

A. C. Clarke

At the retreat centre

After Juana Adcock Vestigial, 'this dusk'

This afternoon when even November rain is blurred
and daylight, leached to a blue pallor,
folds itself up

I wonder how much point there is
in going forward.

Circling as in a labyrinth might lead
to more conclusion.

Yet, when I walk this way I find
in spite of leaves and debris the path
always makes itself known.

I step firm over sodden ground,
a palmer on a self-appointed
pilgrimage for our grim age.

It seems too late but

I still wish for ~~self-belief~~

~~trust~~ ~~certainty~~

faith ...

Scottish-Mexican poet Juana Adcock's latest pamphlet, *Vestigial*, is a collection of poems written after Alasdair Gray's seminal work, *Lanark*. It was published in June by Stewed Rhubarb Press.

Consider the wild iris

People are forever *growing and going on journeys*
and being the best they can be.

Consider the wild iris

which waves its yellow flag in crowds

at the margins of burns,

thrusts up from still ponds,

cools its roots in wetlands.

Every spring it grows to full height,

every autumn dies back.

Is it the best it can be?

It just *is*.

Let's hear it for windfarms

Turbines virtue-signal from the horizon
flailing their triple arms like ineffectual
birdscarers. I've met a man
whose sole task was logging deathcounts,
birds versus windfarms.

What about
birds versus windscreens, birds versus radiomasts
birds versus cats? The blades whirr on
lighting our nights, warming our virtual hearths.

Blot on the landscape? Not more than any other
crop of metal sown among green pastures;
as elegant as any fenland spire
pointing its sermonising finger upwards
to urge our faltering prayers to heaven.

A. C. Clarke has published five full collections and six pamphlets, two of the latter, *Owersettin* and *Drochaid*, in collaboration with Maggie Rabatski and Sheila Templeton. Her fifth full collection, *A Troubling Woman* came out in 2017. She was one of four winners in the Cinnamon Press 2017 pamphlet competition with *War Baby*. She has been working on an extensive series of poems about Paul and Gala Éluard, later Gala Dalí, and the Surrealist circles in which they moved. The first set of these was published as a pamphlet by *Tapsalteerie* in 2021. A full collection based on the same material, *Alive Among Dead Stars*, is due to be published by Broken Sleep books at the end of 2024.