

waterways books

Catching the Cascade



releasing new voices, revealing new perspectives

Catching the Cascade

waterways

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Cover Image found in a skip

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For Joan, Cordelia, Honor and Suria

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Paul Lyalls
2009

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THE VALUE OF WALES

Its chief contribution to the UK
must be as a unit of measurement,
as night after night
a news desk declares,
“An area of rainforest,
the size of Wales disappears every year”
or, “The amount of water
London loses through its creaking Victorian pipes
would fill a swimming pool
the size of Wales.”

Every part of the world has a similar unit of measurement:
in the United States it’s an area the size of New Jersey;
on mainland Europe the reference, more often than not,
is Slovenia—which appropriately happens to be
98.4 percent *the size of Wales*.

But just how accurate is Wales
as a unit of measurement?

Just how constant is that land mass?

It’s worth remembering that at low tide
Wales measures 20,761 SQ KM
whereas at high tide it’s only 20,449 SQ KM—
and to really put it into context,
each year coastal erosion erodes an area of Wales
the size of Central Swansea.

For those of you in Europe trying to visualise this,
that’s the equivalent of an area the size
of downtown Ljubljana.

HARD, FAST AND BEAUTIFUL

In John Ford's Stagecoach (1939)
(which raised the Western genre
to artistic status),
she was the 'Saloon Girl' Dallas
who had been forced out of town
by puritanical women.
When 'The Ringo Kid' (John Wayne)
proposes to her, she says —
*But you don't know me,
you don't know who I am.
I know all I want to know,*
he says.
Seeing a glimmer of hope
she asks the drunken doctor
(Thomas Mitchell) —
*Is that wrong for a girl like me?
If a man and a woman
love each other,
it's all right,
ain't it Doc?*

QUIFF

If you can gel your hair
into a duck's arse
when everyone else
has a Manchester fringe;
If you have hair that stands on end
when all around you
are bad-hair-day winds;
If you have a spiky buzz-cut
when all else is bobbed and trimmed;
If some white van driver
drops the window and yells out "Billy Idol!"
— when all around are sporting
a silly Vidal...

Sassoon;

If you can walk into the barber's shop
with an Elvis Presley record sleeve
and say to the man with the scissors
"This is what I need";
If you can wake up in a morning,
and your hedge is still up there performing;
If, when the Oasis look was all,
you remained true to your Wonder Wall.
If you refuse to answer the fashion call
by letting your hair fall,
then...and only then...
there is no *If*.
You, my son,
have a quiff!

LEAVE YOUR MESSAGE AFTER THE BEAT (PERFORMANCE POETRY IS...)

Bristling with insight, milking every sense of meaning,
it's a fly on the wall study of a fly on the wall,
an aria of decadent route one lyricism
spun by frontier pushing pens,
words to the real, socio-flow
brought to you direct by Lord and Lady Biro.
Alive with detail from
an 'off each and all four walls' little known world,
sharp and fragmented as a broken mirror,
rolling with reflection
and self-fascinated self-exploration.
With an 'on the house' cocktail
of breathtaking confessional meets in-depth suspect,
that's 'checking in from downtown',
featuring the sharpest of the sharp,
with sparks flying off of them in a language lit dark.
Be of the poem, but not in the poem.
Featuring writers who never appeared in their
own reviews,
smeared with cool outsider status
weaving urban mantras to save us—
The King of Spin....The Queen of In-between
.....The Merchant of Menace!
Half real, half dream, with a heart that beats
like a paddle steamer on a mercy mission—
it's not in the spirit of appreciative enquiry though,
it's a lifestyle choice
and the world's greatest journeys are the
words that give them voice.
If the devil has all the best tunes,
the angels all the best hymns,
then somewhere in-between are
poets giving words wings.

GOALS ARE HEAVEN SENT

Goodbye working week, the dream has begun,
goals bring fire to a 3pm journey's end,
a shimmy, a swaying of hips,
the steel stand sways, the movement twists.
The ball is precious, the feet come and go,
Feet leave no footprints when playing in snow.
Feet turn on a coin,
turn on a crowd,
turn the watching world upside down.
Goals are heaven sent—half chances are easy,
quarter chances astound,
scored only by those who wear
the natural born strikers crown.
The missing of an open goal becomes
the sticker-book gap of the footballers soul,
burying the rebound, but the ball wanders past the post
like Lazarus, or some other dead man from the Bible,
going for a stroll.
An unrippled net, a silenced ground, one to forget,
no goals this week— goals are heaven sent .
Saturday comes, the nine-to-five goes, the football flows,
the dream can begin,
if you don't score you cannot win.
'Goals are heaven sent' is the message carried in the
home crowd's reverberating roar,
as they demand an equaliser
even though the opposition have yet to score.
A voice with intent that's unable to relent,
whilst the field flows to dancing toes,

shimmying hips, passing gifts,
football that is total.
The dream can begin—the steel stands sway,
if you don't score you cannot win,
in football goals are everything.