

Fiona Read



An Antipodean ex-pat living in Penzance, studying in Falmouth, working part-time, singing in a band, whilst bringing up four kids on my own, makes me a very occasional poet! However, I really enjoy writing poetry when I do - and intend to do so more often when I can. I guess the beauty of poetry for me is it's economy: saying so much in a minimum of words (even in the words that aren't there). In our time-poor lives, poems create possibilities that are accessible to all.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Sleeping bag man approaches,
is it the time he wants?
Or direction.

Red-rimmed, watery
his eyes don't seem to even see me.
Can I spare him some change?
Yes I can...

but that's not what I say.

A mumbled apology,
embarrassed discomfort.
Vexed, at having been asked
put on the spot,
exposed...

such raw humanity hurts.

Confronted by my lack of compassion
I start to question
why it is, that I
refused him...

where's the charity?

I sent this man with nothing
but his red sleeping bag,
slung over a thin shoulder
penniless, away.

As I sip my latte,
cupped warm in prayerful hands
I ask for his forgiveness.

Fi Read

UNTITLED

Like the somnolent tones of a radio announcer
yours is just the right register,
a voice of quiet, natural authority.

Its musical cadence of maleness,
mellifluous and mesmerising,
lulls me.

The words become unimportant.
It doesn't matter what you say.
Entranced by pitch and rhythm
I lose all reason.

When I lay my head on your bare chest
in the small hours
the muffled murmuring ripples deep
through cavernous chambers.

I dont listen, not properly.
I should have listened
when you said you loved me.
I should have heard,
really heard, that it did not ring true.

You lied.

I heard what I wanted to hear
and was led to the brink,

following the hollow promises
of your tricky voice.

Empty echoes fall
into deaf and blind ears.
But now I see. Now,
there is nothing but
terrible silence.

Fi Read

TUESDAY BLUES

(Negative Spaces)

In faith
I have none

In truth
I know it not

In sorrow
There is no comfort

In pain, it hurts

In times of need
You are never there

In absentia,
I worship nothing
and no-one.

Fi Read

SACROSANCT SATURDAY

On hands and knees
a fervent missionary, intent on
ousting the dust devil
I do cleanse.

Sweeping all before me
with bleach and zeal, repentant
of idle months of neglect.

Full of remorse

I determine to keep things tidy
to absolve my guilt.
Surface grime begone,
begin anew.

Clutter, vanquished.
Paperwork, reviled and filed.
Clothing and excess given unto charity.
Hallowed halls purified by
hoover penitence, I am
once again content
under the firmament, thank god.

Fi Read

SUNDAY PURGATORY

The boredom and tedium of Sunday school.
Light relief compared to the sermon
But to what end?
What purpose such solemn activity? Why

Wordsearch the 12 disciples
Weave a woolly god's-eye
Construct stiff paper 2D camels
Colour in Samson and Delilah
Listen to stories that don't make sense
Locate Ethiopia on a map
Sing the praises of our Lord and his son
Sew an easter bonnet? Badly.

And after, tea with the vicar in the hall
Bustling with the righteous
Well-scrubbed, best-dressed
Lavender old ladies who say,
'You can only have one now mind.'
Just the one, miserly digestive
As you take your weekly offering from the plate.

Fi Read