

Poetry Series

Janet Budd
- poems -

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Janet Budd(September 1950)

Family, Faith (Wiccan) and Friends in that order, are my priorities. I write poetry and short stories.

Retired from work a couple of years' ago. Now studying for an MA in Script-writing.

A Wonder Of The Universe

Your flat familiar vowels curl my toes.
I nestle on the settee, hold my breath,
watch planets burst from embryonic glow.
I wonder at your wonder and feel blessed
that, when 'Star' seems to mean celebrity
your eyes shine starstruck by the laws of life,
reflect rays of sublime curiosity,
describe the highest aim of humankind.
Your Manchester tones make me feel at home,
yet transport my spirit from the mundane
to contemplate the pond of all that's known
and tremble in my marvellous tiny place.
So! When your realm and mine has come and gone,
someplace, some time line, life shall carry on.

Janet Budd

Absent Star

It is not there, this star I watch tonight.
Neither was it, when Mesopotamian sages
Scored clay tablets with epic myths of time.

However much it isn't there, my star inspires;
Alters night to a panoramic screen
Where gods and fancies dance out mystic lives.

And though it is not there, this star provides
A measure, creates angles on tangential planes
Which map the secrets of its world and mine.

This star I watch, bright lighthouse in the skies;
Guides migrating birds, goads adventurous hearts,
Directly beams its rays into my eyes.

My absent soaring star, it has not died.
For in my mortal head spin images;
Tales born to life, from its immortal flight.

Oh speeding dart, oh piercing shaft of light,
Shall I, like you, sustain when I am gone?
Will my love radiate beyond my life?

Janet Budd

Awake

Fitzgerald flooded in to end my night
Cradle song that put my dreams to flight.
A waking spell was cast, my visions caught
By sun bright arrows through a bow of light.

Mother stretched between the curtains wide
Declaimed in rhyme to stir my childish mind.
Words of amber, strung with silver thread
Slung tantalisingly across my bed.

So I awoke, reaching for the sky
A striving soul that heard the heaven's cry.
I grasped the proffered perfect plenished cup
Then drank until the cup was dry.

Unwittingly my passion's flame she lit.
Life's liquor between parted lips she dripped.
Intoxicating blessing, drunken curse
Kissed carelessly by my mother's verse.

Janet Budd

Beltane Wedding

LOVER, COME AND RISE BEFORE ME
BATHE ME, STIR ME WITH YOUR GLORY.
DRAW ME TO YOU, DRINK MY MEASURE.
LOVER, COME AND TAKE YOUR PLEASURE

i leap from darkness beyond time.
my rhythm strikes a cymbal chime
to my imagination's flight
perception's dart, creation bright.

MY SHINGLED SHORE BEGS YOUR CARESS
PERSUADE ME WITH YOUR COUNTLESS BREATHS.
SOFTLY LET YOUR SPANGLED KISSES
TASTE MY BLISSFUL INNER MYSTERIES.

in stillness you await my sting
unleashing violent, vital spring.
sharp shedded shards ignite life's spark
below the cauldron on earth's hearth.

GREEN WATERED DUSKS DRINK SCENTED RAYS
NAKED I SWIM IN SUN DRENCHED DAYS
LETTING YOUR LIGHT RENT NIGHT ASIDE
LIGHTING FIRE IN YOUR BELTANE BRIDE.

Janet Budd

Birthdays Tea - A Ruba'Iat

And butterflies do not land, they alight.
I know, I've had one land on me. So light
At first I didn't notice she was there.
Her curled, unfurling wings disgorging bright.

With careless symmetry, defying air
My butterfly took off, quite unaware
A slight deformity would mar her days.
An untried, un-dried wing. An unmatched pair

Of yellow, orange, russeted mosaics,
Myriad tessellated opaque layers.
Failed in flight. She crash landed on my hand
To let me test the beauty of the maimed.

Suddenly a light was switched on in my mind
Wondering at this startling fateful find
I felt a wound, festering deep in me
Saw spoiled perfection. Innocence resigned

The evening Uncle Terry came to tea.
It could have been my birthday, eager screams
Welcomed everyone who came through the door
Laden with gifts and smiles. Excitedly

I laugh my last naïve laughter. I'm sure
It is my birthday, maybe five or four
The 'Happy Birthday' song's mixed up with cake
And wrapping tangled ribbons fill the floor.

All party guests are gone. Terry delays
Washing dishes. Allowed to stay up late
I sit, watching TV, disappearing
Drowsily. I dream strangely, then awake

Find myself on Terry's knee. Hot burning
Creeps up beneath. I yelp cat like, freezing
As the ridings rise then stop. He joins me
Moaning. Tells me secrets are for keeping.

My memories pupate for long, long years.
The child he left, invisible, unseen
Hid safe within her hard dark brittle skin
Till her imperfect butterfly flew free.

Imperfect butterfly wish to the wind
Fly high, fly wild. Let your spirit spin
boldly in a tornado's eye. Soar high
And with you take my tears shed for a child.

And butterflies do not land, they alight.
I know, I've had one land on me. So light
At first I didn't notice she was there.
Her curled, unfurling wings disgorging bright

Janet Budd

Blonde

I wonder to be blonde. What signifies
That fair Madonna of the nativity
Playing before parental beaming eyes?
The paragon dark urchins fail to be.
I ponder on the sad sadistic Myra
Mixed up Marilyn, mysterious Marlene.
Iconic blondes exude peroxide fire
Out-do the dull plethora in between.
My brown, unwieldy curls are turning grey
I've battled long and never won the fight
To have a lustrous head of shining hair.
Now is the time to step into the light.
The rubber gloves are on, the bleach to hand.
For ridicule or praise I'll take a chance

Janet Budd

Brainstorming

The storm falls on the tar like coloured glass
Bouncing. Shining rubber boots sheath small feet.
A tartan umbrella shields my head.
The drab school Mac makes my outfit complete.

Trembling white skies send me a rallying call.
Lightening charges the nucleus of my brain.
Some irresistible urge pushes me out
The door. I breathe in deeply, smelling rain.

So, feral free, I tramp abandoned streets.
Disrobed of time, my destination no place.
A wild child, unmissed, unchecked, unconcerned,
Under a compelling spell. Uneasy space

Vibrates the aura carried on my sleeve.
A whip crack spear shoots bright about my head.
But drinking danger, smiling, I walk on
Easily. With trust in elemental Gods I'm fed

The sustenance that makes me feel replete.
In conversation with a friend, she asks,
Will I visualise what I aspire to be?
I, mulling for some days upon this task

Get nowhere. I can not see. Then thinking
On a child out in the rain, a sweetly
Smelling, untamed compelling image makes
Itself in me. There I am! Completely!

Does this small child push through rain's sparkling veil?
Does she remain enthralled, whilst I grow old
Within a universe apart from hers?
Waiting in the moment to be recalled

She comes so bright in brilliant rain washed light.
My little spectre once more thrives in me.
Inhales flowing joy, laughs irreverently,
Steps out with courage, worships valiantly.

Janet Budd

Cats And Dogs

My name is Dog
My Zoo is
I do what men say
I am Dog
My Prison is
That I obey
Me Dog
I circus tricks perform
Dog
Sit
Stay

I
I am cat
I am what I am
And that is that

Janet Budd

Dancing Gown

I was given a dancing gown,
woven by the dew drops just for me.
Each thread, it was untangled from a dream.
The warp and weft were loose. In between
lay gold dust by the breeze bequeathed.
I leapt from a rainbow,
ran down a sunbeam to the floor.
Dawn's blue mist whispered to me, 'Dance'.
'Dance for evermore'.
I see a sea of faces stretch from stage to shore.
My toes alight on sparkles from their eyes.
My body floats upon forgetful tears.
I was given a dancing gown,
So I could make time stand still.

Janet Budd

Deeply Blue Indigo Hued

DEEPLY BLUE

Your grief, as anger on your skin, tattooed
with hornet stings, I've scraped red raw again.
I see you deeply blue, indigo hued.

From deep articulate wells, you yell blood
curdling echoes of your past. You display
your grief as anger on your skin. Tattooed

drum beats protest, berate, constant and loud.
My love can't penetrate the noise you make,
I see. You, deeply blue, indigo hued

by fossilised recollections of abuse
I don't recognise, are stultified as pain.
Your grief as anger on your skin tattooed.

Slinging stones remorselessly, you're good
at hurting, wounding, searing with your aim.
I see you deeply blue, indigo hued.

You choose to proffer me your open wound.
Prefer, to my voice, your scarlet futile stain.
Your grief as anger on your skin tattooed
I see you deeply blue indigo hued.

INDIGO HUED

I shall not speak again, shall not pursue
you, beg you not to misconstrue, assure
I loved you in the only way I knew.

The time is done, I did not protect you
in ways you needed, wanted me to do.
I shall not speak again, shall not pursue

emotions you have refused me. Although
my memories of joy have slipped from view.

I loved you in the only way I knew.

Your vehement, violent screamings of abuse
echo in my head, bounce around the room
I shall not speak again, shall not pursue

the past, as if we could begin anew,
undo mistakes, bridge chasms, plaster wounds.
I loved you in the only way I knew.

I broke convention's chains by loving you;
boldly caught a kite's tail in a tornado.
I shall not speak again, shall not persuade you
I loved you in the only way I knew.

Janet Budd

Demeter Mourning

DEMETER MOURNING

The dust I breathe is anger from earth's shell
It fights and bites inside my heaving chest.
I kick up clouds of acrid stinging grief.
Of pain and ire, I am the authoress.

Into the wind I wail, In fury scream
'you have abandoned me', you have escaped my dream
You leave no pyre to burn, no grave to mourn.
My gown of youth is ragged, soiled by tears.

My skin, smooth, fresh and fair when you were born
Is lined. My hands, once soft, are gnarled and worn.
I soothed your cries, kissed joy into your eyes
Then treacherously you leave. My spirit torn,

I walk the land, in search of you. Your cries
A mirage in my deserted heart. Sighs
Of carnage are my wake. Hollow sobs wrench
Futile despair from barren cloudless skies.

My Core, My Persephone, you drench
My mind with memories. Your innocence,
Your guileless charm spun my heart, pounding,
It burst, a star's flight in the firmament.

You could have stayed, dear, remained denying
All fantasies a young girl dreams, sighing
Forever for whatever could have been.
Dormant wild seeds forlornly festering.

You could have wished away a woman's dream
Of loving, being possessed by passion, freed
Of inhibition, charged with light, pleasure
Ploughed, sensation soaked, grown in full esteem.

That sacrifice could have been the measure
Of your loyalty. That unspent treasure

The price paid back to me. Oh cruel pride,
Oh vehement jealousy, diseased torture

Leave me. Springtide, heal the raw divide
Sore wretched wound, pure putrid pain inside
That cleaves Demeter from Persephone.
Winter's fading crone now blesses Hades' bride.

Daughter, please bring ripe fruits of earth to me
Flower of narcissi, pomegranate seed
Share the cup you drink, wine of life and death
Receive my kisses with forgiving tears.

Janet Budd

Dentist's Chair

Today, I'm lying in the dentist chair,
wondering how to seem relaxed. My scheme
is to, by thought, transport myself elsewhere.

My opaque eyelids block the spotlight glare.
Some mellow music plays. I feel no pain.
Today, I'm lying. In the dentist chair

i levitate my soul like gas and air,
float round the boundaries of the room. My aim
is to, by thought, transport myself. Elsewhere

her mouth is being explored. She grins and bares
instruments and drills that scratch, scrape, and grate.
Today, I'm lying in the dentist chair

serenely dreaming. I wistfully compare
the sun of yesterday with today's rain.
Is to by thought transport myself elsewhere

some trick a coward plays, or magic's flair,
a self deceptive ploy or crafty game?
Today, I'm lying in the dentist chair
and by thought I transport myself elsewhere.

Janet Budd

Eurika

Has my daughter got one leg?
I wonder, as from beneath her bed
I pull one smelly, screwed up sock.

Perhaps it is my super washer
that consumes one and leaves the other?
But No! I decide that cannot be.
For to eat one and have one remain
I'd have to put in two the same.

I reach once more beneath the bed
I twist my neck and bump my head
My arm contorts and flails around
Searching for a missing mound
Of lonely, frightened, single socks.

Without success I leave my task.
I rub my knees, straighten my back.
I spy some fabric poking out
from between two books and a CD stack.
'You reek a! , Missing sock! ' I shout.

My optimism is soon shattered.
Well, one more odd sock hardly matters.
At least I've found a pair of knickers.

Janet Budd

From Arthur To Zen

31st December 1919 – 6th March 2005

Don't know where to find him.
How can I truly care?
He left nothing behind him.

Tokens that would remind him
He'd scattered, who knows where.
Don't know where to find him.

Where was the link to bind him
To his child? Should I care
He left nothing behind him?

I found a note signed by him.
Familiar yet rare.
Don't know where to find him.

I wrote to define him
In curls and loops we share.
He left nothing behind him.

Maybe life resigned him
To desire but not to dare.
Don't know where to find him
He left nothing behind him.

Janet Budd

Heaven's First Eleven

Grandad runs up to the wicket and lets a googly fly
Angel Gabriel eyes the ball then aims towards the sky
He folds his wings behind him and gives it such a thwack
Sends it soaring skyward with his golden cricket bat.

It's heading for the boundary in an arching beam of light
Grandad sprints to catch the ball from its celestial flight
It drops into his outstretched palm—elatedly he smiles
Caught and bowled by Grandad, Gabriel walks dejectedly inside.

An everlasting cheer erupts from Grandad's friends and mates
But Grandad isn't finished, the games not over yet
Raphael nervously strides to the crease—He's in at Number Seven
To face Grandad who is Captain of Heaven's First Eleven.

Janet Budd

Hush

Hush my pretty baby lying in your pram
Listen to some words of wisdom from your Mam.
Because you are a girl-child folk will bill-and-coo
Tell you that you're beautiful, a 'little angel' too.
Before you get big headed and think its your lucky day
I really have to tell you, there's a price to pay.
Now love's a little word that's bandied round a lot.
But what a lot of meaning that tiny word has got.
When people say they love you, especially the men
What they're really meaning is, they want you to love them.
You have to love completely and if you don't you're bad
'Cos you're the cause of other people being sad
Now there is one person, you mustn't love too much
The person in the mirror labelled do-not-touch.
By the time you are a woman and you've learned your role in life;
To make those round you happy, to be a perfect wife
There's a certain thing called anger that rears its head up high
It fills the void that too much giving leaves inside.
Like a smouldering chip pan you'll suddenly explode
But will your loved ones calm those flames, I don't think so, No,
They'll point accusing fingers. You've broken all the rules.
You've rocked the boat, You've spilled the beans, Its true
When you've learned this painful lesson, you can start to grow.
Nurture yourself, love yourself. Very soon you'll know
There's another person who importantly exists
Who lives, who thinks, who feels, who needs, loving for herself.

Janet Budd

Inheritance

These pews don't lend themselves to private grief.
A well of tears leaks down my cold, cold cheeks.
Her family must be wondering who we are.
Strangers treading on their private sorrow.

I'd met up with some colleagues at the rear
Beside the great stone font, we'd peered
Around with nervous small talk covering my dread
I'd inappropriately cry, or laugh instead.

At work we'd laughed and shared a tale or two,
Nothing too deep, nothing so unusual,
Yet sandwiched in between this daily bread
Her wisdom, joy, compassion, love was spread.

The architecture grand, the history long,
The hard stone floor, the organ groaning song.
We waited for her body to arrive,
The funeral cortege to come inside

So, finally they came, shuffling sobbing
Red eyed, pale, broken, strong young men, weeping,
Shouldering her coffin down the narrow aisle,
Their tattooed hands clasped, white knuckled, while

Following. the women flowed in torrents, old,
young, grandmas, aunties, sisters, keeping hold
and holding each other, bound in distress,
Witnessing the strength of death's caress.

I watched their faces, shocked amazed to see
Reflected spectres of my loss watch me.
Her family features in a glance, a pose
Her living face, inherited, bestowed.

Janet Budd

Kath - Who Echoes Still

I'm not supposed to say it
But let's face it, it's true
I can think of loads of people
Who should be dead instead of you.
Those people who contribute nothing
To the lives they've got
Kath.....
You give such a lot,
And you keep on giving
I'm certain you'll now know
Those seeds of joy you planted
Will never cease to grow
In the hearts of those who know you
Or met you for a while.
A lady of compassion
Imagination, wit and style
I'm angry at your going.
I feel it's just a waste
Then I close my eyes and listen.
Hear your laughter and a tale
You're telling or retelling to a friend.
So, although my eyes burn
With sad tears, I have to smile.

See—you're doing it again.....

Janet Budd

Listen Sofia

Come
Sofia.
Come listen to me.
Come, snuggle up close on Grandma's knee.

When Grandma was a very young age
She'd squiggle squiggles all over the page
Of an empty book that was full of ideas
That needed squiggles, to make them appear.

Now grandma is old, she has learned how to write.
She makes pictures with words on pages empty and white.
She can't draw with a pencil. She can't paint with a brush.
She can't stand on the ceiling or dance on the moon

But, she can make up stories to amuse and enthrall.
Now those are big words for someone so small.
Enthral opens your eyes wide, amuse brings a smile
While you listen intently to Grandma for a while.

So
Sofia,
Come listen to me.
Come, snuggle up close on Grandma's knee.
Listen, listen with care, to the words Grandma says.
Once, there was a little girl, back in the days.....

Janet Budd

Love Lost, Love Found

Love Lost

Found Poem from The Times, November 17, 2007
From 'All you need is hate: the killing of John Lennon

Casually chanced upon a book
A John Lennon tome and decided to shoot
With the sweet simplicity of a crackpot loon
The man was virtually drained of blood
Thanks to the guerrilla shooting style
Soaking up his new found celebrity
Bathed in the blood of Lennon himself
Is the father of every craven nobody
Oblivious to the macabre performance
Played with terrifying verve
Propulsive portrait of a man on the edge
The film is a four year labour of love
A second assassination, a double indignity
I knew I had a big screen movie

Love Found

Sonnet - All my loving

It was my John I practiced love upon
He sang Mr Moonlight especially for me
I bathed in beams of solitude, alone
Washed by waves of tormented ecstasy.
I loved the pain of yearning for a smile,
A look from TV screen or magazine.
A distant adoration, all the while
Fulfilling fantasies, unknown, unseen.
When he leapt from his pedestal and fell
For that pretentious woman, Oh no! John
My constant love continued despite all
My mocking disapproval and derision
I practised love and learned there's no condition
On which imagined love is truly given

Lying

Today I'm lying in the dentist chair
Wondering how to seem relaxed, my scheme
Is to by thought transport myself elsewhere.

My opaque eyelids block the spotlight glare,
Some mellow music plays. I feel no pain.
Today I'm lying. In the dentist chair

I levitate my soul like gas and air,
Float round the boundaries of the room. My aim
Is to by thought transport myself. Elsewhere

Her mouth is being explored, She grins and bares
Instruments and drills that scratch, scrape, and grate.
Today I'm lying in the dentist chair

Serenely dreaming, wistfully compare
The sun of yesterday with today's rain.
Is to by thought transport myself elsewhere

The trick a coward plays, or magic's flair,
A self deceptive ploy or crafty game?
Today I'm lying in the dentist chair
And by thought I transport myself elsewhere

Janet Budd

My Field Of Vision

I never sat silently
in altering breezes ruffling my nape
Never felt flickering blades of emerald
tickling pale sun starved legs
Nor known wire grass
tattoo patterns on my skin.

I never watched and waited
breath held inside
as spider reaching
the zenith of his climb
bungee jumps into space and time
casting spells across light.

I never soaked warmth
seeping from dank earth beneath
Never bled my thoughts
into the ground until they turned to tears
Nor circled waves of joy around
to catch sunbeams dancing on the smell of green

I never shuttered lashes on a cloud
surrounded by pure blue
Never sipped the hue of sapphire wine
making drunk my heart and mind
Nor saw soaring glisten puffs of seed
tumbling heavenward

I close my eyes and never fail to see
the mystery imagination brings to me
Never fail to feel. Nor experience
that which appears to be beyond my reach.

Janet Budd

Not Drowning

I did not want to taste the salty sea
Just sample cool thrills on a far off beach
To celebrate a school trip nearly done
A tale I could relate once back at home

Deliberating the best time to bathe
I marked well the life guard's white flag wave
Swam out, toes stretching, touching shale to check
Chin skimming blue green water to my neck

My favourite school-friend, let me call her Bee
More robust a swimmer than that timid me
Saw orange pennants of approaching doom
Flapping above the life-guard station's roof

Dead silence rocked on undulating deeps
That swayed the world beneath my reaching feet
Now red flags fluttered and I felt no floor
A vortex sucked my craning neck below

The ancient sea, she courted me that day
Challenged I partake in elemental play
I took her as my lover not my foe
From depths inside I knew her deeps below

Chose not to let her deadly wooing win
Found fires of courage burning deep within
To play her power in perfect harmony
Made love with her whilst she gave birth to me

There was no death, I rode the silent tide
Gave her my strength, a careful sacrifice
That she rewarded, voicing in my ear
Here's the time, surge now, surge now my dear

And surge I did, then lay in sweet repose
Until the current called then on I strove
Then strove I did, and knew to persevere
Would bring the brinking beach nearer then near

She toyed and tempted me to loose my will
But feigning ignorance of her power to kill
I set my eyes steadfastly on the shore
Until my toes touched shifting shale once more

Like Isis rising from the foamy sea
I stood majestically. Triumphantly
I stepped out regal as a radiant bride
Parading down a rich cathedral aisle

Basking so splendidly, my knickers fell
Weighed with gravel dredged from my lover's bed
In sight of all, I pulled that garment down
Brazenly shook the stones onto the ground

Laughing as my pants drooped between my thighs
Waving not drowning, arisen and alive
Down to earth, back to this world's shore I came
Just happy I'd won fortunes fateful game

Once was found walking in despair by Bee.
Abandoned home and children, desperately
Drowning in my own pain and rain and tears
She dragged me from the darkest sea of fears

Bathed me, dried my clothes, brushed my sodden hair□
Bee listened to my hurt and did not stir
Saw crying streak my cheeks, offered no cure
But stoked that source in me that shall endure

Sat by my hearth I nurse my young boy child
My daughter, older, plays with toys nearby
Their brothers and sisters run in and out
As young ones do at weekend. Then about

Half past two, my husband comes back home
From lunch time drinking at the local pub
If drink cheered him, it'd be worth the price
Anything but, a word said out of place

Throws him into a fit of rage, Then

He strikes a blow stinging across my head
Can't raise my hand to protect or deflect
I show no anguish, anger nor protest

Heart rip, soul rot, shock, spirit bitter burn
Resilience seep, invisible weep, no way to turn
A little baby lying on my knee
Suckling, obliviously.

Beyond the boundary of my broken dream
Torrential rain disguised my screaming tears
Crumbling inside, my churning world disgorged
Tumbling illusions, foolishly I'd forged.

A hastily grabbed coat, donned in distress
Had in its pockets, nothing but the address
I'd left behind, scrawled on a crumpled note
As if fate dictated where I must go

Numbly walking, caressed softly by rain
Brought to my mind that drowning sense again
Floating on grief's current, I dredged and found
Gravel grains of hope to spread on the ground.

Bee, she pulled up beside me in her car
Conjured from aether, beamed down from afar
Star sent saviour, she saw essential me
An eternal child walking from the sea

Janet Budd

Pale Pink Thread

nestled darkly
my fingers in the corner of the drawer
find a case of sleeping needles
draw it out lightly
soft pages yield as i touch
reveal twisted tails of pale pink thread
gasp silently
picture wisps of woven dreams
my pierced heart misses a beat
remembering
shining ballet shoes upon my feet
satin ribbon wrapped splendidly
bright tapestry
cross stitch girl in mirrored pose
poised in glass framed arabesque shimmers
refracts deliciously
each little pain perfection commands
pricks playfully a heart that beats to dance.

nestled darkly
my fingers in the corner of the drawer
find a sleeping bleeding me
drawn tightly
soft pages conceal so much
twisted tales lost threads never sewn.
gasp silently
weep for wisps of broken dreams
my pierced heart misses a beat
 remembering
pink ballet shoes upon my feet
shining ribbon wrapped gloriously.
bright tapestry
cross stitched girl in mirror poised
pirouette posed in glass shattered
reflects painfully
every memory shard perfection demands
plays cruelly a heart that beats to dance.

Janet Budd

Picture Show

I think on that ephemeral picture show
That flashes on my inner picture frame
At night. The mysteries it reveals, I know
Will make their flight, in light of day's mundane.
Then caught unawares, wisdom's shadow falls
As if forever indelibly been there
Just waiting to be dredged up from dark thralls
Enlightening the circumstance by air.
They say the eye is window to the soul.
My inner eye Disney bright, Bergman deep
Is screened in silver, richly reeled in gold,
A treasure trove of insights. Mine to keep.
I am the eye of all my conjured scenes
The magic I of image, mage of dreams.

Janet Budd

Sestina - Cycling

November bomb-fires refuse to take light
Like sultry splutters of a lazy passion.
And drowsy hedgehogs under dead, damp wood
Dream snail's trail filaments of kiss and touch.
Autumnal sodden leaves, leave underfoot,
A worn, discarded carpet once so lush.

Cold winter heart of mornings, sunlight lush,
Spangle frosts on bare branches and delight
In shining grass blades crunching underfoot.
Invade my sleepy heart, excite my passion.
I yearn for kisses, search for trembling touch.
Tentatively snap dead-wood's bitter wood.

Rising greenly, sap springs through new wood,
Feeding fresh leaf, nourishing bud till lush
Summer arrives. Await the radiant touch!
Anticipate! The sun's young rays spread light,
Tempting seeds of lust to swell in passion,
Crushing memories which echo underfoot.

Wise warnings thud above whilst underfoot
The thundering tramlings of the wild, wild wood
Call out. "Unleash your thwarted passion.
Drink in the nectar of life's root, the lush
Intoxicating spirit that sets light
Your body with the need for urgent touch.

Laden boughs bend overhead to touch
A verdant rug of green laid underfoot.
Sky brightness winks and blinks. The broken light
Peeps through. Charcoal dark, my cleft heart of wood
Remnant of fire, lies guarded in the lush
Cutting blades of grass that hide my passion.

Leaves scuttle, dry husks rush round with passion
Press-ganged by the wind. Gems dyed by the touch
Of death in glowing hues. Fruit full and lush
With wasps, reaping juice fallen underfoot.

For good, my soul is yearly marked like wood
Rings revealing all, sealed away from light.

Envoi

Can passion trampled underfoot spring up
Again? Can touch revive the flame in wood
Snuffed by lush, lush rain? Can kisses make light?

Janet Budd

Sestina - Safe Hands

I enfold her as if I hold in my hands□
A diaphanous shawl woven loosely
From silken skeins of hope and fear. I feel
Strongly, she's so much part of me. Obviously
She wriggles free. I glance at my daughter
Her mum, and marvel at inheritance.

I wrap all this stuff of inheritance
Into trust, quietly hoping the safe hands
Of my kindly, compassionate daughter
Will suffice. Experience tells me loosely
Held reigns are best. The child plays obliviously.
I watch. She echoes in me. Trembling I feel

The pain inevitably she will feel.
I fear quietly; knowing her inheritance;
The curse of memory. Now obviously
She recalls careless conversation. Hands
On to me stray words, understood loosely
With looks I try to forewarn my daughter

But the treacherous trait has skipped. My daughter
Down to earth, sensible, is born not to feel
Hurts that haunt, doubts that linger loosely.
If only we could choose the inheritance
We bequeath. But it is out of our hands,
We make love, create life obliviously.

I say nothing, pretend obliviously
Disguise fears I dare not share. My daughter
Who loves her, is all she needs. Holding hands
We walk through bustling, crowded streets. I feel
Her tiny linked fingers. The inheritance
Of knowing held gently within mine, loosely.

The web of my life was woven loosely
I held fast to no-one. Obviously
This child makes me unearth an inheritance
Painstakingly hid. Bonded by my daughter

To my granddaughter tenderly I feel
Burning passions branded into our hands.

Envoi

I held her loosely, I let my daughter
Feel, obviously unaware of my
Inheritance, she unbinds my hands

Janet Budd

Smile

I do so want to be desired by you.
I'd love to be desired for some small time
By someone who provokes a smile, and who

Perceives the joy in what I think and do.
An artist with a practised subtle eye.
I do so want to be desired by you.

If I could be so known, I would remove
Each fear I hide behind. My love revived
By someone who provokes a smile, and who

Requires that broken silences be true,
Sees pain in beauty, frailty in lies.
I do so want to be desired by you.

I did not want to be aroused by you.
I didn't need this stirring of desires
By someone who provokes a smile, and who

By just being you, without meaning to
Kindles hopes, blows softly on passion's fires.
I do so want to be desired by you
By someone who provokes a smile. Yes you!

Janet Budd

Snowdrops

In awe, a tiny lunar painted pearl
Perseveres to force the frosted ground
So Brighid can make her altar candle burn.

Light quickens in this warm wombed fecund world.
Bright Brighid, this first and flawless bud, she crowns
In awe, a tiny lunar painted pearl.

Soft fresh tear drops as pure born snow drops turn
Winter's frozen crust to jewel strewn mounds,
So Brighid can make her altar candle burn

And let the little things of spring unfurl
Setting spirals spin. Brighid sighs, weeping down
In awe, a tiny lunar painted pearl.

Blessed signature of a sacred soul
Hid deeply, smouldering safely, sound
So Brighid can make her altar candle burn

Freshly amazed, the waking world's return
Is celebrated. Welcome cries resound
In awe, a tiny lunar painted pearl.
So Brighid can make her altar candle burn

Janet Budd

St Valentine's Day Fiasco

Today in the shower I cried and I cried.
You can't see the tears when I'm washing my hair
But they're still there.

On our first Valentine's Day you gave me flowers.
You should have warned me they were to last forever.
I would have pressed them in a book
Then every year taken a look
To remind me of your love,
Dried and shrivelled.

My heart hurts, Love has left.
Life seems to be slipping away, down the drain
With the tears, and the soap and the hope.

Today in the shower I cried and I cried.
You can't see the tears when I'm washing my hair
But they're still there.

Janet Budd

Sunday Diy

I dash to get to B & Q
By eleven
That's the time
The opening of the temple
To DIY
I go in,
Buy sugar soap to wash
The skirting boards
Prepare them for
Undercoat and gloss
Or on this day of rest
I'd be at a loss
For something wholly
Meaningful to do

The car park's filling up
As I get there
Drivers scan for gaps,
They squint and stare.
They get impatient,
Growl and snap
At others who have come
To worship too,
The Gods of 'Must Keep Busy'
'Spend' and 'Do'.

Back home
The telly's off
The radio too.
I hear my hush
Creeping through
In slippered toes
To the kitchen sink.
Water spurts
I stir a swirling flush
To the bucket's brim
The vortex sucks
A stream of sugar soap
Then gushes

Out and in, out and in.

I sponge away
The grease and grime of time.
Memories
In particles of dust
Suspended, floating
Then flushed down the drain
Nostalgic waste
Yet seeping through
A stain
Permeating old, old layers
Of paint

A hurt, some hurts
Panic, breath breaking pain
Relating to
I no longer know.
I've let it go, I've let it go
But it will not let go.

I wonder if sugar soap tastes sweet?
If bitter tears are flavoured with salt lime?
If eating sage can make me smart?
If plastering the cracks will heal my heart?

Returning to the practical task
Of washing skirting boards
I cease to dream.
An arching ache across my back
A pressing prompt
To make clean, make clean.

I am on the brink.
My bucket walls contain
Hold, bind
A torrent's reign
Of a tidal mind
I sink and rise,
Rise and rise and sink.

I dash to get to B & Q
By four.
That is the time,
The closing of the store
To those
Who earlier forgot,
Or misread their needs
And cannot stop
Now their undertaking
Has begun.

Meanderers are loading up
Their vans
With wooden planks
That won't nearly fit,
With bargain toilet pans
And random paint.
I sprint the car park's edge
Side step the sliding door.
Purchase undercoat and gloss
Then one thing more: -

A looking glass,
A mirror in a frame.
Smooth crystalline,
Reflective pane
In which to see
Another space,
Another time, another me.

I ponder, do reflections have a wall?
Does enlightenment come from the Sun?
Can memories be exposed to light?
Does redemption make wrongs right?

Janet Budd

The Measure

THE MEASURE

You meander through our midst in many forms.
You drink the pain and anguish of the weak
As if suffering is the sweetest wine
Offered to Gods at a celestial feast.

You wield a vicious scourge, capriciously sting
Hardened hearts and tender souls alike.
Then from the void of grief you hear us sing
Laments that set sleeping stars alight.

You plunder, purge and quell our deep conceit.
Steal riches, restore nought, nothing owed
Smile watching, as from such futile seeds
Grow blood red rubies in white wastes of snow.

You thrust a searing sword, a crooked spear
Sons of women, daughters of men fall
As scattered corpses on earth's battle field
To pay the debt of hubris for us all.

Your task is aided? "Yes" I hear you say.
"I'm aided by people who seek escape.
Those who hide, push others in their place
Shall ever be astonished by their fate."

Fragile love can't ever ward you off.
Passion can never you command.
The brightest smile, the loudest, longest laugh
Cannot deflect nor deter your hand.

I imagine you in black and purple hues.
I see you as bright passages of light
I honour your claim to collect your dues
You are the currency by which I measure life.

Janet Budd

The Ode Less

I read this book by Fry, the Stephen sort.
It urges me to exercise my mind
By harvesting a random sea of thoughts
And mould them into verse forms of some kind.
I dance iambic feet across the page
With rondel and rondeau I sing duets
I'm armed with sonnets of a varied range
I tarry with tanka and triolet
With humour Stephen kicks me up the bum
He reins my soaring spirit into gear
I think he needs to pen a further tome
Mixed metaphors are my Achilles heel.
I've caught the writing bug, there is no doubt
But Stephen please, my flaws need ironing out.

Janet Budd

Untried

Those wellies in the shed, remain in their place, unmoved, untried, left exactly where I left them.

He says, 'They don't seem right'

He prefers the work dog steelies from his working days. They make him feel the gardening worthwhile, not a retired man's hobby, not a waste a day pastime.

The way he puts those steelies through their paces you'd expect potatoes, peas and parsnips served up from his spade, but you'd be wrong. His labour is to lift the rose to its highest state.

Balletically he dances secateurs through thorn, by branch, down stem, finding the right spot, excises, executes reverently, precisely.

He'd leave the house at dawn, never miss a day. Return for tea, his tools his boots he'd quietly put away. Never spoke of his mundane.

I picture him, all those years of having a grace I never knew existed. He kept me out then and today still keeps me put away. Like those brand new wellies. Unmoved, untried, in my place.

Janet Budd

Watching Pictures

My smallest child is now bigger than me.
I'm five foot one. He's five foot three.
He's sitting close, his head on my knee
Quietly watching T.V.
Unaware of the pictures I see.
I want to freeze frame the pleasure I feel,

There's a warmth welling up from the tips of my toes
To a tingle like tears at the bridge of my nose.
I rewind my memories back to a night
Thirteen or so years' ago. Our house was quiet
Except for a baby, not long been born,
Waking and crying for nourishment and warmth.

As I tended this stranger, my newly born son
The intense warmth inside me, melted my soul
Whilst we welded, melded in bonded love.
Pictured instants, unique, precious, real
Fixed more permanent than transient images on film.
Engraved more deeply than stone is by steel

Janet Budd

When I'M Three

My first taste of death is when I'm three.
Each day Mum's at work, Mrs K, gets me,
Pushes me home in my grey pushchair,
Stops at Mr Wright's shop where
She lifts me onto the counter edge.
Hessian potato sacks crowd my swinging legs.
Biscuits in glass boxes wait to be weighed.
Mr Wright magically makes a spinning blade
shear bacon into stacks of streaky leaves.
Grownups come in, they fuss over me.
When the shopping is over, the natter is done
My prize for patience is a sherbet fountain;
A yellow tube of tartness,
a sweet liquorice straw.
One day Mrs K
Collects me from Mum,
Pushes me home
In my grey pushchair,
Stops at the shop where
She lifts me on the ledge.
Sacks crowd my legs,
Biscuits wait to be weighed,
Mrs Wright peels bacon from its blade.
Innuendo fall like leaves,
Grownups cup secrets from my ears.
Before it's begun
the shopping is done.
I suck yellow tartness through a liquorice straw.
It's now years later. I'm ten or more.
Mum mentions Mr Wright
Jumping in the canal one night.
A cascade of truths fall at my feet.
Swiftly I jigsaw the illogical heap.
I sense the morning Mr Wright isn't there
I taste death, tart and daring, like sherbet with air.

Janet Budd