass
of a mosaiced two thousand years
is spinning her longest finger.
She smiles at you as someone
(her husband) calls
across the tessellated pavement
of the palaestra:

Placida!

The name rings on
as she, slowly, turns,
her sandal-strap glistening bronze
and walks hand in hand
away with him,
across the marbled floor.
Over it a dolphin leaps,
on a fountain, into air.
They cross underworld the sea of Hades.

(Grass grows thick and crisp
through chunks of once chiselled
stone. Archaeologists come again
to explore foundations, chart on computer
the palaestra area—those colonnaded
city walls).

Fragments only left.

You noted the waft
of fragrance

as she wrapped a cloak
close round her bodice,
a jet necklace encircled her throat—
the fastening brooch is jade—

She had no voice.

At Viroconium
sheep are grazing turf
on earth covered bones—
stone haunts the museum,
inscribed:

*To the gods and shades,
Placida, aged 55,
Set up by order of her husband,
In the thirtieth year of her marriage.*

Space on stone
for details
of next to die.

You are born
from your more recent grave,
as you ride to her
through crested waves
on the back
of the surfacing dolphin.