

Donal McLaughlin

from: a steady trickle

Author's note: I do not keep a diary. Since July 2019, however – influenced by a young, emerging writer I very much rate: Sean McMenemy – I have at times written short, third-person narratives that Sean has labelled *The McLocks Diaries*. Initially, I imagined that these (sporadic) pieces might be a way of writing about Glasgow but, for the past year, their main focus has been my lockdown walks in the local countryside. More recently, I have been writing a ‘steady trickle’ of haiku, inspired sometimes by walks, sometimes by what I have been reading, watching, listening to. The following are taken from that second, unintended, now on-going diary. A date is provided only where appropriate.

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embracing winter?

so much bloody easier
if trump's voted out

24oct2020

*

grey wagtail

twerks at its reflection
tail oh-so-erect

*

thaw after the frost:

path back to squelching / a
peely-wally wren

*

...summer anywhere:

*winter this out & we can
summer anywhere*

*

christmas day need

to see buzzard, wagtails, deer:
strictly one-way just

*

...have mercy on us
 and on the whole world – mum’s plea
 daily at three

*

DUP MP
 forgets tae “un-mute” –
schadenfreude pur ur whit

*

catch it unawares
 before day takes over
 a world still asleep

*

survival –
 the most any of us
 can ask for

*

Acknowledgments

‘Embracing Winter’ was the theme of the programme *Out of Doors*, on Radio Scotland, the weekend the clocks went back. / ‘summer anywhere’ builds on something Seamus Heaney said in an interview in 1973 – as highlighted by the poet & critic Hayden Murphy in his Christmas card to friends last year. / ‘have mercy on us’ uses a response taken from ‘The Divine Mercy’, a novena recited by believers at three o’clock, the ‘Hour of Great Mercy’. / The DUP MP in question appeared on *The View*, on BBC Northern Ireland, on 14 January 2021. / The final two poems were found in Jessie Kesson’s *The White Bird Passes*, and Billy O’Callaghan’s *Life Sentences*, respectively.

Donal McLaughlin is the author of two short story collections: *an allergic reaction to national anthems & other stories* (Argyll), and *beheading the virgin mary, and other stories* (Dalkey Archive). A founding member of the Scottish Writers' Centre, he is a recipient of the Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Award, was Scottish PEN's first écrivain sans frontières, and is a former Hawthornden Fellow. As a translator, he was shortlisted for the Best Translated Book Award (USA) in 2013, and awarded the Max Geilinger Prize in 2015 for his translations of Swiss fiction, many of which have been published by Naveen Kishore's Seagull Books in Kolkata. That Donal's passion for short forms extends to haiku is now no longer a secret.