

*Joyce Caplan***Wild Swimmers at Wardie**

[for Vari]

The wild swimmers make white scars across the leaden sea.
The horizon sky dark with unshed clouds of rain that speeds
them onwards back to shore. Only their hearts are warm
as they beach on wet sand, shrieking with relief,
reaching for towels, glad to have beaten the cold,
their defiant survival almost an act of joy
before they are landlocked again.

After the Snow

The parks are full of dead snowmen, the heaps of melting snow
grown gritty overnight now surrounded by muddy grass.

We did not see them born under the hands of hopeful children
who gave them discreet, blank faces; their noses dark beacons.

The ice crunches underfoot in scales of mirrored light beneath
trees festooned with enquiring birdsong. Celebrating a New Year
each passerby breathes out a greeting of distant smoke that
mingles above us, dispersing to clearer air still beyond our reach.

Lady Joyce Caplan is a Teaching Fellow at University of Edinburgh and a member of the General Council. Chair of several NGO's including Poetry Association of Scotland, Children's Classic Concerts and the medical Charity The Snowball Trust. Also a Board member of The Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society, ScottishPEN, The Edinburgh Burns Council, The Muriel Spark Society.