

# Twelve River RIPPLES

## Members' Poems



### **The Last Post**

Post horn

post chaise – post haste – post bag

post man – post card – post box

post restante – postal order

post bus – post code

post-it note

post grad – post feminist – post prandial

post coital – post partum – post natal

postmistress – postmark

Post Office Inquiry

post traumatic stress disorder

post Brexit – post pandemic

post war

post nuclear

post mortem

post climate change

post internet

post script

*Anne Boileau*

## Members' Poems cont.

### April Ascendant.

Climbing the hill, chilly froze our blood  
tip-toeing forward gently as we could  
fearful of waking the Dragon in the wood.

All night the hanged moon shrouded her face.  
All night the hungry wolves howled from their place.  
All night the screech owl hollered from the wold,  
and the wan lambs whimpered in the hilly fold.

Black was the winter, like a charred rick.  
White was the winter, where the snow lay thick.  
Red was the winter, gnawing at our bones,  
our red raw fingers scrubbing garments on the  
stones.

And, in the deep dark depths of winter's night  
I trembled, trembled – fearing you had taken flight  
and Never, Never would return again,  
to bless our faces with your holy light.

But, as we hastened from the dread wood free  
suddenly we heard rise above the breeze  
the imperious herald of your mysteries.

Though he calls all day, his face is never seen.  
Just two haunting notes from the burgeoning green  
echoing round the hills, near, then far away,  
taunting us, it seems, from his hideaway.  
Then, as summer deepens, mocking his own tune  
in a throatier note, as May flowers into June.

And, gazing upward to your holy grove  
with the guardian oaks shimmering above,  
we see, our hearts deep-heaving with desire  
the flames, that palely lap around your sacred pyre  
– radiantly eclipsed, by your kindling fire.

All hail, Eostre ! Goddess of the Spring !  
Eostre, mother ! We kneel low to you,  
Blessing our sacred grove, with your fire and dew.  
And feel upon our brows  
with mounting bliss,  
the warm caressing imprint of your kiss.  
Your votive's song still echoing from the east.  
And first faint flutterings  
– of new birth in my breast.

*Christopher Reeve*

## Members' Poems cont.

### Sunday morning Strumpshaw fen

Yesterday the sun reflected sky  
on mud slicks left by my boot prints  
as I walked through the reserve  
and beside the great river Yare.

I thought how much I needed the sun  
and spring on that day. Emerging from winter.  
Some birds already began to exercise territorial calls,  
the great tit dominant, robin close second.

The Yare was high, water brimming  
its edge. For a long time it was still  
and silent. I was surprised when  
a narrow boat cruised towards me –

once this river was the main route to the sea.  
The couple shared the rudder, held hot mugs  
their shoulders touched. They knew I saw happiness.  
They waved and I returned it.

I watched the light reflect on dart shaped  
ripples born from the bow and slowly  
diminish. A heron I hadn't noticed feeding  
between reeds on the bankside flew up.

The river widened where a dilapidated  
pump mill half-renovated stood, a solo chimney  
and broad-base like shoulders,  
it used to haul water out of the fields –

a shadow from a very different time  
when all around would have been peopled.  
I turned away from the river where the path  
diverted towards woodland and saw one marsh harrier  
quartering the sky and then two. They hunted  
low over fluffy reed heads, beautiful rufous feathers,  
eyes downturned sharp, absolute concentration.  
The silence is another presence.

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I thought of all the people who didn't have  
this day under the strong spring sunlight  
with its warmth still waiting –  
and before the new war.

I look back and think – was that a moment  
of anticipation, a sense of foreboding –  
the day made more of itself being silent  
and holding me within it?

*Ann Follows*



# For a Ripple of Laughter

## **A Horse and a Tractor**

A tractor was mechanically mowing the meadow  
where farm horses once worked and grazed.

A lonely horse watched from its neat enclosure,  
sometimes snacking from a slow hay feeder.

No space for horses to trot or gallop  
in the pretty painted paddock by the meadow.

A passer-by stroked the horse across the paddock fence  
and tenderly enquired "Why the long face?"

*Simon Haines*