

**On A Painting Of The Somme**  
by Alfred East (1887)

Say The Somme and what do we see? Not  
a Victorian artist's pastoral utopia –  
the sleepy river posing in perfect stillness  
where birches brush the sky with burnished gold,  
and even the wildlife's on its best behaviour.

Nor do we see the smart young officers –  
off duty – for the moment. Hair parted  
ruler straight, they boast clipped moustaches  
and swagger stick status.

No matter how many times we return  
to the grassed over shell-holes, or marvel  
at riverside poppies blazing in the sun, we only see  
the pock-marked panorama of barbed wire hedges,  
where bayonet trees stab the skyline,  
and sepia Tommies, alien in their gas masks,  
struggle over the top into fields of mud –  
a landscape dressed to kill.

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**January Blues**

January is a grey moth of a month.  
The light that was Christmas hides  
behind muffling cloud. Snow saturated,  
the chapped sun casts an unforgiving shadow  
on the ground, trickles inward to grey obscurity.

Coats are daytime duvets:  
grim lipped, hunched like matchstick men  
we go about our business.

'As the days lengthen, the cold strengthens'  
I hear you murmur, your tone lugubrious  
as the raindrops that bounce  
off the conservatory roof.  
I wait impatiently for Easter:  
for rainbow prisms in the dew.

**THE PK POETS**

The PK Poets is a series of free to print poetry leaflets highlighting the poetry of a single poet. It is intended to be a sample introduction to the work of a poet who is also a member of the PK Poetry List. The PK List is a free to join community of poets who share their work using email and the internet. Information about the PK List can be found on the front page of the Poetry Kit Website at [www.poetrykit.org](http://www.poetrykit.org).

**ABOUT CORINNE LAWRENCE**

Corinne lives in the South Manchester area of the UK. A specialist teacher of Speech and Drama for over thirty years, Corinne started writing seriously in 2010. Her first placing was as a runner-up in a Writers' Forum monthly competition and subsequently her work appeared on the Visual Verse website. She enjoys poetry writing courses. She is also a long term member of a local writing group. Corinne has had poems published by Indigo Dreams Publishing in Reach Poetry, which also published 'For The Silent' and 'Voices For the Silent' – anthologies published in conjunction with The League Against Cruel Sports. Corinne is also a 'Poetry Kit' poet as from 2020.

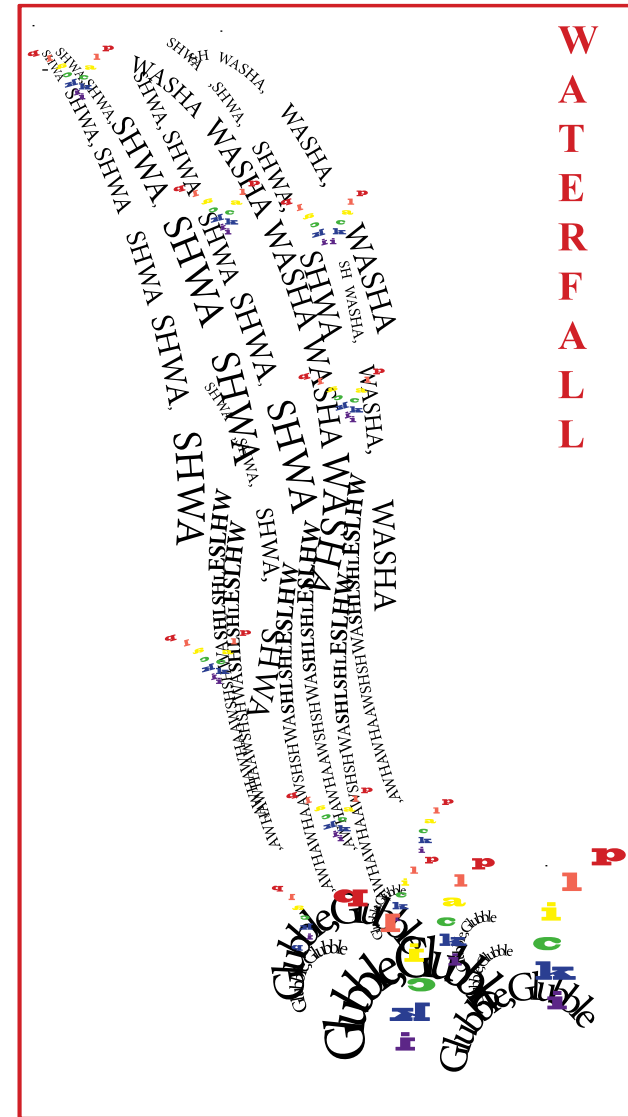
Several of Corinne's poems have been reviewed Writers' Forum and Writing Magazine, and she has won, and been placed or short listed in a number of competitions in both of these publications. Corinne enjoys writing both formal and free verse and is especially fond of ekphrastic poetry.

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For further details, to make comment, or to contact the poet or the publisher please email:  
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**THE PK POETS**

**#5 Corinne Lawrence**



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## Concerto Class

A small seven,  
spectacles  
don't disguise his babyhood.  
Condescending stares note  
his tiny hands.  
Oblivious, he gives everyone  
a gap-toothed smile,  
skips his music to the adjudicator's desk,  
and skips back  
to the piano. Dwarfed  
by its size,  
he needs a foot-stool  
to support  
his dangling feet.

Listening  
for the cue,  
he makes his solo entry  
with professional precision.  
Patronising glances  
fade fast.  
Finger-memory perfect,  
he keeps time with his accompanist  
in an adult universe  
where Bach's unrelenting semi-quavers  
must never falter. We listen,  
astonished, as the clock is turned back,  
and Mozart presented  
to the world again.

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## Two Tankas

Ethernet kisses  
sent on a network of thought  
from *the deep heart's core*:  
ghosted, ignored, they've been left  
unread in a discharged phone.

Fine-spun filmy floaters  
like cotton bolls, clouds balloon  
into sky freighters,  
convey cargoes of weather  
from heaven's warehouse to earth.

## The Return Of The Hunters

(after Pieter Bruegel's *Hunter In The Snow* 1565)

We stop briefly at the top  
of the hill. Spread out before us  
the communities we serve.

Our dogs' tails droop: in vain  
they press their noses  
into the snow trying to detect  
the scent of hare or rabbit.

Birds of ill omen taunt us  
from the trees. Apart from a paltry fox,  
all skin and bone, we've returned  
empty handed.

Ashamed of our failure we hang our heads.  
We will not be welcome here: the villagers  
will hate us for yet again failing to make  
a satisfactory kill. This fox is barely big enough  
for a hungry family: even well cooked  
much vinegar will be required to disguise  
its disagreeable smell and taste.

Children play on the frozen lake,  
working up appetites we cannot satisfy.

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## Dichotomy

Where stars sing  
between threads of time:  
where compassion and courage extend  
helping hands: where thought and endeavour  
work together, you will find me.

Where hatred and cynicism  
corrupt: where lies triumph  
over truth: where calculations  
compute incalculable consequences,  
you will find me.

Call me Pandora if you must,  
but know that I am double-sided.

## Skin: One Changeling To Another

(Because I've always wondered why Shakespeare  
gave no lines to the pivotal character of 'The  
Dream')

There now, young Buckthorn – let those tears flow.  
Don't be ashamed. I knew discomfort, too,  
and wept as well, when told I was a changeling.

At first, abhorring this pellucid skin,  
I tried conditioning its foreign film,  
and strove, against advice, to shed it – like  
a snake. A stranger to myself, I seethed  
with silent rage: they'd taken me, but left  
my twin behind, so sullen, malcontent  
and mute, I loathed this life, and all its ways.  
I grieved for him, for us, and for a past  
I thought beyond recall. But I was wrong.

So dry your eyes. I'll help you find your feet,  
discover links that you will never lose,  
for memories of human flesh recede  
but do not die.

It's true. You'll find yourself  
the unseen spirit in their lives, your niche  
between their laughter and their sighs, to guide  
their claps of joy, take on the salty taste  
of tears, or leave your fragrance on the rose,  
your print on motes of dust that breed a sneeze.  
Immortal now, enjoy some blessings too:  
It's fun to race the swallows as they soar,  
or ape the glow worm searching for a mate.  
You'll learn to hang glide from the wings of bats,  
but best of all, as sun and spray compete,  
delight in dancing at the rainbow's end.  
Good times, dear Buckthorn: take it from a friend.

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## An Englyn

I see swifts in the sky, dark falcate shapes,  
that feed and sleep on high.  
Circling round the summer sky  
never touching ground, they die.