

Louise Garcia



Louise Garcia teaches Biology at Truro School. She is currently working on a musical to be performed at the Burrell Theatre in June 2007. "The Mischling" highlights the Kindertransport movement, which brought over ten thousand children to Great Britain from Nazi Germany in the months preceding the outbreak of World War Two.

"I have been impressed by the way the poetry workshop has led participants with widely disparate beliefs to discuss their spirituality in a supportive atmosphere of non-judgemental exploration, as well as the way it has opened up new avenues of creativity."

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WHERE I GREW UP

Barefoot down the corridor
Watched by the walls
Past the giant painting
Past still doors
Up the velvet stairs which slant
Like gently inclined jaws

Curtains softly shift
As secrets stir behind them
The blank sash panes stare out
The black night air outside them
Draft comes down the chimney
Let the night come in then

Ivy tightly wraps this house
It spreads a life-force through it
Black tendrils creep and grow, suck dry
The living air inside it.
Press your ear to this façade
Hear the blood pump through it

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NICE VIEW OF TRURO CATHEDRAL FROM HERE

Prosperous sugar-iced villas parade
Below lambs on the green hills far away,
Splinter-like spires from St. Mary's raise
Bare skeleton fingers, piercing the sky.

They point some to heaven
They paint some with guilt,
They shadow the cobblestones,
Canticles lilt,
Great arches and pinnacles, verdigris flushed,
And stone, bone and myth turning slowly to dust.

I want to say sorry for all that I've done
I want absolution like snowfall to come
I want to explain that it's me who is dumb
To a pillar or pew, if not you.

In the turbulent dark what should one believe?
Am I earnest and good, or condemned to deceive?
Will you peel off the masks? Are you going to leave?
And is God here anywhere?

So we built him a house like so many before
But he's spirit and freedom, he flew out the door,
And the pigeons outside peck for crumbs on the floor,
And you pass on by.

Like a lighthouse through mist intermittent the beam
Is present then hidden then shining again
From your eyes recognition revealing its gleam
Then nothing.

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TREE HOUSE

A room on stilts
Cocooned in a canopy
Of copper beech and silver Sorbus
Lime and Eucalyptus

Gingham tea towels fly their flags
Summer picnics, hats and sun
Jam-pot covers, chequered dresses,
Jubilees and Chelsea buns

In the cubby corner cupboard
Chocolate biscuits in a tin,
I'm cross-legged on the floorboards
You pour barley water out for me.

Between the chinks in planks and leaf-spread
Lies the lawn with daisies sprinkled,
Old carved stone in shady hollow
Ancient arch and magic lantern

And at the little picnic table
Plastic-topped with purple flowers,
You seem happy, making tea,
Playing camping out with me,
Summer leaves of Sorbus tree,
In the tree house, you and me.

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A NEW VIEW OF TRURO CATHEDRAL

Winter greyscale twigs and boughs
Held mute against the endless sky,
Cathedral spires dominate
Claim the clouds and pierce the eye.

But pussy willow buds arrive
With silver fur to warm the world,
Brown cigar-shaped buds grow plump
Throw out green stars as each unfurls.

Budburst! Pleated green and velvet,
Concertina beech leaves blow,
Purpled-copper discs are minted
From the golden sap below.

So the beech trees come alive
Crown the hill and frame the town,
Dwarf the little toy cathedral
Sing God's praise in wind-bird sound.

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IN TRURO CATHEDRAL

Vaulted arches soar up high,
Like Alice bands on flower girls,
Like handle hoops on flower baskets,
Swung at a wedding, left at a funeral.
Pointed arches pin up the roof,
Like the ribs of an animal carcass.
Young, married, old,
Alpha to omega,
Beginning to end,
In the time it takes a candle to burn,
Bringing us close to eternity.

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EDEN AND THE FALL

Eden is a pool
where love disturbs the surface
two figures walk the beach embraced
in sleek concentric ripples
see their pattern there reflected
wavy channels in the sand
paralleled in quartz veins
of a sea-smooth pebble
feeling Eden spread in rings
to fill the morning air

withdrawal freezing Fall
withers trust
that sprang once upon their lips
strikes the free live ripples dead
entombs them hard in ice
etches grooves of pain
on hearts
with a long cold finger
white to the bone

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AIR CASTLE

The sky turns pink, infatuation
Draws pictures in the scented mist
There breathes an ancient incantation,
Changing all your world to this.
In the castles of the mind
Beauty soars and love is kind
A glance unites two sparks divine
So come with me.

Wraith-led realms of coloured air
Gird the castle towering there
Palace of enchantment - Dare
You! There's the door -
A gently smiling open jaw
A step away.

What melodies of magic sound
To lure you further in and round
To bind, enchant and tie you down?
Long ago
You feel you knew
This warming ray.

This whole celestial inner place
Where doves and owls on rainbows pace
Brim golden tears upon your face.
I'm free, I fly,
I'm trapped, I lie,
Too far away

Now.
Shhh... confession...
Lust, dust, guilt, depression
Light and dark,
Shadow bars
Cage obsession.

“Oh happy slave indeed am I
I'll love thee till I almost die
I'll live here always, never try
Escaping.”

Because I'm told that love is good
And almost everybody should
Lose themselves in this dark wood
Forever.

Faerie voices sing and play
Never let me get away
Lest I get some sense one day.
Then what?

All that castle cracks and crumbles
Every glorious vision tumbles
In the clay the hero stumbles
Over, down and out.

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LIGHT A CANDLE

Dance and leap through flames of amber,
Ringed by druids' sacred oak,
Fire sparks light, heat, hope, live embers
Fade and die to ash and smoke.

Charms at home, a pot of basil,
Wrap red ribbon round her wrist,
Light a candle, red-rose-scented,
Scatter petals, make a wish.

In the Gothic stone cathedral
One Who Knows bends low her ear,
“Is this where Harry Potter came, Mum?
Can they still do magic here?”

Can they? There I heard confession,
“Nothing else went right for me,
Since we did it on the altar,
August Monday, him and me.”

Young and old climbed up the mountain
Heard the Mass and surged on down,
Leaving lovers, sheep and rabbits,
Rambling free above the town...

“Light a candle then,” I urge,
Redeeming ritual, soul’s release,
Purge a sin or buy a favour,
Bid the waves of guilt to cease.

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HEALING

If I intend on
Getting better
I’ll need trees.

A hollow tree
Where I can heal
In the scent of resin
That bleeds from the bark,

Where I’d sing songs of the silver birch,
Make music on the violin,
Polish conkers, warm and round

And I should plant in a pot
A sweet chestnut, wood brown,
Slipped from its prickly coat,
And wait for the elements
Earth, air and water,
To coax from its kernel
A green live shoot.

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