

Christine Murray

A Hierarchy of Halls



Smithereens Press

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Watercolour, Indian Ink, collage, graphite, gold pigment on acid free paper.

Author photograph by Christine Murray.

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A Hierarchy of Halls

A hierarchy of halls,
halls, a universe to sing.

Wren

Wren leads the charge,
her small soldier heart,

follow her flitting sound
into the lowest corridors

This is not a universe,
it is a garden.

Trees,

a hierarchy of halls,
halls, a universe to sing.

Follow wren's sound
into the lowest corridors.

There, a huge gap,
fox-made,
is where blackbirds sing.

Stone-plateaued,
daisy-garlanded
ground-held.

Tree looms above it all.

All descends to metaphor,
a leaf fallen is always a poem.

This is a place for birds.

Wren wingtips an ancient hedge
leading us into her halls,

and up,

always up,

she flies

fleeing into clematis' swing rope,
still, I hear her song –

Clematis petals fall,
and this is a place for birds.

Fox runs
wall's length

stone / tree

sun reveals
garden's clock

radiant / radiating circular

left
to
 shed

right
to
 wall

sun
to
 stone,

to bleached wood,
her garlands revealed.

sun
to
 moon,

My starlings,

housed here
beneath this sleeping roof
are tree-flown,

tree's wood
is applewood
fruit(ed)
-laden.

Rook calls

fox runs
wall's length.

Early Summer

Early summer occurs
in a calamity of falling
young -

petals, birds, the
bright souls of birds.

A small dead bird
is at my feet,
tree looms
over this soul-ossuary

dignifying the small
body with her dark needles,

bird-map-lost
obliterate.

A small mourning

Shadow passes over grass,
just long enough to hide the living bird,

shadow moves against it
tipping it to a tremble,

as if it were fly-flicked,
wing-tipped.

Hierarchy of halls,
halls, a universe to sing.

Wren leads the charge,
her small soldier heart.

I can never write you!

Let us go into the small quiet poem

It awaits our blue hand,
yet we do not trespass
on its silhouette too soon,
it looms against the blind,

tree sigil, indecipherable –
It awaits our blue hand
our dewy trepidation,
word-machine in bird tongue,

leaf tongue. A thorn, hook,
for a frayed jumper
it awaits our blue hand,
Eschewing our monolingualism –

Dark gathers the hour in,
blue the hour, blind
obscures our shaping –
Small poem, it awaits our blue hand.

I can never write you!

I can never write you.
I can observe your soul's dialect.

Tree,
a darkness silhouetted,
war-torn,
limbless,

there.

Wren leads the charge
her soldier heart, flitting

and
always up,

she always flies up
and up!

The ancient rattany vine
shreds,
where clematis was

upstretched,
maybe down past

its rods dried
to fingers
tipping the soil

garden's clock
is a swing rope
or small birds

Garden's clock is moving

Past snowdrops (dawn)
to seven's forsythia
through morning's
narcissi, bluebells,
daisies, clematis
at eleven, to
St. Ann's lace,
ragwort, peony (roses)
fuchsia, by
late afternoon –
the whirling roses
hips jut to nightfall
scented with apples
and rowanberry tea.

Clock persists
less so
at night
until the hour
strengthens
again,

still almost and
pungent the flowers.

Robin arrived
at three
speckled by four
and red by seven

Pipette,
piccolo –
She awaits her full scarlet,

her red flight is a hop
that branches right,
tipping the woodwind –

Her flight is not breathtaking,
a miracle yet.

Walking under orange

Wind came and lifted the leaves
wind came and lifted the leaves right off,

the tree,

the tree did not bend when the wind came
and lifted those leaves,

the tree did not bend when those leaves
lifted right off their branches,

orange,
blood-stopped, murmurations -
purple-tipped, curling grey,

they held in air when the wind came and lifted the leaves,
lifted them right off.

murmuration -

(of) wind

leaves

tree

tree

bends

when

tree

leaf (ves)

lift,

orange

bloodstop

red,

walking under orange

held-in-air

lifting up,

A leaf fallen
is always a poem.



Christine Murray is a City and Guilds stone-cutter. Her chapbook *Three Red Things* was published by Smithereens Press (2013). *Cycles* was published by Lapwing Press (2013). *The Blind* (2013) and *She* (2014) were published by Oneiros Books. *Signature* was published by Bone Orchard Press (2014). She has published widely in literary magazines and her work has been anthologised in *And Agamemnon Dead: An Anthology of Early Twenty First Century Irish Poetry* (2015), *All the Worlds Between* (2017) and *The Gladstone Readings* (2017). Her critical work has also been included in *Eavan Boland: Inside History* (2016).



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