

Donald Adamson

Fresh Air

So much of the impurity
and wrongness in the world is like a mist
rising from the crowd,
the lungs and throats of the multitude.

Little wonder mystics, prophets, saints
look for holiness in empty space

like Benedict – years spent in a cave
until he found another way
to God: the commonality
of an order and a rule:
work and pray.

Thus it was he came to walk
the monk's path, no room for idle talk,
rather he'd shun – as sin? – the eagerness
to prattle or to open up
his nature, surge and babble with the rush
of a mountain brook – pure spontaneousness.

A narrow track he took, harshly subduing
the mortal self. Yet turning thoughts – ours too -
towards a benison – sensing those few

molecules of fresh air entering us

with every breath – breath of the spirit, say,
barely noticed, subtly infused
in thoughts and words
and music, when we sing,
or when we draw a bow across a string.

Donald Adamson is from Dumfries, Scotland, but currently lives in Finland. He writes in English and Scots, and translates from Finnish, notably the poems of Nobel-prize nominee Eeva Kilpi. He has been a prize winner in many competitions, including first prize in the Herald Millennium Competition, the Sangschaw Translation Competition, and the Scottish Federation of Writers Competition (Scots category). His collections include *From Coiled Roots* (IDP 2013) and *Glamourie* (IDP 2015). His pamphlet *All Coming Back* (Roncadora 2019) takes as its theme the third age of life. A new pamphlet in Scots, *Bield*, will be published by Tapsalteerie.