

Poetry Series

June Walker
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

June Walker()

My poems are usually based on observation of flora and fauna in my environment. Most have previously been published in poetry magazines in Canada, USA, NZ, Australia and UK. My poetry site is at

Albatross Of Midway Islands

Fledgling runs from nest,
lands on turf, nose first,
tail in the air,
sheepish look,
puzzled stare.
Flaps paddle feet, runs,
holding windmill arms out,
till a sudden draft lifts him,
up there.

Over water he flaps,
then drops to the surface
like an autumn pear.
Torpedo sharks beneath would love
to rip open that bulging breast;
he rises on unsure legs, strides
along the surface. Suddenly,
he is flying with care.

Looking down, he whispers as he glides,
over oceans, across seas,
monitoring movement of tides,
foaming white horse hair-
stingray, swimming in the air.

June Walker

Birch Trees, Scotland

Five sisters, tall, thin,
straight-backed, play
ring-a-ring-a-roses,
stretching above the glade
and daffodil shoots.
The winter sun
picks out silver bodices
(their arms are brown and bare)
and makes them cast long, thin,
shadows- like strands of hair.

June Walker

Blueberries

In spring,
crouching beside clumps of heather,
mouse ear leaves, thin pink legs,
paws that clasp a crumb.

In winter,
berries, like dark purple eyes,
mist over, giving us
mouse-size grapes
for jam.

June Walker

Brimstone Moth

A lemon yellow dart
lands. A spot of sunlight
on a dark green thorny runway.
Soaks in a moment of calm
before the flight itinerary
takes it
wherever fancy blows.

June Walker

Cosmic Crocus

Under fir tree
puffball crocuses
burst into
star shapes,
visited by interstellar
bug ships-
traders in pollen,
nectar, and other
microscopic star stuff.

June Walker

Dogwood Stems

Red stems, stripped bare, jut out
of hard black soil, like the rib cage
of an abandoned boat, keeled over,
on a cold beach. A roosting perch
for passing gulls, skua, tern-
in summer, hidden in a nest of leaves.
Like strong ideas, stripped to bare bones,
by harsh times,
they turn, face the screaming winds,
and sing.

June Walker

February In Scotland

Jagged peaks of flour
in the distance,
a harshly bright
winter sun
casting long shadows
from Narnian trees.

A moorhen,
flushed out of canal reeds,
speeds across surface of water-
Jesus Christ lizard.

My squeaking shoes,
ingratiating cygnets,
begging for parental attention.

This strange insistence
makes me laugh,
transforming Narnia
into the Sound of Music,
and I sing.

June Walker

Feeding Garden Birds

With winter attempting to approach-
but not quite making it this year-
I put out bread, biscuits, and cake
for neighbourhood birds:
magpies, pigeons, crows and coal tits,
I never see them alight and strut,
or hop amongst the crumbs.
But next morning, the soil is bare,
and in the treetops,
doves are cooing.

June Walker

Fox

Fox's ears jut up, crown-like,
her hair slapped down,
a 1920's flapper, a girl attending
her first job interview.

Fox's tail, a pampas grass plume,
stretches jauntily behind as she prances along,
1960's beach beauty.

Fox's snout is vole-like,
her belly snowy as any house-proud
tabby cat's. She lopes across the moor,
wolf-like; jumps in the air, impala-fashion;
throws a mouse into the clouds,
like a catnip toy.

Fox is a jackal at sunset,
caterwauling at the stars,
combing dimly-lit
suburban streets.

June Walker

Heat Wave

A song thrush rubs her chest into dry dust.
Her beak opens - fledgling begging;
her tongue, a sharp thorn.
A white film covers her closed eyes.
She fans her tail like the main sail
of a yacht, searching for a breeze.
Her wings lift and shiver
in a momentary mirage
of cool North winds.
Now she lies deathly still,
blending brown into brown.
Ghost ship.
My tongue feels like a twig
in my throat.
Suddenly, the bird's chest heaves.
One eye opens in a wink.

June Walker

Hemlock

Head and shoulders above rat's umbrellas
beside the canal. Taller than dock plants,
flourishes hemlock, poisoner,
sister to laburnum and foxglove.

We may not know it as the killer of Socrates,
(who played the fool once too often) ,
but all Scots children learn that this big smelly plant
is dog's flourish (dog's pee on it) ,
so we don't gather it to fill our posies
of wild flowers.

We pick hawthorn or gowan
instead.

June Walker

Her Roots

are wild heather
clinging
to boggy soil,
wringing out usable minerals
from forsaken ground,
specialised for the task,
gripping tightly,
unlikely to be pulled up by man,
or weather.

Craggy stems,
harsh curly head of hair-
still, she bears small green leaves
in spring- and in Autumn-
a magnificent purple blaze.

June Walker

In A Victorian Garden

Yarrow, creamy,
waist-high,
liquorice scent-filled air,
sycamore saplings sprouting,
thin as pencils.
Elderberry spreads
lace parasols above
golden buttercups
strewn,
as if for a picnic
on the lawn.
One hundred yards away,
behind tumble-down,
moss-covered wall,
twenty-first century zips past,
unaware.

June Walker

In The Park

I was surprised to see finches and canaries
in the birdhouse at the park this morning.
The pair of quail were huddled in the corner;
one rather plucked like a chicken ready for the pot.
The cockatiels were popping in and out of holes
in wooden nest boxes high on the shelf.
The green and yellow budgerigars were chirping
and kissing their mates and looking sideways at me.
Around the corner, on the outside, the flock of doves
were cooing and pecking large grains of wheat
strewn on the ground.
And I felt my own ruffled feathers soothed,
softened and cooled.

June Walker

In The Woods

Violets shelter amongst the roots,
dry leaves for a blanket,
a dash of purple and green amongst the brown.
Quiet and unassuming,
as if hiding from the bustle
of town and people.
Perfuming the air with simple pleasure.

When my mind flies rapidly about,
discarding thought after thought,
until it tires me out,
I walk again along that lane,
and see the violet, calm and quiet.
Like a soothing balm,
or soft fingers across my brow,
cares flee and a snapshot remains-
the image of a violet flower,
no mental pains.

June Walker

In Winter

Umber leaf skeletons
perfect like perforated lace
lie under the lime tree again.
They disintegrate if lifted
into powdered ash
but brittle veins
of gold remain.

June Walker

Is She A Clown?

I look at her short black bobbed hairstyle,
her pale Geisha face,
her loose tunic with large buttons-
Andy Pandy style-
in a row down the front,
tight kaleidoscopic leggings,
like Pierrette.
She looks like a circus clown.

As if to confirm my opinion, she says,
holding up a picture of
the centre of the universe,
i.e., a mirror in a picture frame,
'I like to do jokey sort of art.'
Is it the veil of illusion
she loves to create?
Is the appeal simply to
her child-like heart?

'I am a painter, ' she says with as
much force as she can muster
with those thin dark red lips.
'I am a painter, ' she says again.
And I don't know whether to admire
her confidence,
or whether to suspect
that she is saying it to convince herself,
or even more so, to convince us...

Then I decide...its admirable
to state what you are...
you may predict your own fate.
So what should I say?
I am a scholar? Too restrictive.
I am a philosopher? Too impractical.

I know...
I am a painter too.

June Walker

Is This Love Impossible?

All through the ocean deeps he wails;
a-crying on the foam.
He weeps and wails, and weeps and moans,
'Come home, my love, come home.'

But I am far away from him,
far up the mountain side;
my feet are clasping craggy rocks;
my eyes are open wide.

Oh, can a whale become a bird
and swim te airy sky?
And can a bird plunge to the depths
and through the ocean fly?

June Walker

Ivy

I bought a small ivy plant
and dug it into unpromising soil
above the concrete retaining wall.
It grew like fever-
curling, twisting, over the hard dirt,
tumbling down stone slabs
in tones of green.

I pruned it back in spring,
intending to dig it right out,
but those roots clenched the soil like angry fists.
I cut and cut and cut: ivy tendrils
fell like shorn locks around my feet.
No sign of green on surface soil-
I ignored the roots below- and planted
bedding slabs of red and lavender and cream.

Come winter, all the colours blew away.
Peering above the ground came cheerful
waving hands, curling like the sea's hair.

I will let it grow for now,
I will let it dream its dream.

June Walker

Kaikoura Seals

Brown mermaids
sit on top of rocks
on Kaikoura beach.
With weary eyes-
deep as the Pacific ocean-
and battle scars,
red ribbons on their skin,
they comb their fur
with flipper feet
and look into
mirror pools.

June Walker

Kitchen Garden

Nasturtium flames burn,
red and yellow.

Bumblebees, like cinders,
visit each one in turn,
air hums with heat.

The vines of the pear twist
up white metal struts
of the glassless greenhouse,
awaiting autumn to produce
bulbous green fruit.

Reflected sunshine rises from ground,
swirls around my head.

I am giddy as a child on a roller coaster,
almost airborne....

in such a garden as this.

June Walker

Memory Chairs

I bought four wooden chairs
from the hospice charity shop,
honey-coloured wood
with noticeable knots,
and spars across the legs.
Sturdy, functional, dependable.
Reminding me of the chair
I sat on every morning as a child,
waiting for my grandma to make me
French toast, a boiled egg, or sausage,
before she oiled my cycle, polished my shoes,
tied a ribbon in my hair and said,
'Have you got your homework? ' and
'Here's your schoolbag and your scarf, '
then sent me off,
up the road,
over the bridge across the canal,
to school to learn.
But they could not teach me as well as
breakfast time
on the wooden kitchen chair.

June Walker

Mozart's Flute Concerto

His music softly stirs your soul
with piping roll
on whistling flute
that won't lie mute;
but rises up like fountain's spout,
till love trills out
with heady notes
from silken throats
and weaves its spell around and through
the heart of you-
until all calm
lies in your palm.

June Walker

New Flower Bud

Drooping head of pansy bud,
white as first snowdrop,
shy as a girl
on her first day at school.
Her emerald star bonnet
and lime mittens,
straight from a page
in a nursery rhyme book.
She lifts unstained face
and gazes openly at the sky.
Blown left, right,
by summer breezes.

June Walker

One Summer Morning

A breath of mist covers the fields.
Sun rises, watery and thin-
like runny lemon curd.
Cattle sleep, warm bodies pressed together-
like naked mouse pups in an underground nest,
their nostrils open and close,
like mud circles on a volcanic pool.

Two cows, lying apart from the herd,
awaken, stretch out tongues, giraffe-like,
to curl around green stalks. Their ears
flicker. They chew cud and stare
at the mists, the sun, and distant firs:
a visual breakfast.

June Walker

Our Heroes

Red stems, stripped bare, jut up
from icy black soil- like the rib cage
of an abandoned boat, keeled over,
on a Winter's beach. A roosting perch
for passing gulls, skua, tern.
Like strong ideas, striped to bare bones
by harsh times, they face the screaming winds.
Their secret strength nurtured,
they rise-
to blossom in Spring.

June Walker

Park Bench

I sit on a park bench;
the traffic roar dies to a distant rumble,
birds begin to chirp
in trees and bushes.

I hear one so sweetly sing; I search...
There on the fence she perches.
She's rounder than a tennis ball-
a drab brown sparrow
with a linnet's voice.

June Walker

Paua Shell

This shell has pockmarks and barnacle bumps
on its rough elephant hide back,
protecting the abalone that once lived
there. The roof inside is smooth,
shining, with running rivers of violet,
green and blue: as spectacular as the Sistine chapel.
Maori priests placed polished paua slivers
for eyes on effigies of their dead
to help them see in spirit lands.
Cool colours soothe burning fires.
Now, tourists wear paua in their ear
and strange sea shanties hear.

June Walker

Pigeons In Trafalgar Square, London

Surprisingly warm, light and soft,
his body feather touches my cheek
as the city pigeon alights on my shoulder.
His claws and his strong gnarled toes
dig for a grip.
I hold up the white plastic cup
and his head goes
down up,
down up,
like a pneumatic drill, shuddering. Spilling seeds
fly out of the edges of the container,
but he is not distracted: peck,
peck, peck.
Head up, tail down;
head down, tail up. Comical,
like a plastic monkey
on a stick that you can buy at the fair,
and pull the string, to make it
somersault.

June Walker

Point Chevalier

Grey sea
grey sky
grey sand
and one grey heron
picking its way
through puddles
left on the shore,
stands still
and blends
into the greyness
for a moment-
disappearing.
Then it moves,
flashing white cheek patches,
that echo
the rolling in
white horses of the sea.
Its mate arrives.
Together,
they fly off over
the stoical
coastal trees,
animating the now,
not-so-grey, day-
for me.

June Walker

Queen's Park, Hull, Uk

Tall stemmed arum lilies
spear glass green water;
mallards hide and seek amongst them;
water fountains, like Rotorua geysers,
spout and fall; pigeons, puff-chested,
pursue mates, bobbing and cooing;
blue-green elfin trees shade
a dog panting from the heat;
sun splashes on the lawns;
lazy garden park people picnic,
or wipe brows with hankies-
on walkabout,
mimicking long Australian days.

June Walker

Seeds

Sycamore seeds put pin prick roots
into soft earth to suck up minerals,
like rows of butterflies
sucking salt from the sand,
waving brittle wings like bat's ears,
drawing shawls about their shoulders,
like women gossiping at a village fair.
The gardener, fussy official, moves them on.

June Walker

Silver Eyes, Nz

A flock of silver eyes
falls
like autumn leaves
from the eucalyptus tree.
Almost hitting the dirt,
they rise at the last moment
to perch in the orange bush.
Enclosed in cloisters,
they start to chatter like vervet monkeys,
or like priests around the refectory table,
when the vow of silence has passed.

June Walker

Snowdrops

Mid March.

Spring has not yet arrived.

Daffodils are a promise,
but at least show spindly stalks
of green. In the grove, deciduous trees
are brown jaggy things with no buds. Even
magnolia, usually decked with cream flames,
is asleep. But nestling in nooks and roots
of bare oaks, clusters of snowdrops
like white apostrophes, jab the air.

June Walker

Tall Trees

At the top of the road,
tall black trees wear crow's nests
like untidy Maori headdresses.
A passing breeze transforms stiff trees
into Polynesian dancers
swaying in the sun.
Crows call out drumbeat
and the leaves sing.

June Walker

The Coot's Chick

is fluffy slate
and smokey grey-
circling in water- pestering, peeping.
Her mother, jet black with milk white arrowhead beak,
dives deep under water, pulls up bottom dwelling weeds,
in a long trail of slimy
moss across oily water,
in front of chick's myopic stare.
'There and there, ' she points with her bill.
And the chick splashes and gags weeds,
as if she had six siblings.
And her mother looks on with contended care.

June Walker

The Copper Tree

One copper sapling on the bank of the canal.
Startling shades of brown rise from green grass,
warmth in the cool.

I feel my eyes open wider than before,
to take in depth, colour, perspective.

A camera whose focus has been ascertained,
F-stops adjusted, switch clicked,
with emotional precision.

June Walker

The Dance Of The Hornets

In the park,
hornets hover,
spaced out,
hang-gliders,
they dive and dart-
transcribing quick circles-
chasing others who dare to trespass
on their space in the air.

They have a territorial imperative,
preferring to hover together and argue,
than to be alone in the plentiful space
that exists
everywhere.

Just like us.

June Walker

The Hawthorn

Bred in a stubborn land,
this hedge of hawthorn grabs frozen soil,
with clenched claw roots.
Its trunks- thick, twisted, gnarled hide-
rough as an elephant's skin.
Its twigs, stubby as shorn corn,
thorns interlock like rutting stag's antlers.
Nature's barbwire fence, uprooted
by neither wind nor storm.
Its softened face wears small white flowers
in green hair- harbinger of spring lambs,
summer sun.

June Walker

The Pier At Herne Bay

A piece of the pier sits on the horizon,
like a lost hope, or a lost ship,
a perching place for birds,
a marker for fishermen's boats at sea.

A Marie-Celeste, a ghost pier,
inhabited by the spirits of adults and children,
who formerly sauntered along
on sunny English afternoons-
a day at the seaside-
snapshots in a Victorian album.

An anachronism,
a ghostly edifice,
that laden ships pass by,
stately, portly,
making for London docks,
the metropolis, the hubbub:
a million miles from reality.

Shrouded in the mists of time.
a painting by Turner...
the pier at sea.

June Walker

The Tenacious Butterfly

A flash of red and black
lands on ridged bark,
finds an open vein of golden sap.
Gathering wasps, hornets, bees, and blowflies,
assail her tiny head.

She beats her flimsy crimson wings,
determinedly.
And although they are only
dusty silken things,
one by one,
the highwaymen recoil,
with empty sacks.

June Walker

Transported

There are few butterflies
in the city- a couple of cabbage whites,
a tortoiseshell, and, if you are lucky,
a peacock butterfly with eyes that seem
to see.

Although, one night out walking,
I saw two silk moths-
size of fruit bats- flapping by.

And, the other day, as I trod carefully
along the overgrown path
where rats sometimes cavort, I saw-
crawling carefully across the dirt,
a glint in its eye and determined
demeanour- a large brown and gold striped
caterpillar. Hairs like spears
along its back.

I bent down,
offered it my finger to crawl on,
and it accepted- like those thousands
of tickling caterpillars,
years and years ago,
in my youth.

June Walker

Tulips

A row of sergeant-majors
stands to attention beside the girders
of the glass-house. Wearing wine red busbies
above lime green uniform stalks:
a thin red line on parade.

After spring's magnificent bloom:
shrivelled petals,3 up,3 down-
like a row of blood-torn crimson irises,
or an army limping home.

June Walker

Waitomo Caves, Nz

In the grotto, ghostly stalactites
and stalagmites, like termite mounds,
line the narrow pathway,
opening onto an underground cavern
as big as a concert hall.

The underground lake is black and still.
Glow-worms shine like elfin lanterns,
numbers depleting every year. The roof
closes in: a de-sensitizing tank.
Will we make it out alive?
At last, I step off the flat-bottomed boat,
emerging from the dark- a mole squinting
at sunlight- soothed and calmed,
as if spirits had been combing my hair.

June Walker

Wilderness

At the edge of close-cropped lawn,
purple vetch, daisies, thistles
and buttercups grow-
a singular patch of wilderness.
Bees, drunk to find such colour, scent,
and untidiness, indulge
their senses, from dawn to dusk.

Birds are delirious.
Not just common crows or quails,
or strutting magpies,
but goldfinches, doves and nightingales,
calling, diving and plucking flies.

And on the bending tip
of seeding grass, a dragonfly,
turned and dazzled, with sapphire jewels.
As Nature crept,
seeds in her sack,
to claim her earthly garden back.

June Walker

Willow Buds 1

Catkins
sprout
mouse buds
grey
like winter's clouds
sparkling in the sun,
like choppy canal water,
or cat's eyes
at night.
Quiet and still
asleep
until the breeze
brushes past
calling them
to dance in the wind
for a crazy moment
of glory.

June Walker

Willow Buds 2

Silver grey mice
crouching on stems,
litters of ten
to a twig,
not moving
until windcat's tail
brushes past,
making their warm bodies
shiver
then pause-
when she has gone.

June Walker