

Twelve River RIPPLES

Members' Poems



Shadows

On winter nights at six o'clock
I walk along the street,
whilst long leashed to my feet,
my eager shadow leaps ahead,
then at the lamp shrinks back
to cower beneath my soles
when no-one comes.

Each new light passed
it springs, recoils,
elongates to recede again,
dull and timid on the path.

Footsteps and another lamp.
A second shadow rushes out,
surges from its likeness,
stretches to greet like a lover,
brushes against my own.

A pause.
We stand there, you and I,
breathe a brief *goodnight*.
Quelled, our shadows huddle,
circle and move on.

One night soon we'll stop to talk
under the lamp.
Boldly our shadows will mingle, meet,
kiss beneath our touching feet.

Angela Pickering

Members' Poems cont.

Retrospect

Listen
no-one signed up for life
We got thrown on the rocks of reality
I did my best and though
the straightness of my path
might have curled
different courses from yours
I did clamber the steeps and walls
over to the free horizon.

All I can regret
is that I did not know the depths
of the floe and cracks of the future
to find myself
on this smallest shard.

But now I'm using the word *retrospect*
and imagine yesterday and go back ten
twenty years and wonder
why that feels like freedom and
then I use the word *retrospect* again
and find myself thirty years younger still
and wonder why the wind blows cool on my face
blows free-flow through my hair and
wonder why the sun shines so much brighter
and why I float free spirited
and find this adventure by my side
and why we both giggled at nothing.

And I miss that.

Jacques Groen

Love Song

When you die, I told him,
I shall go to Alexandria on a bicycle
with the insurance money.
An eccentric English lady
of the Agatha Christie school
with pith hat and veil,
I shall cycle to Luxor and Karnac,
a relict of the past.
Logistics, sand, heat, flies
do not feature in fantasy.

But when you die,
I shall be cut in half.
It will be hard to cycle
with only one leg.

Diane Jackman

For a Ripple of Laughter

Scruffy

I like old shoes because they
Always softly and gently nestle
In a knowing and comfortable way,
Never inciting my feet to wrestle;
And dirt and muck won't noticeably scuff:
They're irredeemably marked enough.

About shirts and jackets
I feel the same;
And bulging pockets are useful packets
For my treasured toys for nameless games;
And my shapeless trousers' pouting knees
Keep me safe from damp and breeze.

Sometimes I'm told to wear a tie,
But my top shirt-button stays undone.
I must eat, and drink, until I die,
And of greater importance: the second one.
Please don't make me gag and choke:
Trussed-up, dried-out by superior folk,

I very seldom wear a hat,
Though I've bought some over the years:
The sweating makes me itch, with a hat
Perched high above my glowing ears.
My steaming brain might self-delude –
That I'm much more elegant in the nude.

Raymond Hume