

Rhiannon  
Lloyd-Williams

A Little  
Weightier  
than I  
Arrived







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## Neither Use Nor Ornament

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Unwilling to be groomed, I was told  
I looked like I'd been dragged through a hedge backwards.  
I always pondered the 'backwards'.  
Was it oh-so essential to my leaf-stained self  
That backwards complete the look?

I was no china doll to be placed and cooed at.  
They tried once, made me carnival princess  
And bade me wear a dress and sit and smile.  
I sat and sullened. The dress a far cry  
From the beauty of my skinned knees  
And the thrill of the trees.

Others got to be spiderlings and heroes,  
And I? All ornament and uselessness.  
The ornamental didn't stick.  
'If only you'd listen you could fit'.  
'If only you weren't so angry  
We would all fall in love'.

I didn't know that I was angry  
Until they gave me the trophy to carry.  
Heavy it was but each time I threw it away  
Someone handed it back, with a strained look and a worried nod.  
Until the weight of it made me angry  
And it wore a groove in the crook of my arm.

'What is beauty without use?' I would wail,  
'What good is a dress if it doesn't guard my knees  
When I climb my trees? Where are the pockets  
For all the perfect stones I will find?  
Where will I keep my treasure  
It will not fit on my crown.'  
Then they said, 'It's important to be yourself'

But I knew that was a lie, because I'd shown them me  
And it didn't fit. It was too tight on their shoulders  
And the waist was all tassels,  
It made them feel uncomfortable.  
So, I took it off and kept it for playing dress up.  
I am use - that's the secret.

I am all use and solutions.  
I am all hand movements and creations.  
I am all dancing keys and joy in the unnoticed.  
A child knows; a child took my hand and said,  
'Let's find you a nice beetle, that will make you smile'  
And we did, and it did.

And there are no bigger secrets to uncover  
Than the truth of what is use  
And what is ornament,  
And why.

## Journeys

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Sometimes roads don't unravel the way you hoped they would.  
Sometimes crossroads cross-swords with the best of us,  
And the footsteps beat drums, and the battle's not won,  
And the rain drops berate us for a path lost,  
A journey missed, a wanderlust unslaked,  
But that... that is in the connections,  
The rejections, the intersections.  
A map with no labels -No key to unlock -  
The fingers disjointed. Disappointed.

And yet, tomorrow the road leads on  
As though it always did, and though it lies,  
It lies awakened, and that unslakened  
Movement brings back the beat.  
Road weary feet step on,  
And once again it all opens, oyster-like.

There is always another path, another route through.  
Sometimes the well trodden is not for you.  
Sometimes sheep trails are for setting sail.  
A meandering pace - a one step back for the two.

Sometimes you need the wind behind you to run down the hill.  
The fear of falling a part of the thrill.  
Your heart a-thrumming, and still, and still,  
No way of knowing if your feet have the will.  
Sometimes I tumble, sometimes I fall,  
But the road and its footsteps still have me in thrall,  
And tomorrow – tomorrow -  
I'll rekindle its call, I'll rekindle its call, I'll rekindle its call.



## A Yarn

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A woollen tornado tearing at the strings,  
As they strum through fingers that know the beat,  
Know the rhythm, follow the feet  
As they pass by.  
Tangling around ankles, bare-knuckled and bruised,  
And the footsteps beat on as the yarns inter-fuse.  
There is space in the stitches - yawning and whole.  
There is space in the stitches - chasm and hole.  
There is space in the stitches - between and betwixt.  
There is space in the stitches - to join a new stitch.  
The white on the green - the lamb on the grass,  
The movement and swaying that bows as we pass.  
There is movement in stillness, there is flowing within,  
There is water in needles that pours from the skin.  
The click and the clatter that step ever on,  
The echoes of self-ness passing and gone.  
I am held in the knots, I am held in the twists,  
I am held here stitched in as it falls from your wrists.

## Fragments

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What are we if not webs of who we were,  
Mixed and lost and confused by misrememberings  
And forgetfulness?

Can I be touched from the outside?  
Can you collect me in a paper-bag  
Of things I once held, things I once saw,  
Things I once tasted, places I've been,  
People I've met?

Can you find me in my footsteps?  
Can you measure me in fingerprints?

Where do I begin? Where do I end?  
Is the importance between a trifling thing?

Is what I am, outside of me,  
More than what I am inside you?

I am caught in the things but where I sing -  
Where I sing - is in memories.  
That is not my voice locked in that box.  
That is not who I was, nor who I am.

It is as hearing a bird - all twittering and no meaning  
Beyond what you bring with you.

I live on, inside only. My footsteps are empty.  
They only show where I should be,  
Not where I am.

## Luggage

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I wanted to touch it.  
I wanted to touch the soft indentations of use.  
I wanted to feel the weight and heft  
Of a memory of luggage.  
I wanted to hear the trudge, the weary steps,  
As they lugged memories onwards.  
I wanted to score the arguments;  
All the things lost, all the things forgotten,  
All the things.  
I wanted to trace my fingers over  
An unnoticed potion, overlooked on a sill.  
I want to know how the leather tugs my fingers.  
I want the afterimage of a hat and gloves  
And a quickstep on a platform  
As the wheels squeal to leave.  
I want a moment, I want a lifetime,  
I want to steal what was theirs  
And fold it into mine.  
I want all their yesterdays and all their loves,  
But not their hopes - I don't have space for more.  
I am packed to the brim:  
I have pushed and pressed and heaved.

Their life cast patterns on the world, cobwebs brushing my cheek,  
A semblance of what never was unfurled in my breast,  
As I almost touched what was surely touched  
By all those fingers as they passed through,  
As they passed by. I wave them away and leave  
A little weightier than I arrived.

## Transportation

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We are transported through our senses  
From here to there, from when to when.  
All it takes is the scent of rotting rubber  
And I can almost hear the squawk  
Of a school gym. Our senses connect us  
Through time, through space.  
A touch of fabric and we are grasping  
The hem of mother's skirt.  
The world is grown and we are lost in the touch.  
A dusty shadow and I catch my breath.  
In a Spanish Summer's paper leaves,  
Thunder grumbles through hillsides  
And I am naked and swimming in a lake;  
Water pelts my shoulders  
As I huddle beneath the waves.  
Lightning flashes and my defiance  
Goes unheard beneath the torrent and battle.  
I am all water and electricity.  
A drop of cold honey and I am holding a cone  
Of ice-cream and bees on a blustery Welsh coast.  
The wind tearing at my duffel coat  
As I am thrilled by the chills  
And flavours of an autumn russet.  
I am connected to all those I've been;  
All those who have walked my Earth.  
I am connected to all the things  
I have sensed on my travails.  
I am connected from root to tipping point.

## Typewriter

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Your railway chatter was always enough to catch my heart.  
You delighted in my forceful prodding;  
Judgementally thudding when I didn't put in my all.  
I remember how you gave back the words  
To my grandmother when her hands curled with unruliness  
How the letters reappeared with ribbons in their hair,  
Long after she thought them gone.  
I remember the scrawl of stolen piano keys -  
How time purloined her music but never her words.  
How many ideas passed through your lips  
Without a by your leave?  
How many complaints and tirades?  
How much love?  
A reel of interlinking moments.  
With a ring you moved me on.  
With a crunch and a ring I skipped away  
From your judgement - no hiding from my mistakes.  
And all I wanted from you was your chatter;  
Your pitter patter, your throaty cough  
Between lines. Oh, the times the world used to roar  
With your voice but now we're all tiptoes and gentle keys.  
Throwing down thoughts with disdain -  
All mistakes a pause's gain.  
I tickle the keys - like writing symphonies in silence.  
No one left to stamp the world, to mark it deep.  
Your ribbons whisper ghostly memories  
Of lost chuckles, and I remember your ripples  
Set in sound.

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## Smoke on Water

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I saw her in the sunlight behind the fire,  
Where the shadows leapt and fell in the evening light.  
I saw her sway and fall, a distant memory  
Of wood-smoke long ago.  
I saw her beckon as the flames licked  
And pushed me back. I saw her smile  
As the wood cracked and spluttered its excuses.  
I knew that to move would be to lose that glimpse,  
To lose the angle, to lose the lines  
Of sun through rain. So, I sat with smoky eyes  
And held my distance - held it close -  
And swayed with the flame.

## Webs

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Like wings in a web, I flap in the gusts.  
I am the strands and structure;  
The interlocking lines, the ladders.  
I am ascending and descending -  
Expanding - and I breathe with the breeze.  
In. Out.  
I cannot pull my web together.  
Where the strands touch  
And there should be connection,  
I am halted by the change.  
My pattern fractured, my movement lost  
To the waves that tear it all asunder.  
I cannot gather it together.  
I cannot hold my wings aloft in armfuls and say,  
"Here. My offering;  
A frayed flag dithering in the wind."

## Catherine Wheels

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Catherine wheels spin with a moment from long ago.  
I am the tearing light, seared in by where I was,  
Where I am, where I will be.  
I am thrown this way and that  
By the force of my inner world.  
What is outside is never as big, or so I'm told.  
Gunpowder explosions and light shows;  
I whirlpool on the spot with no thought  
For saving more for tomorrow.  
Here and then and ever.  
I should not be kept indoors - though I often am -  
It is best to give me my space;  
A moat of empty air to keep us all safe.  
You close your eyes, but I am seared into your lids  
And though you do not see it all  
I am imprinted. My visceral lines  
Overlaying yours. Burning brighter for the spin.  
I am falling stars and oohs and aaahs,  
I am patterns in the darkness,  
A distant untouched caress;  
I don't need your touch  
To touch you.



## Queues

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I am a follow-through.  
I am all of those who came before  
And will come after.

Though I am not the anger of metamorphosis,  
I am not the fear of adulthood,  
I am not the confusion of youth,  
I am not the first flushes of desire,  
I am not young love,  
I am not rocking in a corner,  
I am not the scent of hay-making,  
I am not exchanging rings,  
I am not inking my skin,  
I am not singing on a hilltop,  
I am not dancing in the rain,  
I am not swimming in a thunderstorm,  
I am not lost and alone,  
I am not head-banging on a dance floor,  
I am not diving in the moonlight,  
I am not kissing in the lamplight,  
I am not naming all the stars,  
I am not enraptured by a newborn,  
I am not exhausted to my bones.  
I am not any of those people anymore.

I am standing at the front;  
I am the first step  
Of everyone I have yet to be.

## Verge

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I am edges, angles, on the margins.  
I stand admiringly, in the gaps  
Around the paper.  
Waiting for the right words  
To pounce and hold up.  
Waiting for the right monkey  
At the right typewriter  
To say the things I need to hear.

I am an on-the-outside person  
Though my outside is paper  
I am waiting for permission to tear.

I saw a shadow on the wall that moved as I moved,  
Stood as I stood, echoed as I echoed,  
And I pushed it onto the page  
Where it staggered,  
Looking back at me and my betrayal.  
I bade it dance for the crowds  
Knowing all they would see  
Was the hollowness, and I could stay safe  
On the edges. All knees and elbows.

## Cabinet

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Life moves within and I am contained.  
Treasures pushed aside to find the focus.  
Everything I need is within these walls -  
My memories of remembering.

The air isn't mine, it rustles with paper leaves:  
The wood aching with burnt soil.  
The shutters clap to the scent of figs  
And an air of home.

Shadows play on my mind as I rumble through  
What belongs and what has past use.

Salt laps at the ring pull I long to make sing,  
Pulling back the scent that curls an imagined lip.

My casket shifts with the sands as I feel the firmness  
And sense the shape.

Somewhere it crossed from his to mine.  
Our fingers brushing by  
So close I felt the air sigh.

What was, now filtering through  
My body, through my world.

Like fence-posts stuttering across a hillside,  
Each placed in turn, each heaved in space,  
Each pushed through the bones of the ground.  
The first placed so differently from the last;  
The movement pushed by the repetition;  
Bending and forcing and swaying with the land.

As I place my final object I am displaced:  
I am not who I was when I began.

## Treasure

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In a bygone era,  
When elves still roamed  
And eyes were everywhere,  
I intercepted the post one day.  
He was more than happy  
To pass me his parcels  
Through the window of his van -  
No need to brave the farm dogs.

It was the day before  
The day before  
My birthday.

There were rules about parcels  
And rules about opening,  
But the only thing there  
Was addressed to me  
In large, round letters.

I stole it away. Walked down through  
The yard where the tractor sat,  
Sullen and croaky,  
With its uncomfortable joints,  
And its age-weary bones.

I nodded at the cows  
Who licked their lips at my passing,  
And I placed my face near to the bull's  
And tried to lick my own nostrils clean.

I clutched my package tightly,  
Shushing the chickens  
Who clucked at my approach.  
The hay shed was for hens and nesting,  
Not this interloper with no eggs to hatch.  
They grumbled as I nestled down  
In a dusty cocoon of husky grasses.

I arched my bare legs to keep them from the prickle  
And gently, guiltily peeled open the parcel.

In a flurry of fluid metal  
Its contents poured through my knees;  
A bee broach, a bracelet, so much treasure  
Fell into the cracks of the golden grasses.  
I scooped at them, found what I could,  
But never knew if I had found them all.

The treasure should not have been mine  
Until I came of age - and I was still only nine.  
I had not the grand wisdom of the ten-year-old  
I could not have known better, not yet.

The light of the late morning sun  
Beamed in through the broken slats,  
The hens chided me for my foolishness,  
And I stayed, playing games  
With the dust motes.  
Cupping my riches to my breast,  
Holding on to that breathless moment  
That was just for me.  
Stolen only from myself.

## Desire

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Envy washes me on like a low-level tsunami  
Nudging me behind the knees. I am so envious of you;  
Of everything you do, everything you see, everything you touch.  
If I had your lightness I could pour all these words  
Out and through and they would fill the world  
Like maybugs. Instead they crawl beneath my feet -  
So many slugs, torpid and grey and unable to escape my  
Occasional deletion, my occasional misstep, my occasional smooosh.

I am deeply envious -  
Not of who you are, not of what you do, not of how you do it,  
But of the connections; the tendrils that slip  
So easily from your lips to kiss another.

Though I can kiss - my kisses are deep and heartfelt -  
But I can't help but be washed away by lips.  
That moment of envelopment and taste.  
Is it just that my kiss halts your words?  
Is it just that I can connect through our movement?  
Is it just that I am bonded to you in touch,  
And you to me, without a word between us?

Is that why my kisses plumb such depths?  
Is that why I fall into the chasm of connection?  
Emerging blinking and wide-eyed,  
Like a lost spelunker finding the light?  
Terrified that the world changed whilst I was gone.  
Terrified that I have made another mistake  
In opening my breath to your tongue.

It is fine to limit the bestowment of kisses,  
But lips are supposed to throw words to the masses;  
To toss them carelessly to the wind.  
I keep my words -like my kisses -  
For those that I need to hear them.  
My connections are deep.  
I am no good at the paddling,  
Give me lagoons and shadowy gulfs  
That hide who and what.  
Give me the dark cold of the unfathomable.

I am full of envy for the ability to be  
Someone I have no interest in being.  
I am caught in a net that can only catch me  
If I leave the shallows, but I always step deeper.  
The slow sweep of the water as I stride down the slope,  
Flowing around my legs. A sinuous ball-gown  
Clinging to my grace, its train sweeping my wake.  
I always wanted to swim to Ireland,  
To cross the Irish sea, by hand, by foot, by floating fat.

I long for an adventure that I've pushed away,  
Hands splashing at the shore;  
So sure that turning the tide is within my will.  
If only I can push hard enough  
If only I can lean into my desires I can move them.  
Like treacle they lean back and gently,  
And slowly - so slowly that I cannot see the change "â€"  
They envelop. Fingers first; my push pulls me in.

One day I shall stride from the sea,  
Like a character - a pretend person.  
The sun glinting on the water that  
Falls from my flesh. I'll shake my long locks,  
That somehow lack lankness from the soaking,  
And I'll wave my hips and smile,  
And all my words will fall forward onto the warm sand.  
They'll lie there, torpid and new-born,  
For anyone to take home, if they wish.

Until then, I shall sleep and dream and covet,  
From a seabed that rolls when I do.

## Shedding cells

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My home isn't who I am,  
It's a fudge of who I was  
And who I wanted to be.  
My love for her keeps me close -  
I try to shed the disappointed cells  
And keep the mirrors;  
Trinkets built by sand between my toes  
My fingers pared their waves.  
I'm shedding the cells of yesterday,

Curled like peeled wax.  
I circle from this to that

Coating it all in my scent.  
Find me in the imprint  
I leave in the avalanche of living.  
Leave me in my belonging.



## Echoes

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I dropped a glass  
And its tinkle smashed,  
Echoing through the darkness.  
It bounced back and around  
And back and around -  
A resounding re-sound.  
Just for a moment  
It contained an entirety of me  
Stood there in air.  
With ears, I saw her smile  
And drop, to pick at shards -  
No fingertips to tear at her,  
No sharp points.  
She was all soft shadows  
And hard company.

## Glass Buoys

Buoys played in the pond when I was a girl.  
They chattered whenever I splashed them from afar.  
The lily-pads held out their hands beckoning me to join their fun,  
But beneath the hedging green, tangles twined to catch me close.  
If left alone for long enough I would capture a straggler;  
I would hold him up to the light with my see-through arms  
And turn him to see where his age showed through,  
The glass swimming through its own waves.  
I would look into my crystal ball and see only what had been -  
A lobster pot and a soul afloat, to herald in the reaper.  
I was not allowed to throw them back,  
But the song they sang as they plunged deep and soured  
Was too much for a small girl to contain.  
All that air from long ago, trapped inside from a time  
When the sky tasted of apples and sea-salt.  
Three prattled when I was their age, only two made it to adulthood.  
They released their breath with a slate cry.  
We're all grown up and sensible now;  
My two buoys tinkle an afternoon tea and clipped Koi.



