



Heron

CREATIVE JOURNAL OF
THE KATHERINE MANSFIELD SOCIETY

HERON

Creative Journal of the Katherine Mansfield Society

Issue 2 October 2019



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Introduction: Fragments and Afterlives

A flash of lightning:

Into the gloom

Goes the heron's cry

Matsuo Basho

For Katherine Mansfield, Heron was somewhere else, the imagined perfect place that would be named for her brother, Leslie Heron Beauchamp, killed in the First World War, and inspiration for her return in memory to the world of her New Zealand childhood. As Jan Kemp observes in her introduction to 'The Man from Angola', featured in this edition of *Heron*, 'every human being has an origin relating to "una pezza di terra", as Petrarch taught us', our own piece of earth. But it also seems fitting that the universal symbolism of the heron across many ancient cultures identifies it as a messenger of the spirit world, establishing connection and presence between the living and the dead, and giving to that mystery a sense of location. In ancient Japanese and Chinese mythology, the White Heron inhabits the Isles of the Blessed, its powerful wings conveying souls to the Western Paradise. In Greek mythology Hermes becomes a heron to escort the corpses of the battlefield to the underworld.

For all its association with death, the heron has other roles to play, an expansive symbolism which would surely have appealed to Mansfield, balanced as she was between so many worlds, and engaged deeply by the mysterious process of creation. For the Egyptian imagination, the heron signified the dawn, Spring and the generation of life, being the first form to emerge out of the watery chaos at the beginning of time. And for the ancient Greeks, this powerful bird was also the messenger of inviolable female deities such as Aphrodite and Athena, and associated with young women and girls: herons were presented as pets or erotic gifts, and often depicted beside female figures on ceramics. In the Native American tradition, where the heron's curiosity and wisdom make it a symbol of luck, it is this bird who accompanies shamans on their vision quests between the upper and middle worlds, and who negotiates with deities on their behalf. In Africa the heron communicates easily with the Gods.

In this way the heron might be seen to translate and hold all the fragments of experience and imagination. It offers possibilities for creation, is an antidote for loss. In Maori too the heron, *Te Kotuku*, is a messenger of the spirit world, standing for connection between the afterlife and the world of the living. It represents everything pure and beautiful in Maori mythology, but most importantly, says the Maori tradition, 'the kotuku represents all the people of this land. The kotuku is a traveller, who came to this country and chose to stay'. Thus it is also a bird for our times, where so many people have travelled, like Mansfield, away from their place of origin, either voluntarily or not. Its symbolism expresses our position between worlds, both of place and imagination, and the fact that, for all the distance travelled, as Jan Kemp observes, 'Home is both an origin and a destination', known through the fragments of sensory experience and memory.

It is these that make up the detail of so many of the pieces published in this second edition of *Heron*, feeling towards a language and form which can embody that which is both present and lost.

In 'Constantia', by Nina Powles, neither presence nor absence is to be underestimated as an animating power. There is the play of light which gives substance, enlivening a stuffed bird, and the suddenness of a 'bluish white/teacup', as well as the forbidding photographic image of a woman, now dead, 'encircled by a black feather boa'. In 'The Grief Collector', the double echo of Mansfield and Sappho, through Anne Carson, is layered with Powles' voice too, emerging and taking shape out of its fragmentary form. In 'Birthday' there is the penetrating power of colour, as well as its felt absence: the intense blue in the opening section of Verónica Cobrál's poem gives way to a quality of reverie:

I wash in the blue, deep ink-blue under the piercing-heavy yellow stars melting into the blue'

while in 'Katherine Mansfield sees A Painting by Van Gogh', Rosemary Appleton captures colour as destination: 'This is what she came for://All this/yellow', though the effect lingers and transmutes into other senses: 'At night, she will breathe/their smell of baked pepper,/will see the petals' long, slight curl'. Fragments cohere, and for Cobrál what follows is recognition:

this is the seeing she was learning
It must be
a far, wide, gap but this is its closure
It's only a crack now, to remind them what love is

By contrast the violets in Powles' poem 'The Grief Collector' are 'not blue enough', and the retreating image of Kath MacLean's 'Not in Her Lovely' leaves us with, 'She, no, not in her lovely/blue – waves, wildly, softly, signal fading'. These fragments and echoes speak out of another place and time, but as Anne Carson, writing about her encounter with Sappho, says, 'even though you are approaching Sappho in translation, that is no reason you should miss the drama of trying to read a papyrus torn in half or riddled with holes or smaller than a postage stamp – brackets imply a free space of imaginal adventure'. This sense of building an adventure from details 'smaller than a postage stamp' appears again as stitches and language play together in Sarah Rhea's 'Tricoter':

One slips then passes over another
and the two come together
and carry on
only to be remade
leaving few or many behind
to shape, gather up or cast off.

From each shifting detail a world is being suggested, where, as Jan Kemp says of Mansfield, we can 'read the flora and fauna of her words to find out where she has located the story'. These are animated in Sarah Rhea's poems and photographs much as they are in Mansfield's writing, with a life and story of their own. Inspired by her time spent working at Katherine Mansfield House and Garden, Rhea's photographs, with Mansfield as their own presiding spirit, communicate the beauty and intelligence of each singular form, together with something of the *genus loci*. Woven together with her poems they create a fabric that evokes fragrance, colour, texture, as do the details of Jan Kemp's 'The Casino at Nice'. Kemp's story 'The Man from Angola' also explores the impact of dislocation through a close evocation of place.

Texture gives way to taste in Jessica Whyte's poems 'Simple Pleasures' and 'Killing Time', where memories of food are comforts evoked by Mansfield's letters, with life and death poised at an angle to each other:

a glass of milk,
a boiled egg, an Arabian shawl of silk
to shroud you in

and sickness always a shadow:

In Looe, laid up, she lives off rosebuds,
snaps up fish like a sea lion, milk like a snake,
sighs for fruit, is thrilled by a juicy, meaty orange
that hasn't ripened...

Many of the poems here examine what remains and its power to enliven our remembrance, and sense of location. Iain Britton's 'Vignettes' yoke the present with memory of Mansfield's experience and an even deeper sense of history:

amongst Salisbury's Neolithic
stone humps her mouth
brushes against this
consciousness
of impermanence & she
whispers it's how we dance
with others that matters

as if some kind of secret contact might be made across time. In a similar way Martin Westman's memoir is layered with encounters – with memory, with his mother, with Mansfield, where like 'something out of a time capsule, this long rectangular black and white photograph only reluctantly allows itself to be unfurled, as if eager to quickly close again around its long-kept secret'. His mother's thesis is ephemeral: 'Like a dolphin it seems to have made a brief glittering appearance only to quickly – and, alas, just briefly skimmed - be lost in the depths again.' Yet the details in his account are fully alive and located – the white sandals amongst dark shoes, a diagonally chequered dress, a certain hair style, the date on the photograph itself – and we feel the powerful afterlife of fragments, even in the shadow of the smile which names this piece. As in Iain Britton's vignette there is 'the landlocked fragrance/of her departure', and creative possibility: 'amongst human lanterns/i step into a girl's story'. In 'The Death of Miss Brill', by Shavil Lyu, the tragedy of Miss Brill's apparent anonymity is mitigated by the narrator's attention to detail throughout the story, and presence at the end:

Nobody was alarmed, her scant possessions were boxed up quickly and she was buried within two days. And just like that suddenly there was no trace of her ever being alive in this world...But she was alive to me, once. I was the only testimony of Miss Brill being alive. But what good would that do? I had no place in this world myself.

In spite of the nameless narrator's sense of her own dislocation, who can forget the pathos of the sorry fur, or the narrator's concern? When she says 'she was alive to me, *once*,' that small word carries the weight of the whole story.

Mansfield's necessary preoccupation with death, and her intense love of life, anticipate the way in which writing inspired by her touches on these tensions. No detail too small for her attention, Mansfield was able to make something of everything she encountered - something to endure, however fragmentary, as an antidote for loss. Iain Britton's fourth 'Vignette' offers a creative sympathy with her:

she shows me the imagined
grave of her brother the
epitaph of no fixed
abode i offer solace
in the shape of an orchid's
speckled grin

where one flower in the garden can stand for all others in an endless creative multiplication, and nature appears as benevolent remedy. Nina Powles' prose poem 'Katherine Mansfield Park, Wellington' also invites an imagined communication: 'If I could, I would tell her I like the park best at dusk in summer'. But the darker and unrelenting pressure exerted by the past and its griefs finds expression in Harmony Devillard's translation of a scene from Alma de Groen's play, *The Rivers of China*. Of memory, and of the things that remain, Mansfield says,

'Je n'ai rien d'autre à faire que de me souvenir... Mes pensées aussi doivent se faire soigner.'
(*I have nothing to do but to remember... My thoughts too must be healed.*)

It is perhaps fitting that in Devillard's translation we find Mansfield anticipating both her encounter with Gurdjieff, that most international of teachers, and the world of Fontainebleau, while speaking in French. And fitting too that, far from home, Mansfield found the cure she believed was holistic and universal enough to resolve the troubled aspects of her experience and imagination, something that could yoke together their many elements, and finally bring her to another sense of 'home'.

This second edition of *Heron* brings together voices from all over the world: England, France, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, and parts of Asia. Many of these writers have relocated from their countries of birth, and write in two or more languages. That Mansfield continues to be an inspiration to such a diversity of writers says something about the capacity of her writing to reverberate and create enduring connections, and express in so many ways the symbolism invited by the heron. As Iain Britton has said, commenting on the title for this journal, 'the white heron is a very special bird and is considered a treasure... I think this heron is symbolic of all peoples... a choice KM would endorse, with her unique brand of enthusiasm.'

Lesley Sharpe, editor
May 2019

The Grief Collector

Nina Mingya Powles

After 'Fragment 3' by Sappho, translated by Anne Carson

Fontainebleau, 1923

] to write this down
] yet of the deathless
] of the lovely and the living, you
] nineteenth birthday on the 3rd of May
] me in-between

] swollen
] wrong-colour violets you left in my lap, sitting
in a sunbeam so warm like a spoonful of caramel

] letter dated January somethingth 1914
] *your loving brother*
] French violets are not quite right, not blue enough
] not laughing wildly like you

all night long	[] I am aware of it
] of evildoing
] wounds
] fields
] a clot on the left lung

Constantia

Nina Mingya Powles

Constantia felt everything in the parlour change colour when she pulled the curtains open. The yellow-breasted goldfinch her father brought back from India finely stuffed and perched, glass eyes twinkling brightly, tail feathers painted orange by the light. The celestial globe (a normal globe wouldn't do, said father) stitched all over with crisscrossing constellations glowing as if lit inside. The bluish white teacup left forgotten on the table when the nurse had shouted *please* come quickly! The frame of her mother's portrait inlaid with gold-flaked roses, where a woman encircled by a black feather boa watches her daughter, untouched by the warm light flooding the ghost-room that made Constantia feel, just then, as if all of this had actually mattered.

from **K6: The Vignettes**

Iain Britton

7

I know something you don't know,' said the Buddha —The Daughters of the Late Colonel

& Katya

tastes rain on her lips

the river the moisture

of the grass i take her

badger-spotting we

shoot pheasants & grouse

with our eyes

at the urupa the war dead

walk in their wounds

the poets lick their suppurations

the church still wears

its gas mask K knows

something i don't we pause

amongst Salisbury's Neolithic

stone humps her mouth

brushes against this consciousness

of impermanence & she

whispers it's how we dance

with others that matters

how nature's worm

gyrates its comet-hard

pelvis in the universe



Katherine Mansfield Park, Wellington

Nina Mingya Powles

After we moved away, I often thought about the park. I thought of how I used to practice rolling sideways down the hill. I thought of grass stains on my elbows and dirt beneath my fingernails. I thought of sitting on the seesaw licking the pink icing off hundreds-and-thousands biscuits.

This must be the place where I first saw her name. It was printed in yellow letters on a signpost next to the slide.

If I could, I would tell her I like the park best at dusk in summer, looking up at the green hills looming above. I would ask her if she remembers this – the moon rising and shapes collapsing inside their own shadows, birds flinging themselves out of the bush, calling out to each other in the dark.



from **Birthday**

Verónica Cobrál; dedicated to Katherine Mansfield

1a:

yearly a heart calls back and forth to not itself
green leaves and yellow
ripe plums tiny speckled shivering leaves
business and it all is
and hope last year a birth
to be born again
of course it is
but to be born again means to die and that is the miracle
But anyway, about love:
love is unity in plurality
and the plurality is essential
Love is a relation

this works because only love can transcend reason without becoming delusion
(though this is, to be sure, a statement of faith)
if there's more to say let it be said:
once more a fault, fault-line
harvesting wheat, corn, squash,
last year's moon a hope filled heart and a broken book
while I wash in the blue, deep ink-blue under the piercing-heavy yellow stars melting into the
blue



2a:

How she came to be:
This is how it happened
she came to be, rocking back and forth, red all around
confusion, nausea, dizziness
to spend so much time being at one but uncomfortable
Ride, ride away
she cried
but of course she could not
but to stay?
If you try to leave, your leaving will always take you back
If you stay, you will find yourself far away one day perhaps
Does it make sense?
No – but that's how it works.
At night the shawl was wrapped around her, iridescent embroidery
in the heavy woods
a candle's light reflected, highlighting the patterns
but as she moves they move in and out of darkness.
Neck bent learning to see.



2b:

Fecundity

It *does* come out of emptiness
that shawl that was mentioned before
well, it found another home
a sharp one, between two trees, on a steel knife's point
bathed in white blue heavy wafting downward sunlight
ascending, though, by the looks of it
she came and took it
but not without hesitating first
their eyes met for a moment
recognition
this is the seeing she was learning
It must be
a far, wide, gap but this is its closure
It's only a crack now, to remind them what love is



Cycle

Sarah Rhea

Glowing translucent petals
depart the tree's heavy shade.
Their delicate nature
fights the blemishes
of elemental might.
The crispness of youth
battles impending recoil each day;
perfection alongside decay.
As senescence grips flowers' hue
so too life holds on to death -
balancing upon its very memory
before it falls to the earth
to return renewed
or be swept off by a temporal wind.

Moths

Blossoming allegories
lit the golden lamp of bliss
as looming reminders perched
upon an adjacent branch.

Floating shadows
were carried by the grace of ink
as the belief in releasing
was assured by the tide.

Tricoter

One slips then passes over another
and the two come together
and carry on
only to be remade
leaving few or many behind
to shape, gather up or cast off.

Pace

Asleep in a nightgown of green
the past present, never unseen
stirred only by the lightest caress
of a leaf falling in sunset's dress.
Lost in a nostalgic daydream
disrupted only by a gleaming moonbeam.

Affinities

The arrows were scattered
leaving you flattered
and you were struck at once
and the next day it was extracted
but you kept each arrow on paper
and in your reflection
as you passed swaying mirrors
although one arrow remained
and it was kept close
but also at a distance
for it was not made for shooting
but still it shot you.

Flâneur

Bay windows surge open
allowing a wider view
one that is more potent
in its tones and hues.
No latch, nor catch
could stifle your outlook
as you overtook
your peers with striking jeers
and held firm unbroken yet true.



Hummingbird

Sarah Rhea

O, to seek sweetness!
And never settle for blandness
and still devour the savoury
as your high tea piles up like a castle
with crenellations of crockery
holding delightfully delicate treats
poised for consumption.

O, to seek sweetness!
And never settle for sadness
and still enjoy each tear
as your tea leaves fall into the pot
like dandelions into cupped hands
stirring the brewed beverage
poised for disruption.



Simple Pleasures

Jessica Whyte

Gone, the days when Grandmother would bring her a bowl of hot bread & milk,
gone, the adventuring days of broad beans, cooked over a campfire.
She leaves behind her island, made of cake mixture,
its rocks at low tide strewn with almonds and raisins.
London waits, like a big, brimming bowl of the very best pea soup;
she eats hardboiled eggs out of her hand & drinks milk out of a bottle.

She meets Murry, who, being reared from birth on suet puddings,
is confounded by her first love note, which reads: 'This is your egg. You must boil it.'
Love eats and eats at her heart, while apart
she writes him silly letters, like eating ashes with a fish fork.

In far-west Cornwall, her heavy-ankled servant girl looms through the mist
with a glimmering egg on a tray,
while Frieda makes marzipan and war rages.

In Looe, laid up, she lives off rosebuds,
snaps up fish like a sea lion, milk like a snake,
sighs for fruit, is thrilled by a juicy, meaty orange
that hasn't ripened, among soup squares and blotting paper.
Wearing a raspberry & currant petticoat, her afternoons with Anne are
hung with swags of strawberries,
they talk about raspberries and cherries and plums
and try not to say too often 'when Murry comes'.

On the continent, in the absence of companionship,
Starving with that dreadful, silent hunger,
she discovers that simple pleasures are the refuge of the complex.
She sets sail across tureens of nourishing soup,
staggers over soft mountains of Pommes Purée, melts into marmalade,
so full of violet fish that if she is torpedoed on her way home

she will burst into fins and a mermaid's tail.
Murry waits at the London station, his casserole in a hanky.
In Hampstead, she is told to eat the food of a child of eight,
milk & oranges, newlaid egg-wegs.
She seeks warmer climes to eat her bregglechick in bed,
wintercrack jam on a winking bright tray,
butter flying to her brain,
living off telegrams & oranges & eggs,
she gets the milk habit, a secret tippler,
chooses the fish with the fattest eye.
Her illness no à la carte to be grimaced at and thrown away,
but an infernally boring table d'hôte,
with side dishes she is not allowed to refuse.

In Paris she is mysterious, full of blue rays like a deep sea fishchik,
her handwriting lacks backbone,
there is nothing sweet sound fresh, except the oranges.

In Switzerland, land of milk rivers, butter mountains and cream valleys,
she eats air in slices, with big bits of sun spread on them,
yet all the while she dreams of perpetual picnics,
of living in a biscuit box, on honeydew & Milk of Paradise,
eating out of egg cups,
preparing scrumbunctious little dinners,
going mad dog in the kitchen,
knocking lumps of earth off freshly-pulled carrots, full of emotion,
a feeling too deep for sound or foam.

The food at Gurdjieff's is like a Gogol feast,
she lies among the cows and obeys the orders of Doctor New Milk,
eats quince jam & eggs for breakfast,
scrapes at carrots, makes mountains of breadcrumbs.
Her last Christmas pudding is made in a baby's bath,
a single coin, floating in currants.

Killing Time

Jessica Whyte

Wait. Beyond the careless Furies' door
supine, you beg me for a glass of milk,
a boiled egg, an Arabian shawl of silk
to shroud you in, as you were rapt before.

Exiled from the kingdom of the well
you sip *tisanes* and implore the maid
to bring tea trays when your nerves are frayed
by isolation, and that summoning bell

which brings me, breathless, to your invalid bed,
where you remind me of small cruelties said
in haste, in hurt, in jealousy of words
as yet unwritten, soft as trill of birds.

The Death of Miss Brill

Shavil Lyu

No one knew when the old spinster on the second floor came down with a bad fever. But by Sunday, she could not even get out of her bed. Mrs. Mansfield sent *me* upstairs to bring her some dry bread and herbal remedies, probably as a punishment for not scrubbing the lobby floor hard enough. What's the point of hard scrubbing anyway? Time and dust and mildew would eat it away eventually—would eat us all away someday.

The tiny dark room on the second floor smelt of moth powder and sick old lady. Brisk morning wind slipped through the only window across the room. A little sunshine would do everybody some good. But there is no sunshine to be let in on this side of the house.

I settled the tray on the bed stand near Miss Brill's head. Her skin was sallow but her face was red as she coughed and tried to squint her eyes to see who was coming. I rushed out of the room, not even bothering to say a word.

And that became my new routine. For several times a day I was obligated to come up the cracking stairs and attend to the old woman. The more I was stuck with her the more I regretted not scrubbing hard enough.

At night as I sneaked into the kitchen to grab some food, Mrs. Mansfield always asked me how Miss Brill was doing, and I always reassured her the old spinster was indeed, getting worse. That seemed to please the chubby old woman and she would turn back to resume gossiping with her flock of women, leaving me alone with my cold supper. I never gossiped. I rarely even talked. But their slanders and sneers wafted into my ears and stuck in my head. Probably because I had nothing in my brain to keep them out.

Miss Brill never talked with anyone either. On Wednesday the coughing subsided and she seemed to have revived a little bit, staring at the ceiling and muttering things to herself cheerfully for most of the day. I didn't pay much attention to it at first, until that afternoon when I sent in lunch and heard clearly, Miss Brill called out with a smile on her wrinkled face, "so nice to meet you Bridget."

Who was Bridget?

"So nice to meet you Matthew. What is the book you are reading? – *Don Quixote*..."

Miss Brill was making conversations. With some people that lived inside her mind.

The days dragged on outside the cupboard of a room. People come and people go; Mrs. Mansfield and the other old women still gossiped about every family and newcomer on this street. No one was aware of the old lady slowly dying above their head, just like no one was aware when she was healthy and roaming the street. Sometimes it felt like Miss Brill was dead to them already. Sometimes, it was as if she never was alive.

One night when I came back up to check on her for the last time, she was unexpectedly conscious and seeing as I entered, raised a finger to point at the tiny closet taken up the corner. Not knowing what she wanted I opened the closet and a white box lying on the bottom caught my attention. I held it up and inside laid a simple, lonely fur necklet looking up at me with sad little eyes. I drew near to the bed and lay the fur around her neck. I squeezed her bony hand, and she smiled.

I felt something bitter melting in my heart. The fur was the lonely woman's prized possession. She must have really cherished it, only taking it out on Sundays to wear to church, to wear to the garden. In the dim light, a contended look spread upon her face as she held the fur near. What was going on in that wretched mind of hers now? Was she reliving her golden days when she was really, truly alive? Was there such a time at all? Was she making up conversations with people from her memory again? Was she aware, that in this life we never had a role? We were nobody's family, nobody's friends; we were no part of this world.

The next morning found Miss Brill dead peacefully in her bed. Nobody was alarmed, her scant possessions were boxed up quickly and she was buried within two days. And just like that suddenly there was no trace of her ever being alive in this world. I knew now to others, she never was.

But she *was* alive to me, once. I was the only testimony of Miss Brill being alive. But what good would that do? I had no place in this world myself.

SM to KM

Sarah Rhea

Perhaps you sat
pursing your fingers
around a plucked bird
dipped in permanence
and wet with change,
looking through progressive panes.

Recumbent you basked
in the triumph of culture
and divinity of breath
willing it to reconcile the mess
as your untamed strides
described themselves with vigour.

Upright you stood à l'étranger
wielding your mightier sword,
carving each fighting line
as you were consumed by endurance
and becoming divine.

Nectar

Sarah Rhea

This kinetic sculpture
draped in the vivid beauty of colours bleeding
is disrupted by a natural tax.
The collector finds levity
although perching precariously
one sees vicariously
the impact of known brevity
and how one could act
to go beyond conceding
and to oneself be pure.



Reverie

Sarah Rhea

Parchment allows for flowers to be flattened
and for the flowers to be penned
until we wonder what kind of flowers they were,
if they were flowers at all
and if the flowers blossoming today
might be penned tomorrow
or just belong to yesterday.

from **The Vignettes**

Iain Britton

1

'that reckless, defiant indifference that one knows only in dreams' —An Ideal Family

intractable perverse

because she is

because i know her

better than most i've

lived with her in this

place lived with her

since she first grabbed her

grandmother's Celtic shawl

held it stroked it

this morning's no different

she wears it for comfort

for warmth the window

shuts firmly on a spectrum

of light her focus turns

inwards Katya has shut

herself in with 3 blue-

painted apparitions 3

jugglers tossing soft toys

A dark porch, half hidden by a passion-vine, that drooped ... as though it understood' —An Ideal Family

at night the sweetness
of wood burning the smoke
hanging above chimneys
the sea-hug of baches
amongst the sand dunes
i can't get enough of it
i live here with my warring
selves like K i write letters
to friends parents mind-readers
she tells me of England
of God's bruises on her lungs
his refusal to hang her
from his conscience
she tells me about *Sons and*
Lovers buildings made
of poems the crossroad
cultures of Wilfred Owen's guns
passionfruit loops
around my porch
i can't get enough of her
she lies in the middle
of a field of yellow grass

from **Vignette 4**

she shows me the imagined
grave of her brother the
epitaph of no fixed
abode i offer solace
in the shape of an orchid's
speckled grin



'Out of the smudgy little window you could see an immense expanse' —Life of Ma Parker

families return to homes
clipped to the flanks of hills
the harbour is a passage of
stillness a voiceless water
of murmurs the woman
smokes i smoke
we share a pipe & a small
funnel of peace endures
the beach is a reminder
a white line of yesterday
the city's streetlights drop
like necklaces into valleys
we recall prophecies of visits
to Te Wairoa
visits to the talking stones
to fables of ancient people
out of this night
a tohunga's lens
is deliberately smudged

The Casino at Nice

Jan Kemp

Was it to Nice you went? Well, you might remember it.
You must have known Dufy'd loved it, if you did.
Peeping between the palms onto the sweep of *Baie des Anges*.
Playing in the casino. Winsome. Lose some. Such is life!
Those little prized bits we try to prise apart
to keep them whole or in compartments
if they swamp us.
Women do.
I mean their minds coalesce things more don't they
than men who matchbox this or shoebox that?
You'd have to say. Or Raoul. Each one. The sun.
Blue painted chair on the beach. Smooth stones underfoot.
Angel-fish Bay. Mixing with the riff-raff of the Mediterranean
as you stroll past the cupola of the Negresca
down the *Promenade des Anglais*. Not bad.
In fact, quite *naive*. Don't you think?

A Shadow of a Smile

Martin Westman

Like something out of a time capsule, this long rectangular black and white photograph only reluctantly allows itself to be unfurled, as if eager to quickly close again around its long-kept secret: a display of about 140 people sitting or standing in four rows; participants and no doubt staff of a "Summer Vacation Course in 20th Century English Literature", captured by Panora Ltd., 56 Eagle Street, London W.C.1. The year is 1949.

They are outside, in a street, before a stone building; part of a parked car shows to the right; to the left a street corner. Smiling, at ease, having come this far, having survived a war. Ties, floral dresses, open collars, shirtsleeves, handbags, white sandals among dark shoes. Women sitting in front, men standing behind, but exceptions also abound. One man is black and one looks Asian. Their faces are distinct and vivid, as if this was not that much before yesteryear, as if they were keeping quiet just an instant for the photographer, with talk and laughter about to burst forth again. And there, twenty-fifth in the second row from the front, right of centre - that's you, standing very upright ,

looking straight at me, a bit shy or sullen, but unmistakably proud, with a shadow of a smile, in a striking diagonally chequered dress, with a film-star-curly hairdo, looking so young, almost a little girl among the lot.

How little I heard, except as the odd passing mention, and asked about all this, while it was still time. Is that your friend Mimi, whom you came back to visit years later for a few weeks, standing by your side to the right, looking exceptionally not into the camera but amusedly, even tenderly at you? Was this before or after you wrote your graduate thesis, back at university in Helsinki, on Katherine Mansfield; before or after you wrote your glowing essay on KM's friend and literary rival Virginia Woolf (*"to read her for the first time was something of a sensation. A new world seemed to open..."*), earning the remark *"interesting and intelligent appreciation"*.

The KM thesis, or your handwritten first version of it, I can't just now relocate among the still partly unordered things you left behind - although I remember having held it in my hand. Like a dolphin it seems to have made a brief glittering appearance only to quickly – and, alas, just briefly

skimmed – be lost in the depths again. This was the thesis that made your professor in a luncheon queue stoop from his Olympian heights to suggest you continue towards a higher degree. Instead, you took your mother's cue to waive your career and support your husband's, becoming an academic housewife with swim-preventing infections, summer blueberry-picking, English and American novel-reading and English Ladies. Later came part-time librarianship and cautious feminism.

In much later years, already too late to ask you, I stumble upon Finnish poet Pauliina Haasjoki's poem "Letters from the beach" (in her *"Aallonmurtaja" /Breakwater/,* Otava, Helsinki, 2011) in which she makes use of lines from KM's letters and diaries (*"The sea sounds like a big old rake...At dinner we were joined by an old man who writes for children"*). In a poetry workshop I attend, one task is to translate this poem from the original Finnish into Finland's second national language Swedish, and your half-forgotten KM connection swims into view.

And only last summer, before finding your essay – hand-written! – on VW I'm blown away by the luminous beginning of "Mrs Dalloway", which you also quote from (*"So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance and fall; collect and fall..."*). Now, at long last wading into my first Mansfield, "At the Bay", having an experience of being awakened from a long half-sleep, of an almost life-long mist dispersing, I get an inkling of the kind of lenses you were looking at the world through. Your young bold accomplished self catches me off guard, looking out from that panorama group pic, so full of things to still convey, three years before you became my mother.



In memory of Nina Eva Elisabeth Westman, b. Helander (1927-2009)

from **The Vignettes**

Iain Britton

8

'and he turned over the pages until a title struck his eye —Something Childish but very Natural '

amongst human lanterns
i step into a girl's story
a slideshow of a London
vaudeville of night under
a neon strip of colour
inside this flat
temptations split open
a panorama of two people
painting haiku verses
on the blank pages
of their bodies Katya
remembers her mother's
maniacal habits of sitting
in dark rooms herself
in a dark room voices
shaping an emptiness
a foetal image in suspension
she remembers
waking up daffodils
of feeling the excited heartbeats
of children running
into sand dunes

'The windows were open wide, the shutters put back, and the light glared in' —The Man without a Temperament

this ceremony for the day's
burning fades
i've this empathy
for the hangers-on who live by
mirages alone for the ones
whose bronze hands have been
hammered into bowls Katya's
like this—she picks up
cleans up knows the delicateness
of someone's frailty
she opens her shutters
to the chalk-scarred hillside
of a war canoe with glaring
white eyes & paddlers dripping
sunlight she sees a man
clothed like a kotuku
his family roots
twisting from his body
she opens her windows &
antlered branches climb in
the ceremony for something
better begins

Haven't you got any Houses of Boxes?' she said —How Pearl Button was Kidnapped

in London i sleep in K's bed
only the landlocked fragrance
of her departure remains
her birthright photographed
for her house built on ruins



Katherine Mansfield Sees a Painting by Van Gogh

Rosemary Appleton

KM attended the Post-Impressionist Exhibition in London in 1910

She trips lightly up the Grafton's steps,
her breath a pale bloom in the winter air.
This is what she came for:

All this
yellow
in tones she remembers
from her childhood paintbox:
Lemon, Indian, Winsor Deep.

Ah, the brave glare
of these flowerheads
safe against the vase's curve
their blunt, breezy joy
blazing from the artist's bold mind and
there, his first name,
printed like a child's.

At night, she will breathe
their smell of baked pepper,
will see the petals' long, slight curl,
press her palm against
the dense, dark seeds
packed tight like promises,
will want to loose them, shake them free
from those heavy heads sinking on their buckling stems.

from Naming our soil – KM Conference Bandol, 10-12 June 2016

Jan Kemp

...every human being has an origin relating to “una pezza di terra”, as Petrarch taught us, when standing on Mont Ventoux looking way over towards the Mediterranean, he initiated us all into individualism and the Renaissance.

This ‘ground beneath one’s feet’ slips from under when we travel and take in new worlds, environments, and so doing fashion for ourselves another more mobile identity. Nevertheless, it still seems to remain a necessity to know where you ‘come from’. ‘I was born there’, we all say, whatever our relationship to the birthplace is later. There is always some metaphorical umbilical cord linking us back to what we first knew, that first gave us foothold and then a first identity in the world.

...Some of us become expatriates, in the happy position of having that choice, those who can return home whenever they’d like to and others become exiles, because it would be very dangerous for us to remain ‘at home’ and continue to profess to the things we believe in.

What happens then, when we as expatriate or exile become writers and write of our travels or of our home for that matter, from a different position around the globe as that first place? What shifts are there in our perspective and therefore in our ‘naming’ of that place? And where except in the observing consciousness in each of us does this take place!?

...That Mansfield looks back into early memory after such a shock [the death of her brother] is surely important. She is clutching for that ‘pezza di terra’ of the mind; she needs to name it; to revisit it. As in so many of her stories set in relatively vaguely defined places which might be England, might be France, might be New Zealand, we read the flora and fauna of her words to find out where she has located the story. ‘The Prelude’ and ‘At the Bay’ are set in specific New Zealand locations, but Mansfield didn’t feel it necessary for example to name her story ‘At Day’s Bay’.

By contrast, and because my story also has a political agenda, I did feel it necessary to give both its location and place name of the Hotel Bela Vista in Macau, near Hong Kong. And the talk between the two main characters on the Bela Vista veranda, though skirmishing the topic, refers to the Angolan war of 1985. Do these references date the story? I do hope not. Hemingway wrote of a particular war in ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls’ or there are his Spanish Civil War stories.

Magical realism and the morphing of one character into another is something I was so pleased afterwards to see I’d achieved, as a creative writer reading over what she’d just written after she’d written it. That the Vasco da Gama of the story is actually a fictive invention in a lonely young woman’s mind as she sits on a veranda in what is, as the time of the story, still a Portuguese colony, might be thought of as local flora and fauna; just as a print of the Schevagin painting of Napoleon’s retreat from the Russian snow in actuality was something I had seen hanging in the dining room of the Bela Vista Hotel, just inside from the veranda.

One might compare the shimmering moments of Mansfield’s Beryl looking at the pear-tree in her story ‘Bliss’ to those of Vasco da Gama, boy with the blistered lips, profile portrait of a Roman or was it an Egyptian funereal mask of a young man to see how the suspension of realistic narrative disbelief functions for Mansfield and for me as authors.

My denouement and resolution at the story's end which spells out the whole point of having written it – to reach the moment of serendipity, the epiphanal moment between two young travellers, each far from home but finding something that links them that gives them courage and strength, however tiny it is, could be regarded perhaps as Mansfieldian; and again could be regarded as tying up the plot too neatly. Though, the uncertainties of what each of them will do next remains open.

Bela Vista or The Man From Angola, a traveller's tale

Jan Kemp

From the outside it has the appearance of what Jessett imagines a hillside *hacienda* would be like. A sprawling shape made of yellow-painted stucco, dressed with brown shutters, built against a slope. The verandah overlooks a low, white, pillared wall which girds the children's hop-scotch court on the second plaza, a floor below. Jessett leans over the verandah balustrade the better to read off the chalked roman figures and wonders at the multitudes of languages children speak without thinking. They chuck down small pieces of slate as markers. Now and then, their chatter and laughter bursts into a squabble over the position of a marker in relation to the chalk lines, faint in the dusk light. Phonemes of Portuguese float up. But Jessett cannot break these exacting linguistic bubbles except for the odd number or expletive, that any traveller soon picks up. She settles back at her table, to sip at her glass of wine and watch the evening.

The bay's brown water sifts in, gone silver in the light the casino casts across the bay, from its dominant position on the further headland. Cars wind around the bends of Rua da Praia Grande keeping to the level horizon of the waterfront road. Their lights are intermittently visible through the trees, all along the sea-wall, where this afternoon she walked past the fishing-nets, giant pale-brown cobwebs suspended on stilts over the water. The elegant span of the Vista Bridge asks the eye to follow it, from the tip of the further headland right across the estuary. From each lamp on the bridge, a tall reflected tunnel shimmers on the water's surface making an ephemeral grille of light. On this side, the shimmers disappear into the tops of the Morton Bay fig-trees, that edge the Rua da Praia Grande, another level yet below the plaza. Two small cannons sit on either side of the plaza, facing the bay. One of the children sits desultorily astride a cannon, back to the bay, watching the others.

Jessett can now hear the sounds of a diesel motor from an invisible boat about mid-bridge. Before dusk, sampans and fishing trawlers sailed under the bridge and up the length of the bay. Perhaps

the boat will come into view as a silhouette passing through the shimmering light of one of the grille bars and shift course, just past the bridge, to centre itself in the channel that leads right up the Pearl River estuary and into China.

Jessett's gaze pans back to the Lisboa, opposite the entrance to the Vista Bridge. Occasionally, car-lights driving off the bridge glint on the metallic gold S-bends that architecturally and decoratively trim the hotel-casino so that in the half-light it looks like a giant golden wedding cake or an elaborately dressed flamenco parlour, from which dancers might pour. Instead, a river of money flows here, from the pockets of the Cantonese-speaking, smoking, hawk-eyed *amabs* of Hong Kong, who guard the gaming boards within, into the ocean of China's foreign exchange, half-heartedly hidden behind the facade of Macau.

It is at this spot, on the near headland, and seated on the Hotel Bela Vista verandah, that Jessett meets Vasco da Gama. She is drinking her second glass of wine and watches a table of deaf and dumb people, their faces caught animated in expressive poses in the candle-light, who are talking in the dining room, beyond the brown door-shutters, that open onto the verandah. They appear to be enormously happy, despite their handicap. Or, are they merely gesticulating and Jessett, at this distance, is unable to hear them over the sounds of cutlery being washed in the kitchen or above the low drone of traffic, that comes like an inhuman hum from the bay?

Da Gama steps out through the door-shutters and before she knows it, he's asked Jessett if he can sit at her table. Jessett thinks him extremely forward, but she admires audacity. How can she refuse? She likes his boots. And the way he sits. Sprawls actually. It's not often the world's reversed, but the minute she looks in his face, she knows he's seeing things. She wants to know if he's keen on *jaialai* or dog-racing, if he has the abandon of the gambler about him.

"Who are you, then?"

"I'm Vasco da Gama," he volunteers, as if he were all Portugal.

"Truly!" she says, mockingly.

"But of course; here is my card."

Jessett looks at it as he says, "ah, it is Portuguese wine you are drinking." He sniffs at her glass. "I can tell from the aroma. May I buy you another?"

Jessett nods weakly. His card reads *Vasco da Gama, Explorer and Wine-Merchant*. On the reverse side are engraved Chinese characters Jessett knows say the same thing, in those intricately-drawn, stylish strokes. She tucks one corner of the card under the empty wine carafe and it makes a sharp flicked sound, as it hits the hard table.

Drinkers sit on verandahs and also men who have lost a woman and want to examine their thoughts to find out why, whilst masquerading as devils-may-care. Jessett notices one of this kind beyond Vasco da Gama, while the latter is calling imperatively for the waiter, one whose thin shoulders show their thinness through his shirt. The man she watches cannot be more than twenty-five. When he turns profile to look at the bay and suck in at his cigarette, Jessett can see he has an undershot chin and lips that stick out like blisters, imagining they are being kissed. Quite ugly. Yet he has beautiful, well-lashed eyes like a portrait in a Roman mosaic. She wants to remark on this to da Gama, but he is so full of waiters and wine, that there is no space for her words and to draw his attention to another gentleman would not be seemly, so she keeps her silence.

Napoleon looked longer at the Russian snow and with more bitterness, for men take defeat to heart in such a way that women might well teach them to ride it with a kind of patience, Jessett is thinking. It would describe this Vasco accurately enough, she would imagine, if a grand plan of his got botched. Yet somehow you knew his plans weren't of the botching kind. They'd work, however mad they were, or he'd phase them out and others in like tides, so you'd never know exactly what failed. He was too cunning for that or just too street-wise to let it show.

Jessett wondered if he wanted her. It was hard to say at this stage. But how could she tell him she wasn't in the habit of picking up strange men, without putting her palms right up to his eyes for him to read the progress of the lines? There was little time for courtship. Her jet-foil for Hong Kong was leaving the next day at noon, unless she took the three o'clock ferry, for which she had no booking. No, no would have to be no, and it would be best for him if he realised this soon, then he couldn't accuse her of leading him on. Or maybe she'd read him quite wrongly and all he wanted was verandah conversation and a chance to boast or to test out his mental machismo, by having her have to keep the dazzle out of her irises. A conquest of the mind. She couldn't be sure. Men after all are men.

Jessett remarked that the fishing trawlers at sea looked like giant arachnids walking the water and asked him if he knew how to sail or rope a horse and didn't they come to the same thing? Da Gama laughed loudly, then sipped his wine saying that as he was an explorer, adventure was what thrilled him most. It couldn't buck him off. And that he knew how to ride discoveries.

"I came over on the Flying Ibis," Jessett said, by way of distraction, "and you?"

"I come over everywhere on anything," da Gama said and laughed again, "I told you, I explore. I don't die off. I've been around life-times. I'm historic."

Was he telling her something mystical? Jessett pinched herself. The guy was nuts. She liked a wild eye but not wilder than an egret's. The thing must have some thought to it. Some sane chord that ties it to a common sense. Her glance wandered over the grille of light. Otherwise, it falls apart.

She looked back at him to see da Gama, profile turned to the estuary. And before her eyes, the boy beyond, with the blistered lips, vanished as a separate entity and became part of da Gama, who pouted more now, than he had done at first; and when he turned back to her, a sadness made his expression far less bullish.

"You see before you," he said, "another of my selves, another lifetime of mistake, disappointment and failure, another discovery that I must ride. Now, will you come to my room? I wish to share something with you."

Jessett went, not like a lamb, but like a goat, intrepid, tasting the air, musty in the Hotel Bela Vista passage from the humidity, keeping her mind off da Gama's boots, which swaggered and seduced her. I shall keep my mind focused on the damp ceiling patches, she determined. No one can lure someone to bed with them, to have them look up at green mould, however spectacularly emerald it is. He was telling her with his lips, not his boots, of Luis de Camoes, the sixteenth century Portuguese poet, who wrote his epic by the rocks near the Camoes Grotto and how he would take her there after breakfast the next morning, if she liked.

Why go to men's rooms? Jessett was kicking herself. Doomed again. It must be the wine. If only she had a husband! Some excuse. Did she truly need another fly-by-night discovery of this particular kind? Jessett determined in that second, she'd had enough, sure that Camoes' poem read aloud in Portuguese would be merely an excursion before the main voyage, which would be her. She apologised for the manner of her exit to the onward-walking boots and retreated, tiptoeing quickly back down the passage.

* * * * *

Jessett was back by the darkened alcove where the hotel receptionist's desk sat at the top of the wide stairway that led up from the street, where the taxi delivered guests to the back entrance of the hotel. The clock above the desk read five past eleven. And then he emerged from behind an internal pillar, near the vestibule where guests sat, whilst a bill was being toted up, or sat to catch their breath, waiting for the porter to carry the bags up, the boy-man with those beautiful eyes and the blistered lips.

"Would you talk to me?" he tentatively asked Jessett, who nodded and indicated the vestibule seat.

As they moved towards it, the dining hall door opened and like a troop, the deaf and dumb crowd walked past, all dark-haired and dressed up for the dinner they'd had; perhaps three families. They walked through the reception area and moved up the staircase that lead to the choicest rooms in the hotel, each with a balcony that looked over the bay. They called out their good-nights to one another, *Boa Noite, Boa Noite* and Jessett knew then it must have been the cutlery and no charade.

"My English is not so..."

"Never mind," Jessett said, "my...my whatever you speak is probably not so...what do you want to talk to me about?"

"Ah, such sad things."

"Where are you from? Why are you here?"

"I'm from Angola."

"In Africa? But then..."

"Yes, you see, not all Africans are black. It was a Portuguese colony, you know. And I myself have married to a black woman." The fighting, the civil war, the killing, my country, his lips explained. His eyes.

"So, I came here to work. To send the money to my family. But I have not seen my wife and children for three years. I came tonight to sit, to think on the verandah, to drink wine. I come every Saturday. And I see you alone. Like me alone. And think I might talk. Some words."

"Where do you work?"

"On the far island. I am construction site engineer. We build a town. You work?"

"In Hong Kong. For a film company. I translate Chinese and English for the films we make."

"We are same generation. Not like the older man you talked to."

"You watched us?"

"Yes. The one with the pretty boots. The one you followed away. Forgive my saying. I think you had spend the night with him?"

"No, he just wanted to show me something, that's all...a book...a poem."

"A poem? Ah, this is song without music. I sing you poem I can? About my country. You will hold my hands?"

His voice shook and despite the warm night, his body shook too as if he were cold.

"It is three years since I touched woman."

They sat in the near dark in the vestibule and he sang and Jessett held his hands and her mind roved over the unlikelihood of predicting she would be gently holding the hands of a man from Angola, who sang so sadly for his country and the tortures it knew, as a man from Somalia, or an Iraqi Kurd or a man or a woman from countless torn-apart countries, she'd never been to, might.

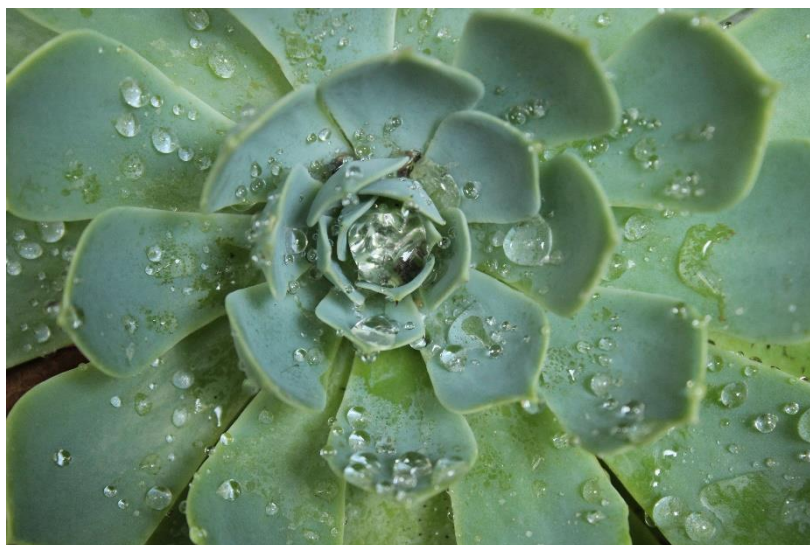
In the morning after breakfast on that verandah beyond the brown door-shutters and at the far end where the wind blew your hair away and she could watch the Portuguese families (the children would be cousins because the three mustachioed gentlemen were brothers, she surmised), she glanced back over the bay and up towards the estuary. The light came totally from another slant and the tide was out, making huge reflective mounds from the mud-flats. The grille was gone. And of course, so too, the empty wine carafe, the card.

She read the hotel register as the slow old Chinese clerk added up her expenditure. As she had thought, no da Gama in Room 207. Nobody at all. So, she *had* imagined him?

And Alonzo from Angola would be back tomorrow on his construction site under a hard hat, interpreting the Cantonese tones of the workers he supervised, trying to give clear instructions, while his heart turned over like the raw soil under the bulldozer.

Jessett thought over all this again, on the slow ferry back to Hong Kong. The long, old, slow ferry built like a real boat. She looked at her hand on the railing, resting lightly there, the aquamarine stone of a ring reflecting the sunlight, translucent for a moment, against the great wash and churn of water the ferry's propellers sent up from under the sea, as if the sea was foaming with pleasure, as the boat moved into it.

And though she was alone, she felt that her solitude had opened, that it was full of space and that there was a landscape there, over which she could move; and that it was peopled with strangers, with whom, however new they were to her, she could, however detachedly, begin to share small things.



from **The Vignettes**

Iain Britton

6

'There is the whole psychology of a people; and how un-French—how un-French' —Je ne parle pas français

the autumn crunches
on thinly-webbed leaves
broken twigs a storm's
brief visit Katya
listens to Elgar's
concerto for cello & tugs
contemplatively at her hair
i've decorated my flat
in scenes from the antipodes
i've placed her at the very
centre of a lake which was
once a crater a flesh wound
in a red giant's thigh
i've placed her at the head
of my table with Libra's
planets orbiting
a carved gift knotted
about her neck birthday music
plays from the bedroom
while she reads
Je ne parle pas Français
through the smoking threads
of a candle

Les Fleuves de Chine d'Alma De Groen

pièce traduite et adaptée de l'anglais par Harmony Devillard

ACTE I

*

Scène 3

Londres, 1922. KATHERINE est assise dans le jardin, plongée dans la lecture d'une lettre.

MURRY sort de la maison derrière elle, se rend compte qu'elle tousse, et rebrousse chemin pour rentrer de nouveau. KATHERINE le voit faire.

KATHERINE : J'aurais dû naître crocodile. C'est la seule créature, selon Sir Thomas Browne, qui ne tousse pas.

MURRY : Tu ne devrais pas être là dehors.

KATHERINE : Je pensais attendre ici jusqu'à ce que Lawrence s'en aille. [*Ton moqueur :*]
« Comment vas-tu, Katherine ? »... « Oh, je me porte comme un charme. Merci, Lawrence. »

MURRY : Tu ne lui as pas demandé non plus comment il allait.

KATHERINE : Parce que ça le terrorise. À chaque fois qu'il me voit, c'est sa propre maladie qu'il voit le regarder en face.

MURRY : Pauvre bonhomme. Personne n'a envie d'imaginer Lawrence malade.

KATHERINE : Personne n'a envie d'imaginer qui que ce soit malade !

MURRY : Tu ferais mieux de rentrer. Il fait trop froid pour toi dehors.

[*KATHERINE reste où elle est.*]

KATHERINE : J'étais en train de penser à ma mère.

MURRY : S'il te plaît, rentre.

KATHERINE : Un jour, elle m'a dit qu'elle pensait qu'elle aurait mieux fait de ne pas se marier, qu'elle aurait mieux fait de devenir explorateur.

[*Tout à son souvenir, elle sourit.*]

Elle rêvait des fleuves de Chine... Je lui ai demandé ce qu'elle savait des fleuves de Chine, puisque ma mère ne connaissait strictement rien à la géographie – moins qu'un enfant de dix ans. Elle a admis qu'elle n'en savait rien, mais elle a dit : « Mais je *sens* quel chapeau je devrais porter ! » J'ai le mal du pays, pas toi ? C'est malsain de vivre entouré de pierres et de cheminées.

MURRY : Nous pourrions louer pour l'été une maison en Cornouailles.

KATHERINE : En Cornouailles ?

MURRY : J'ai entendu parler d'un endroit près de Saint-Ives.

KATHERINE : Proche des Lawrence.

MURRY : Oui, forcément.

KATHERINE : Proche de combien ?

MURRY : La maison voisine. Il dit que c'est exactement ce qu'il nous faut. La tour de Katherine, c'est comme ça qu'il l'appelle.

KATHERINE : Une envie de m'enfermer, peut-être ?

MURRY : C'est juste une figure de style, chérie. Ce n'est pas une vraie tour.

KATHERINE : C'est que tu la connais déjà en long, en large et en travers, c'est ça ?

MURRY : Il dit que le loyer est très abordable et que l'on pourrait sans doute louer ici et en tirer quatre guinées par mois.

KATHERINE : Mais toutes nos affaires sont là !

MURRY : On le loue en meublé. Ça fera *cinq* guinées !

KATHERINE : Je n'aime pas la Cornouailles. Et Frieda me fait peur. Je n'ai pas envie de passer ensemble l'été entier à faire l'autruche pour esquiver les casseroles et les fers à repasser.

MURRY : Nous ne serons pas obligés de leur rendre visite tous les jours.

KATHERINE : Bons dieux, j'espère bien que non.

[*Pause.*]

Je passe tous les hivers loin de toi. On pourrait au moins passer l'été ensemble.

MURRY : Nous sommes ensemble, là.

KATHERINE : Ce n'est pas étonnant que Virginia parvienne à écrire. Un toit sur la tête, tous ses biens à disposition, son mari à portée de voix...

MURRY : Je *suis* là !

KATHERINE : Tu as prévu tout ça avec Lawrence !

MURRY : Nous en avons discuté, c'est tout.

KATHERINE : Jack, il y a des livres qui apparaissent dans la maison que tu ne me montres même pas, dont tu ne me parles jamais. Si je ne te demande pas ce que c'est, tu les ranges sans un mot. Tu sais bien que je peux à peine sortir, que je peux difficilement me rendre jusque dans une librairie...

MURRY : Je suis désolé.

KATHERINE : Je fais à peine partie de ta vie à présent. La tour de Katherine ? Je n'ai pas besoin de m'emmurier vivante derrière un tas de briques. J'ai l'impression que tu n'es jamais plus heureux que quand je ne suis pas là.

MURRY : Ce n'est pas vrai !

KATHERINE : Tu te mets à fleurir en hiver. On te voit pousser des branches et des feuilles. Ça se lit dans tes lettres : le soulagement ! À chaque ligne.

MURRY : J'arrive mieux à m'exprimer à l'écrit.

KATHERINE : Oui. Tu ne risques pas d'être « distrait » par autre chose.

MURRY : Tu reviens sur tout ce que j'ai fait de mal, mais tu ne te souviens pas des bons moments.

KATHERINE : Je m'en souviens. Je n'ai rien d'autre à faire que de me souvenir. C'est bien là la source de ce qui m'empêche d'aller mieux. Je ne contrôle plus l'activité de mon esprit. Ce n'est pas seulement physiologique. Mes pensées aussi doivent se faire soigner.

MURRY : C'est n'importe quoi.

KATHERINE : Vraiment ? [*Tout bas.*] Tu ne me prends jamais dans tes bras. Je t'ai vu, quand je tousse...

[*Elle s'interrompt d'elle-même. Une pause.*]

Est-ce que tu crois qu'il faut qu'on continue ?

MURRY [*l'air sombre*] : On n'en est quand même pas là.

KATHERINE : C'est ça, la différence entre nous. Je trouve qu'« être là », c'est déjà extraordinaire.

J'aimerais bien en rester là pendant un moment.

[*Pause.*]

Savouer les toutes petites choses : passer le balai dans la maison, cueillir une fleur pour orner la table, partir en toute hâte pour arriver juste à temps sur le quai où tu me tomberas dans les bras... aller dans ta chambre, passer mes bras autour de toi, et te souffler : « Regarde. Regarde ce diamant de lumière dont les feux passent entre les volets ! »

[*Elle frissonne.*]

Je sais très bien qu'en vérité je suis assise à regarder par la fenêtre alors que derrière moi la maison est en flammes.

[MURRY *passse ses bras autour d'elle. Il la tient dans ses bras jusqu'à ce qu'elle s'éloigne de lui.*]

J'imagine que maintenant je peux m'affubler du bon chapeau et du bon esprit pour la Chine.

MURRY : Tu veux dire, pour la Cornouailles ?

KATHERINE : Tu peux prendre des airs d'insouciance virile. Pas moi.

[*Elle tend la lettre à MURRY.*]

MURRY : Gurdjieff ? Nom de Dieu !

KATHERINE : Pas exactement. Mais ça n'en est pas loin, à en croire ce que m'en disent ses disciples.

MURRY : Ses disciples ? Des demeurés, oui ! « Comment se transformer en sur-femme en élevant des porcs » !

KATHERINE : Je songe à m'y rendre.

MURRY : Où ça ?

KATHERINE : À Fontainebleau.

MURRY : Ne sois pas ridicule. Ce type est grotesque. Ce n'est rien qu'un imposteur !

KATHERINE : Qui est-ce qui te l'a dit ? Le grand Aleister Crowley ?

MURRY : Il est bien placé pour le savoir. Ils font bien la paire : aussi malfaisants l'un que l'autre !

KATHERINE : De ce que j'entends dire, Gurdjieff est le seul à vraiment comprendre la relation entre le corps et l'esprit. Les docteurs n'en soignent que la moitié.

MURRY : Il prétend aussi pouvoir tuer un yack à dix miles de distance. Enfin, franchement, pourquoi s'en soucier ? [*Il lit.*] « Hydrothérapie, électrothérapie, diétothérapie... » Bon sang de bonsoir, dis-moi que tu plaisantes ?... « Duliothérapie » ! Pour l'amour de Dieu, qu'est-ce que c'est encore que ça ?

KATHERINE : Je crois que ça a un rapport avec un travail de soumission à la volonté du Maître.

MURRY : « Mécanique cosmologique »... « gymnastique » – alors là, c'est bon : de ta part, ça ne peut être qu'une plaisanterie – « danse orientale »... « Exercices de renforcement de la volonté et de la concentration. » C'est là où s'arrête la rééducation. J'en ai déjà entendu parler. [*À pleins poumons.*] ARRÊTE CE CIRQUE !

[*KATHERINE l'ignore.*]

Tu dois être au-dessus de ça. Les pigeons se font prendre, mais pas toi.

KATHERINE : J'ai dit que j'y *songeais*.

MURRY [*lit à voix haute*] : « L'Homme est devenu une créature déracinée, incapable de s'adapter à la vie et étrangère à toutes les circonstances de son existence présente. »

[*Il relève les yeux.*]

Eh bien, chère créature aliénée : tu n'as pas besoin de ça.

[*Il déchire le papier.*]

KATHERINE : De quoi ai-je besoin, Jack ?

MURRY : De repos.

KATHERINE : Bons dieux ! Je me lève à onze heures, jusqu'à quatorze heures je reste en bas, puis je monte et m'allonge dans ma chambre jusqu'à dix-sept heures, et c'est déjà l'heure de retourner au lit ! Ça fait *cinq ans* que je me repose ! Je me sens comme un scarabée coincé dans un livre. Si je continue encore à me reposer, ce sera un repos éternel ! Tu peux tout aussi bien rédiger ma notice nécrologique... Si ce n'est pas déjà fait.

MURRY : Arrête. C'est insupportable.

KATHERINE : C'est toi qui ne le supportes pas. Chaque jour je me dis qu'il faut que ce soit le dernier jour à vivre comme ça.

MURRY : Je ne suis pas fait de cuir et d'acier. Je sais bien que tu n'y peux rien, mais arrête.

KATHERINE : Si je ne peux pas te parler, avec qui puis-je le faire ?

MURRY : Katherine, j'essaie de...

KATHERINE : Être malade me transforme en femme et c'est la dernière chose dont tu as besoin.

[*Un silence.*]

MURRY : Quand es-tu devenue si cruelle ?

KATHERINE : Ce doit être quand ce charmant monsieur m'a dit en Suisse que j'avais peut-être une chance. Oui, ça doit être à ce moment-là.

MURRY : Je ne sais plus quoi te dire. Ça ne sert plus à rien que je dise quoi que ce soit. Tu sais que je t'aime. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai changé. C'est toi. [*Avec douceur.*] Tout ce que je sais, c'est que si tu plonges, je plongerai avec toi.

[*KATHERINE le dévisage. Un silence s'étend.*]

KATHERINE : Je m'en vais voir Gurdjieff.

MURRY : Quoi ?

KATHERINE : Tout ce qu'il me dira de faire, je le ferai.

MURRY : Il n'a pas le droit de te faire faire quoi que ce soit ! Ce n'est pas un docteur.

KATHERINE : Non. Ce n'est pas un docteur.

[*Elle le regarde.*]

Et il a un autre avantage. Ce n'est pas toi.

[*Elle lui tourne le dos et le quitte. Après un moment, MURRY sort.*]

Not in Her Lovely

Kath MacLean

One jab would do it.
Back arcing, hands stretched taunt;
I am floating & fish, gulping
air, etherized.

Pale pink scales shine, flicker
helplessly on the ceiling; fin & flap.
Words? I might have said
as the needle finds its nerve,

swims backwards, forwards, circles
about the spine. Funny, sort of a coincidence really,
a ring, a bangle snaring her dress, brushing
memory in the cloakroom, this strange light,

Katherine's last visit to Paris. Anything is
possible. Walk on the promenade? A man,
a woman, sit upon a bench. Patient before
the window, her velvet frock, a soft blue

good-bye, good-bye – But you don't mean it.
Smell the smoke, charred flesh, frazzled
hope; it drifts to sea. She, no, not in her lovely
blue – waves, wildly, softly, signal fading.

Now we are both lost, drifting. Out
of our element. Coughing wakes me.
Hers, mine. *Listen, I see spots.* Time
has no recollection. It, she, I can't

remember the orange glow. Katherine's cigarette
as it fluffs her small features from pea to
poppycock – shaking her stick, denying her
presence, the ticking clock, its glorious hum,

her pen scratching. *Ah that* – Anything is
possible; I might write across the page, the nib draws ink
in a jar, stains her bandages. Pretty phrases, *a fine review*.
Unaccustomed to blotting, I smudge what I have

written. Katherine isn't impressed. Not easily. Two people
rising, no longer sit upon the bench. The Promenade waves
goodbye; goodbye, you don't mean it. Waves lap; my fins
flap uncontrollably; the room grows larger where

she paces. Holes grow in the carpet. Pink threads, pale,
this strange light; I might follow their pattern. A bow draws
across a cello string. Hers? Does it matter? Love strains
for its tug, the needle pricks; music stops as if

it doesn't belong. He, she, remembers, nonetheless.
Listen, *I am D*. I am sleeping. Parched & late
for an appointment. The doctor asks,
You all right? Water burns my cheeks. A bow presses

across my throat. Snapping unexpectedly, it hurts.
I hurt like hell. The cello? He asks. *Yes, yes*.
I am repeating myself. *Well, that's to be*
expected, he says. It's funny, a coincidence

really, the bench, its lovely
blue fin flapping, signals cross;
we are lost,
each of us, drifting –

Biographical Notes

Rosemary Appleton writes in the wilds of East Anglia, fuelled by coffee. Her poems have been published by Mslexia, The Fenland Reed, Spontaneity and Paper Swans Press. She tweets @BluestockingBks.

Iain Britton is an Aotearoa New Zealand poet and the author of five collections of poetry, mainly published in the UK. Recent poems have been published or are forthcoming in Landfall, Brief, Cordite, the Southerly Journal, Harvard Review, POETRY (Chicago), JACKET2, The New York Times, Stand, Agenda, Poetry Wales, Long Poem Magazine and The Fortnightly Review. THE INTAGLIO POEMS was published by Hesterglock Press (UK) 2017. We are pleased to publish selections from his long poem 'K' which follows many thematic paths. Crossing timelines and geographical boundaries it swings between Europe and New Zealand. Katherine Mansfield is more of a 'soul presence' and, like the 'I' in the sequence, appears to have the poetical license to shift through many dimensions. Vignettes 2 and 4 can be read in *Heron #1*, (KMS, 2018)

Verónica Cobral lives on Vancouver Island in Canada. The full text of her poem sequence *Birthday* can be found at <https://medium.com/@veronica.j.cobral/birthday-1266dbf16c26>. veronica.j.cobral@gmail.com.

Harmony Devillard studied English literature in Sorbonne Université. During her Erasmus year in Cambridge (Churchill College), she was introduced to Katherine Mansfield's writing by Dr Isobel Maddison. Four years later, she translated and adapted into French *The Rivers of China* by Alma De Groen with KM as a protagonist. She is looking for a director to put it on stage and if a KM admirer following the KMS and *Les Amis de Katherine Mansfield* is willing to take the job it would be perfect. She has just finished her first novel and is now translating another play by the same playwright. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/harmonydevillard/>

Alma De Groen, born in New Zealand, is the first playwright to win the Patrick White Award for her contribution to Australian literature. In *The Rivers of China* (1987), she imagined Katherine Mansfield's last days combined with a philosophical sci-fi plot. The play won two Premier's Literary Award for Drama. Her other works include *The Woman in the Window* (1998) and *Wicked Sisters* (2002).

This excerpt is the third scene from Act 1. It stages Katherine Mansfield and James Middleton Murry, talking about her fight against TB before she goes to George Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau, France. We thank Alma De Groen and her agent Chloe Pryce from RGM artists and Australia's performing arts publisher Currency Press who have given their permission for this publication.

New Zealand-born poet **Jan Kemp, (Janet Riemenschneider-Kemp MNZM)** lives in Kronberg im Taunus, Germany. Her latest publications include two bilingual editions: *Dante Down Under* (Tranzlit, Kronberg im Taunus, 2017) with translations into German by Dieter Riemenschneider and *Il Cielo di Dante* with translations into Italian by Aldo Magagnino (Edizioni del Poggio, Poggio Imperiale, 2016), both from the original *Dante's Heaven* (Puriri Press, Auckland, 2006); as well as *Voicetracks* (Tranzlit, Kronberg im Taunus, 2012). Her collected short stories *Eddies of Breath – short stories & novellas 1967–1992* as well as a new volume of poems *Black Ice & The Love Planet* are presently being considered for publication. Early in 2019, she began working on her tenth collection of poems *Dancing Heart* before turning seventy in March. Awarded an MNZM in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2005, she was founding director of the AoNZPS Archive and project manager of '25 NZ Poets for the PA' (UK) where she has her own page <https://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/jan-kemp>. She is a long-standing member of both the KM Society and PEN–Germany as well as being a member of the recently-formed Elizabeth von Arnim Society. She sings in the choir in the Johanniskirche in Kronberg in Taunus, where she also reads and performs her poems, some of which have been set to music for voice and selected instruments by the North Devon composer, Francis Chandler.

Shavil Lyu has provided no biography but we enjoyed her submission and reproduce it here.

KMS member **Kath MacLean** is a multi-media artist and performer. Her creative fiction 'A Little Bird' is part of a larger body of work to be published in due course. Kath has published two books of poetry, her first winning the Muse Award for new writers, and her second, recently published by University of Alberta, *Kat Among the Tigers* (2011), based on the letters and journals of Katherine Mansfield. She has also published works of fiction, creative nonfiction, and critical reviews in Canadian, American, and European journals, and has collaborated with other artists to record a CD of performance poetry and two video poems, one of which, Doo-Daa-Doo-Da is based on Mansfield's experience of the bombing of Paris in March 1915. A professor of creative writing much of the time, Kath was Writer in Residence for the Canadian Author's Association (2009/10). A recent change of career has found her working as a kindergarten teacher in Toronto, where she is also currently working on a book of essays, many of which involve Katherine Mansfield – she refuses to go away! Her latest collection *Translating Air* (McGill – Queen's Press, 2018) is based on H.D. and her sessions with Dr Freud in the 1930s. For more details on Kath's work please visit her website <http://www.kathmaclean.com/about.html>

Nina Mingya Powles is a writer from New Zealand, currently living in London. In 2018 she was one of three inaugural winners of the Women Poets' Prize. She is the author of several poetry pamphlet collections including *field notes on a downpour* (If a Leaf Falls, 2018), *Luminescent* (Seraph Press, 2018) and *Girls of the Drift* (Seraph Press, 2017). She is poetry co-editor at *The Shanghai Literary Review*, and is part of the editorial team of *Tupuranga*, a new literary journal for

New Zealand writers of colour. Her prose debut, a food memoir, is forthcoming from The Emma Press in 2019. www.ninapowles.com

'The Grief Collector' and 'Constantia' were originally published in *Girls of the Drift* (Seraph Press) and 'Katherine Mansfield Park, Wellington' was published in *Luminescent* (Seraph Press, 2017). They are reprinted here by kind permission of Seraph Press.

Sarah Rhea is a poet and photographer born and raised in Wellington. Her poetry and photography coexist to inform each other when resolving projects or ideas. She grew up writing poetry alongside her father, Stephen Morgan, and was inspired to write this collection when she was working at Katherine Mansfield House and Garden. Sarah now utilises her two academic fields of photography and museum studies by digitising cultural heritage materials. sarahrhea.net

Lesley Sharpe studied English at Cambridge and has an MA in Creative Writing from Birkbeck. She teaches literature and creative writing in London. Her poems have been published in a number of journals and anthologies, and long listed for the Cinnamon Press 2018 Debut Collection Prize.

Martin Westman, a retired psychologist, lives in Karis, in south western Finland. He has published three books of poetry (most recently, *Låtsas vara en sorglös turist/Pretend to be a Carefree Tourist*/Söderströms, Helsinki, 2003) and numerous single poems, short prose and book reviews in his native language Swedish. In his professional field of psychology, he has published research papers in English on cognitive-moral development and on bilingualism in children with specific language disorder. He has specialized in clinical adult neuropsychology, and keeps up a small-scale private practice. He continues to write, mostly in Swedish but also in English. In the landscape where he lives, near Church Lake and Black River, every now and then a heron passes overhead.

Jessica Whyte has been a member of the KMS since 2011, when she fell in love with Mansfield's writing while studying for a degree in English and Creative Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her short story about Katherine Mansfield, 'Sunday', was published in the 2012 Katherine Mansfield Studies Yearbook, as well as a poem about Katherine Mansfield's illness, entitled 'Remedy' in the 2017 Yearbook, and several contributions for the KMS newsletter. 'Simple Pleasures' incorporates phrases and expressions selected from Katherine Mansfield's letters, to give an overview of her life through descriptions of food. The second poem, 'Killing Time', is written about KM's experience of illness, a subject which is close to Jessica's heart as she has lived most of her life with chronic illness.