

Roselle Angwin is a Cornish poet, author and painter whose work has won a number of awards. She read Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and followed that with a training in transpersonal psychology. Her work is influenced by these things, as well as by Zen and druidry.

Under the *Fire in the Head* banner she leads an international holistic creative writing programme ranging from the ecobardic 'Ground of Being' outdoor workshops, through intensive poetry, to novel-writing based on the psychology of myth.

As a poet, she has been involved in a number of interdisciplinary and often land-based arts projects, collaborating with other writers, and with artists, musicians, dancers and sculptors. Her poetry has been displayed on buses and cathedral websites, has appeared in numerous anthologies, been etched into glass, hung from trees, printed on T-shirts, carved into stone, metal and wood, painted, sung, composed to, choreographed, danced, performed—and eaten by sheep. Her novel, *Imago*, appeared in 2011.

Also by Roselle Angwin

Poetry

Looking for Icarus

A Hawk into Everywhere (*with Rupert M. Loydell*)

Fiction

Imago

Non-fiction

Riding the Dragon — Myth and the Inner Journey

Creative Novel Writing

Writing The Bright Moment

As editor

Moor Poets 1

Bardo

ROSELLE ANGWIN

Shearsman Books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2011 by
Shearsman Books
58 Velwell Road
Exeter EX4 4LD

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

ISBN 978-1-84861-163-4

Copyright © Roselle Angwin, 2011.

The right of Roselle Angwin 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.

Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the editors of the journals in
which some of the poems in this book first appeared:

Contents

<i>if you take away . . .</i>	9
One true thing	10
Ridgeway Near Uffington	11
Ridgeway Near Wayland's Smithy	12
Ridgeway Scutchamer Knob	13
Ridgeway Segsbury Camp	14
Ridgeway Barbury Castle	15
Ridgeway Hackpen Hill	16
Ridgeway West Kennett Longbarrow	17
Ridgeway	18
Courtyard	19
Rain	21
<i>From the road you can barely see it</i>	22
The green water that is not air	23
Incident	24
everything there is	25
Someone needs to sing over the bones	26
Tamar	27
Crossing the water	28
Planting garlic at the winter solstice	29
Boleigh Fogou at midwinter	30
Slipstream	31
Navigating memory	32
sky sutra	33
rain sutra	34
leaf sutra	35
air sutra	36
water sutra	36
landscape sutra	37
September retreat sutra	38
megalith sutra	39
dog sutra	40
wolf sutra	40
quantum sutra	41
going into the meadow after the retreat	42

the sound of my feet walking	43
'This Simone Weil called prayer'	44
Fishing boat	45
<i>Open the gate . . .</i>	46
Fletcherscombe	47
What-are-the-birds-doing-with-the-December-sky rap	48
'January's Full Moon is called the Wolf Moon'	50
In the time of no time	52
How can I speak of silence?	53
Feet	55
The blood of others	57
exclusion zone	58
For the Fallen 1	59
Maristow	60
Lydford Gorge	62
Summer Solstice, Merrivale	64
Entering the wood	67
This is our time	72
Undercliff sutra	80
'One word like a sun'	83
being here	85
spell for the spirit of fire	88
The white noise of the universe	89

‘[T]he essence of bardo . . . can . . . be applied to every moment of existence. The present moment, the now, is a continual bardo, always suspended between the past and the future.’

—*Francesca Fremantle*

if you take away the sum
of the manifest universe
what remains is light

One true thing

The land streams past the window. The heart asks for both clarity and paradox, aches equally for freedom and for joining, being part of and apart.

To be like a tree. To be that horse dreaming, one hoof delicately pointed, muzzle lowered and relaxed, at home completely in the day.

Tell me the truest thing you can, is what this journey seems to say.

Ridgeway *Near Uffington*

It was a hard ascent up to the chalklands into places that didn't know water. Then stepping into a sky bigger than anything except mind, and how we live sometimes as if the sky were not big enough to swallow us whole, holy, but that day we parted the tranches of barley like waves in a field canted towards the horizon and knew that we could fly, upwards into the scudding blue intervals; and later though you were a foot away I could hear your heartbeat through the chalk and the day breathing the greengold barley and the silvermauve grasses and little downland flowers that knew something of blue and the skylark kiting its song, and below us the white horse dreaming in its long slow sleep as it has for millennia and the sky came down anyway—a moment when we might enter someone else's life, and remember.

Ridgeway *Near Wayland's Smithy*

There are more layers than we can know or imagine, and here are some: sky gathering; emerald hills pressing upwards; and everything lit from within by this morning's hazy but irrepressible sunrise.

Here the stillness is alive: ancient and loud in its 5000-year-old silence.

All of life is contained in a hand, releasing a bird that we cannot see into the path of the wind that is not yet here; or perhaps has already passed.

Ridgeway *Scutchamer Knob*

On the horizon chrome-yellow light and light the colour of rust,
water-gathering; and above, a pooling of night—of purple, ox-
blood, indigo.

The tree is one with horizon and night. Holds still.

Ridgeway *Segsbury Camp*

Pleats of dawn light. Then sheets of noon. Then dusk.
Millennia &c.

This June solstice.

What you can't see from here is the beginning, or the end, of the track that crosses your line of sight, though it's both invitation and boundary. Beyond the earthworks the ridged hillside is a pelt of the blood of history.

What you can't see from here are the figures in their helmeted jerkined twos and threes, ragged and muddied; a gathering of vapour, condensation on a membrane that remains invisible

just beyond our frequency, cohering from wind or drizzle, the mist that might descend at the end of a moist summer day, a flicker across the retina barely registered

like the breeze through this sea of grasses, a quickening of neurons

though you might just think the wind brings the clash of spear and sword,
shouts and howls from mouths long stopped

and maybe now at last, later, centuries, perhaps
the laughter

that pares the darkness away from bone clean
as peeling an ash-wand.

Ridgeway *Barbury Castle*

Bliss of a simple mug of tea, respite from backpacks. A robin takes crumbs from my hand. In the perspex canteen window a photo of a green-barley crop circle, intricate and impenetrable. Is that a new one? I ask the girl. Yes, she says, I'll show you the article. Like a proud father her bloke hands me the paper. I found it, he says. Couple weeks ago. Coming and going all night on the hill, me and the boys, and never saw a thing. Next morning there it was.

A perfect pictorial representation of Pi, says the consulted astrophysicist, complete with decimal point and ellipsis for the recurring digits. The most complicated yet. Human-made, extra-terrestrial, geomantic, meteorological, fissure-energy, ephemeral echoes of megaliths? Connection between Pi and the Fibonacci sequence? Origins?

Explanations, you say, don't ever answer the bigger question: why?

Ridgeway *Hackpen Hill*

Later, in a perfect beech copse, round as a planet, we sit against trunks at the northern edge of Hackpen Hill, and look out over a 6-swirl fractal crop circle; simple and elegant. We don't talk.

Ridgeway *West Kennett Longbarrow*

Beetle. Drab daytime glow-worm. Barley-running day. Swifts.
Ploughing the skyline. Remember the city: vast loneliness; birds
willow water wide sky &c the only.

Then places that don't know water. The sussuration of time.
Arrow. Helios. Colours of the winds. Me—one interface of time
and space. Now.

The aching tree. You. Here. Waiting. Expectant. And un-.

Ridgeway

In the garden, at a meeting, on the road—my mind homes back
to this place, reclines in its halls of grasses, backstrokes in its
pools of silence.

The long men who stride these hills; their chalk horses.

Courtyard

1

Watching you from the window when you don't know I'm looking—sky falling slant through this span of glass, frost on the hillside and a few yellow spears still clinging to the willow for the warblers, paper-white narcissi at the fulcrum of waiting and becoming, and your purposeful stride, breath making visible atoms of air to halo, cobwebs stringing drops like tiny planets and the stream in the valley, my body still pliant and not quite separate yet (an articulation of grace), and you stop, and I know you'll be looking at the shooting winter garlic and all the time I'm here snug in the kitchen watching and thinking that one degree colder or one degree warmer we wouldn't be here at all, and how 'miracle' doesn't approach it.

2

Sometimes one's life is an open mouth asking question after question knowing there may be no answer.

Today after the difficult meeting I went with you out into the courtyard—together we bent to the paper-white narcissi, their brief scented faces lifted to the short grey day

and I longed to be opened again by sun, or moonlight, by rain—reminded how whole it all is, how perfect, even in its sometimes unending-seeming brokenness.

So much rain, drenching the willow, sliding off the roof, saturating the vegetable patch, but all the time I know it's on the inside.

3

Six o'clock again but in the evening this time, and we're here again side-by-side on the wicker sofa with the terracotta pillows like overstuffed thoughts

and the rain; and we're listening to that, and to the silence that is the white noise of too many words unspoken. If I were to ask you what you are not saying you would say *by definition, nothing*

but I hear it all banging at the window, blind and flightless. Here we are again, rain prickling the courtyard, the voice of the owl, a full moon rising through bandages of cloud, and dark rolling in like a drunk, like all that unknowing between what we are and what we sense that we might be, if only

4

Fog unrolls from the river, ghosts up the valley so that the trees stand behind themselves, lose a dimension.

Now the house is eclipsed, and we lose definition, belong to each other again.

On this shortest day the fog steals the last of the light that we were allowed, wraps us instead in white.