

Dark Matter

Amy Neilson Smith

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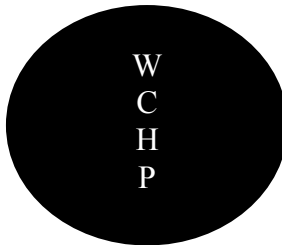
Second Chance

Supporting Mental Health in Performing Arts

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Second Chance

You may need it next

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Some of the poems first appeared in the following publications: *Artemis, Loose Muse – Morgan’s Eye Press* (collated and edited by Agnes Meadows), *Flipped Eye, Ariadne’s Thread, Blue of Noon, Until the Lights Go Out – Thin Skin Publishing, Playerist Literary Magazine, The Keystone Anthology – Dempsey & Windle Publishing* and *Baskalier Publishing*. Other publications include: *Soul Feathers* by *Indigo Dreams Publishing* – charity writing for *Macmillan Cancer*, for this collection Amy’s poems alongside work by Carol Ann Duffy, Maya Angelou and Leonard Cohen, charity writing for *Rennie Grove Hospice – Rhyme and Reason Collection*; this followed being shortlisted by *Pighog Publishing*. As an actress and performance poet, Amy has worked for *The National Theatre Studio, Trafalgar Studios – West End, The Orange Tree Theatre, The Peter Hall Company, The Finborough Theatre, The Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Diorama Theatre/ Hat Trick Productions, The Dome Theatre – Brighton, The Komedia – Brighton, ITV, BBC, The Royal Festival Hall – Poetry Library, Shuffle – Poetry Cafe, The Hackney Yard Theatre, The Royal Pavilion – Brighton, Bermondsey Street Festival, Brighton Festival and The Secret Garden Party*.

From the writer:

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*I dreamed in red: scarlet, vermilion, ruby.
And now I dream in black.*

Book of Blood, Vicki Feaver

for Amy McAllister

– seeing the light

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Unsymbolic

for Sarah Winter

Apparently this artist is unsymbolic;
three hundred and fifty shirts on lines of string,
suspended from the inside dome of the church roof,
tied wrist to wrist, a sea of blues and greys.
Makes me think of the dead, each vacant scrap
holding hands with the next; makes me think
of pyjama-clad Jews left naked in the gas chambers;
makes me think of Heaven, suspended ghosts,
unable to let go of their worldly goods; reminds me
of Jesus walking on water, separating the seas.
Between all of these blues and greys is a bright
yellow shirt, alone, yet hanging with the others;
I think of God, Her emptiness, insignificance;
I think of Judas, shape-shifting to be like
the others; I think why does one have to be
different? Why is my eye drawn to the shade
that doesn't fit? And wanting to be yellow,
so desperately wanting to be yellow, stand out
in this fabricated convention; think I might
say a prayer to myself, ask the universe
to make a God I want to pray to, set the shirts
on fire, watch the glaucous ash fall
and see if my unsymbolic gesture
raises any eyebrows.

There's a tempest in me . . .

for Graham

There's a tempest in me. . .
You rocked the boat and now splinters
of shattered deck and torn sails are left
vomited over the rocks and barnacles
lining my insides; aborted oyster pearls
roll around the contours of my stomach,
acidic marbles . . .

There's a tempest in me . . .
Prospero lies dead, just under my heart,
sharing spilling blood with my atrium;
his staff cracked to pieces, a withered
corpse now not a wizard, a broken back
now, cracked like an egg on a rock. Magic
leaked from his torn body, skin weeping,
bleeding his wizardry into the sea. . .

There's a tempest in me . . .
Miranda wades in grief, screams at the waves
for taking her father. Screams as Caliban now
creeps into her bed on lonely nights, creeps
into her head, dances in her dreams covered
in his own cum. She doesn't know yet . . .
But she carries his son. . .

There's a tempest in me . . .
Dance Ariel, dance, fly like the little devil you are!
Free now he's dead! Fly Ariel, fly, like the little bat
that you are! Free now he's dead! Dance on his grave
little gremlin, you never loved him anyway. Be you
boy or girl, or being or beast, you're free now!
Trapped spirits only taunt souls. Collect like rocks.

There's a tempest in me . . .
Trinculo has forgotten how to jest, lost his trinkets,
Stephano has run out of beer, his goblet gaunt.
Froth dried like flaking skin to his scarlet cheeks.
They're not funny anymore. They've forgotten
how to laugh. The tremulous tightrope of sub-
plot they balanced along, snapped. Got lost
along the way and were eaten by bears in a cave
as they slept, next to the carcass and crown
of our dear friend Lear . . .

There's a tempest in me . . .

I'm sick and I throw up sea water . . .
There's a clear reflection in the puddle I see . . .

There's a tempest in me . . .
I see your face in this frothy mirror . . .
There's a tempest in me . . .
Calm mornings turn into tricky afternoons
thinking of you . . .
There's a tempest in me . . .
Can you see?

And you are the dark eye of the storm.

Dry Land

A blot
across the sky,
the birds are falling

slit the silver smear
of sea; it's like

you chose

to cry,
the one day
I needed it

to be dry.

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