

## Four poems by Helen Moore<sup>1</sup>

### The White Lyne, Cumbria

*It is not difficult for her to imagine the river  
as a vein running through her body.*

– Fiona Owen

The stream enters me,  
    sliding into muddy  
cavities with swabs of Sphagnum,  
    and sounds a deep bass tone  
as fluid bundles  
    at the stones, fallopians  
these fronded roots –  
    the Alder's capillaries that go  
coursing on the current –  
    and wallows in haemoglobin  
glubbing up;  
    bubbles; corpuscles,  
the smooth mammalian rush  
    that rises into mid riffs –  
the liver brightened  
    with the body blessing –  
cells, saliva,  
    silver accretions  
below the dry grass nerves  
    that spate tenters  
on twigs. O –  
    such sheer dissolution –  
it soars the spirits like a breeze  
    curving up the vertebrae of an Ash;  
and the Sun's synaptic flashes  
    are a heart/mind inspiration,  
while silent, unseen  
    all separate-self evaporates,  
its stories diaphanous as steam.

## Guerrilla Gardening, Technique #5

*there is a flight of seeds  
across an open place*

– Michael Hartnett, “Secular Prayers”

The far side of the fence, spotless, sacred, the serial enormity of lawn  
shorn weekly by the guzzle-grind of petrol, while in the corner, forlorn  
relic, an ornament tree rustles sterile keys, and, growling at a Pigeon  
the heavy-jowled dog prowls his dominion with fanatical religion.

This side of the boundary, the garden’s tangled, sprawling mess –  
and yet, the woolly spires of Aaron’s Rod summoning the insects;  
euphoric Swallows, Comfrey, fronded Fennel, a scarlet offering of Poppies;  
Woodbine, and congregating in the log-pile, Woodlice, Woodmice, Beetles;

small orbs of Spiders, beatifying Blackbirds, Blue Tits twirling high in a Plum;  
Damselies, Dragonflies, by the pond a Willow waxing and the cradling Bulrush;  
Bishop’s-weed, Cuckoo Spit – the Froghopper nymph’s baptismal cup;  
or in the owl-scried darkness, a Hedgehog anointed with the juice of Slugs.

Late August I see Traveller’s Joy and Willowherb with ripening cargo  
becalmed; and marshalling my defences, in rapid lung-fire, blow....

## The Worst Winter in Thirty Years

A single winter doesn’t break  
the pattern. O fern frost,  
iced webs, branch stipple-  
engraved with Squirrel prints,  
snow in swags and drifts  
our kids have never seen.  
Stillness, respite from  
the relentless –  
abandoned cars, time  
to walk in wonder. Yet  
hand-wringing, the calculated  
loss to the economy, salt hills  
dwindling, impasse, gritted  
teeth. A single winter  
can break the bank.

## Today, of All Days

*In memory of Annette Tolson*

Today a Hare leaps from the shadows of a thicket;  
I'm its silent, motionless observer,  
its ear-erect alertness, its wide eyeball watch.

Today shafts of Winter sunlight rouse me –  
hair-tips stretching up to bathe  
in its pale, ultra-violet gift.

Today the Oak's roots support me;  
through its cleft and curvy leaves I breathe,  
knotted arms crowning my dependence.

Today a crew of Rooks fly up  
from tree-tops in gregarious, airy lifting;  
I'm their co-arising everywhere.

Today the wind blows from the North;  
I stand by my door – sense how Spirit  
lives inside this house of bone.

Today thousands of Mycelia connect me,  
by sugared strands invisibly through the soil;  
I fruit brownly-white; deliquesce here, there, nowhere.

## Notes

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1. An eco-poet based in Frome, Somerset, Helen Moore publishes poetry, essays, and reviews in various anthologies and periodicals, including *Soul of the Earth*, *The Wolf*, *Magma*, *Green Spirit*, *Caduceus*, and *Resurgence*. Helen regularly performs her poetry at events in the UK and Europe, and also works as a children's author and educator. Her books include: *Changing Nature* (GreenSeer Books, 2006) and the *Hope Stories* (Lollypop Publishing). Her eco-poetry is now available on a new CD – *Nature's Words: Selected Ecopoems 2*. See: [www.natures-words.co.uk](http://www.natures-words.co.uk)