

*Mario Relich***Shades of Pink**

Looking at the Amazon river dolphins,
friendly to the fishermen in their boats,
they remind us of other dolphins
we might see in open-air aquariums
or BBC wild-life documentaries,

ducking, diving, and jumping up high,
even if not pursuing any fish, nor reward.
Nothing, unless you know the river,
can prepare us for dolphins displaying
themselves in the fleeting shimmer

of startling pink flashes beckoning
us to follow them deliriously,
looking for a good time, and careless
of the amphibious black caiman,
a sinister, gloomy croc hidden below.

Another living, breathing creature
bright as the dolphins, if more lethargic
is the pink iguana, and it's to be found
totally isolated in the Galapagos,
living on the luxuriant, shiny green

vegetation growing on the slopes
of the smouldering Wolf volcano

in the lush island of Isabela,
Darwin, had he known about them
like the other iguanas he saw there
would have wondered how
such a freakish reptile happened
to evolve its pinkish coloration,
so far from *red in tooth and claw*,
and observed that its sensitive skin

allows the blood in its veins
to look pink on the outside.
A creature far too proximate
to an active volcano, it's rare
and found nowhere else.

Less endangered, but elusive,
the pink robin can be found
in the remote rainforests
of southeastern Australia.
Small and sooty-feathered,

apart from its lilac pink chest,
it's quietly unobtrusive, and
often looks for insects, but it's not
related to the robins I sometimes see
in my back-garden doing the same.

But it also pleases the eye;
river, volcano, rainforest, all

are habitats in which animals,
conch-shell pink, still survive,
quirks of opulent evolution.

Mario Relich is a poet and critic, and on the Board of Scottish PEN. He is based in Edinburgh, and is a regular contributor to *Scottish Affairs*, which is published both in hard-copy and online. His Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh was on philosophical dialogue by David Hume and others during the Enlightenment.