

## A Heaped Handful of Poems

by Chris Richardson

### Revival

Life has awoken,  
Bubbling up in me  
Like a mountain spring  
Breaking out where chalk meets shale.  
It bubbles through the parched grass of grief  
Caressing, renewing the fissured insomniacal earth.  
My senses soak and sharpen.

### Winter Dreaming

The lake shines silver,  
Amplifying the struggling sun  
With a lover's devotion.  
The pristine surface mirrors,  
Sleek and unblemished,  
With a cellophane crinkling of ice in the shallows.  
Frosting fractals film the matt margins.

There are no eyes now for the stately pine,  
Attentive and statuesque,  
With furrowed, cork-encircled trunk  
And needle-shocked umbrella head.  
Light slants across the fields  
Chalk dusted with morning rime.

A vista stretches before me,  
Pastels washed with lime.

### Beyond World's End

You.

Just you.

Only you.

You focus my thoughts like a crystal lens.

My mind shoots arrows at the heavens,

Pitching my strength against the absolute.

Are you still there?

Did you go on...

Transmuted by death's alchemy,

But still within grasp of spirit and soul?

Do you dance like dust in the sunrise?

Do you stream through the elements or sculpt the skies?

Can I reach you?

Can I feel you?

Can I connect?

A synaptic spark to fuse the worlds of time and shadow,

Short circuit the barriers,

Defibrillate the spirit back into life?

I seek you, over and over,

Every hour and every day.

I scream out to you in the open spaces,

Ruminate in the ebb and flow of traffic,

Search my mind for your essence

Whilst car doors slam at midnight.

Questions beam like satellite links,

Seeking resolution.

No chance now to replay and rewind.

No chance to rescue or to save.

Can I tell you,

Tell you that you mattered?

### All at sea

The news of your death

A ripple in the green water

Setting a trajectory

Inexorable, driving to land

I float

A flotsam bubble

Carried, unprotesting,

Led along by the swell of salt water

I can only obsess

Only search

Like trawler bound gulls

Their shrieks splitting the silence

Churchyard Yew Tree: Layston

The setting sun is sinking now,  
Caressing the church tower with its last rays  
Lengthening the shadows of tumbled-down graves  
Ringed safe within my ramparts.

The church looks on, indifferent.  
Shafting light plays in the roofless, unswept aisle,  
Accents the abandoned altar space and stripped-down stonework.  
Soon, invertebrates will be scuttling.

The dark despair of desecration glares behind the lintels  
Yet the flint-studded walls stand, unyielding.  
Fallen leaves eddy round the porch, beyond the broken door,  
Slipping through the bars of chained up gateways.

It was not always like this. I remember,  
Back in the days before bombs and revolutions,  
When the church was whole and life was here,  
And the harvest came in, year after year.

For six hundred years, we have kept watch,  
In silent communion, the church and I.  
Faithful to the boundaries  
Between life and death, earth and sky.

April: A time of pink and yellow

Spring has erupted, spilling flowers everywhere

Cherry trees vie with forsythia

Hyacinths with narcissi

Tulips with daffodil drifts

Week old ducklings scoot along the river

Exquisite in their beige flecked down.

They throng in family groups

Under the watchful eye of mother

The hatchlings dart in random motion

Spinning like whirligig beetles

Dashing hither and thither

Full of enthusiasm, devoid of direction

They glide over the clear water

Congregating in sun warmed pools

Beneath the sycamore's shade.

Each tows a ripple circle

New life bursts out in every corner

Celandines carpet the river banks

Polyanthus parade in the park

Primroses peer from the shrub filled border

### Jungle Telegraph

Bad news! Bad news!

Phones ring and e-mails ping

Just to let you know

Just cause you should hear...

Primeval compulsion stirs

In the ether: Networks etched

By long dead friendships

Activate and hum

We stand together against the dark

Bound by the chant of the medicine man.

Solidarity will hold back the night

Defy the demons of loss and fear

### The Hunt

Alone, under midnight's shadows,

I'm stalking your death again.

I steal though the forest like a panther

I ghost along unmarked trails

I keep silent watch, veiled

By latticed branches

Am I the hunter,

In search of resolution?

Am I the prey,

Compelled by the siren scent?

### Spring Tide at Lowestoft

She sweeps across the morning sands

Smoothing, polishing with ermine edged skirts

Dancing in rapture with the moon

Marking the planet's heartbeat

Like a carnival drummer.

As the melody swirls

The chiffon layers ebb and flow

Whooshing across the beach as she reels.

With the surging swash, the falling backwash,

Surreptitious, she advances.

Wave after wave mark minim and semi-quaver

Variations on four/four time.

The clear salt water spreads and stalls.

Gravity's fingers grasp, sucking at the beach.

The rolling gravel slips and sings.