

*Sue Whitmore***Dragon**

The boilers roared.

We had the dragon by its tail
or so we thought

until it turned on us;
and now its hot and acrid breath,
its open maw
is taking forest, farm and heath -
like war.

And it won't stop -
though nor it seems, will we,
still firing up the dragon's rage.

Oh yes, it's come for us,
come through gardens,
roofs and walls, come
for all the comfortable stuff
of living.

One day we will wake up
and find the creatures of the world,
like our regrets, are ashes on the wind.

Dragons can be unforgiving.

God's old ear

'...to doubt is to immediately go out.' - Wm. Blake

Of course she was angry -
stiff with adolescent rage
childhood innocence now seemed
like gullibility.

But no, they hadn't lied,
only led themselves, and her,
to believe this, that and the other,
that if she was good and chaste and prayed,
trusted the oracles, obeyed,
honoured her father and her mother,
life wouldn't hurt so much.

Such kind intentions.
Parents: too strong and yet too weak,
their tiny mortal boats will leave you
on a moment's waning breath,
any words you might have said all spoken,
all bonds broken.

However old that's when it hurts -
no mum, no dad, no forwarding address,
no phone, no letter,
they're not around to make things better.

Too strong and yet too weak?
Sounds just like their God, in fact,
an old ear pressed against the confessional grille

locked in omni-impotence -
hearing all yet simply cannot act.

Of course she was angry!
They'd tried to share their limp old God with her
and here she was
stuck with nagging human fear
and a withered relic -
God's old ear.

When the waters rose

Drifting on without a chart
 we're losing sight of land -
 nothing about this trip was planned;
 and where is Noah the old drunk -
 lost to his bed?

The cruise is in full swing
 and one thing's clear,
 we revellers must be fed
 and fellow passengers of fur and beak,
 scale and wing will quietly disappear . . .

If things we don't yet know to name
 are lost to flood and flame, so what?
 Everything's fine -
 Noah is in his laboratory storing genes on ice,
 seed, eggs and sperm in a frozen zoo.

He's making play with DNA
 in his all-too-human, all-too-apelike way.
 He's not to blame,
 we've all done *far* too little *far* too late,
 Party's over now it's down to fate.

The world keeps turning
 and our cruise moves on.
 When history judges
 we will be long gone.

Sue Whitmore: Poet and artist Sue Whitmore studied at University College London and Central and Wimbledon Schools of Art. She has a lifelong commitment to imagination, language and the human experience expressed through poetry and enjoys performing her poetry. Her poems have been broadcast and published in many journals. She convenes a Stanza of the Poetry Society. She is a member of Greenwich Printmakers. In 2012 she was made Champion of Culture by Art in Business for her contribution to the arts. Publications: *'Sue, Realist: A Selection of Poems & Drawings'*, 1992 and *'Blood, Fish & Bone' [Books I & II]*, 2017, a pamphlet, *'Human Interest'* - commended in IDP's Geoff Stevens Memorial Competition in 2018.

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