

Take Your Choice

A Federation of Writers Scotland Patchwork Poem for National Poetry Day 2021

Where wid I be goin the day if I hud the chance tae choose?
There's a bus route that goes round all the roads not taken,
arrives and leaves in the same moment,
doors opening and shutting.
I like simple straight lines,
a one-way ticket to a new world
- *is that to the outskirts or the city centre?* –
two options, one the same as the other,
a revolving door you can't slam.
I travel with words of my choice,
the delicate pull and tug of tales
written on my palms in red ink.

Leave the city, head for the shore.
The seafront glistened, wild,
one hot July afternoon,
children on the sand, waving,
tenacious as a morning moon,
pale on those jig-together rocks.
I jumped into the blue of water, the sky,
a midnight within a midnight,
feuch dè thraoghadh leis an làn
wondering at what would be beached by the tide.

We missed the bus and the bomb.
You could not look me in the eye,
stared straight ahead, ignored what was being said,
restive hands unclenching.
Now I polish your ghost for the kids,
holding earth in my hands;
sometimes I don't know why.

As bad as this must sound to you,
we're all the same, fair game
in these crooked sanctums.
This is not the Wild West
where logic might not find its place,
none of us are any better/worse/less.
Those are the rules, right?

So where to go next? Who's to say.
Grab the joy as it dissipates like smoke from the gods,
eat the whole rainbow,
bubbles o excitement rising.
Deep inside a bird breaks free,
and it's me for you and you for me.

***This poem was created
by taking a single line
from contributions by
the following writers:***

Frances Ainslie
Vicky Allen
Anjali Suzanne Angel
Kieron Baird
Teresa Barnard
Kitty Beau
A C Clarke
Anne Connolly
Janet Crawford
Irene Cunningham
Tom Docherty
Rona Fitzgerald
Ellen Galford
Jane George
Jo Gilbert
Kate Gordon
Jenifer Harley
Maryanne Hartness
Samuel Hartwood
Beag Horn
Hadley James Hoyles
Mairi Jack
Alice Jennings
Jane Lamb
Marcas mac an Tuairneir
Kate Macfarlane
Anne MacKinnon
Iain MacLeod
Sadie Maskery
Beth McDonough
Diane McKee
Anne Pia
Marka Rifat
Rose Ann Fraser Ritchie
Finola Scott
Leela Soma
M T Taylor
L. A. Traynor
Lynn Valentine
Tez Watson
Elaine Webster
Kate Young

Poem collated by Andy Jackson

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