Art squares look and stare

Keith Robert Bray

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Introductory preface:

My third book of poems is a broad selection of themes and ideas written over the last two years. Some drawn from personal experience and direct observation while others more playful, fanciful, surreal; reflecting individual concerns more sociological than political. A mixed bag of assorted vignettes and anecdotes brought together under the collective title ‘Art squares look and stare’. A large majority of the poems are written and presented in traditional stanza form. A conscious decision made in order to tighten up the work to make the pieces concise, pithier and structurally more coherent.

There are a number of people I want to mention and credit for their influence on my work, either directly or indirectly. With many thanks to Jazzman John Robert Clarke, Tanya Marshall, Adam Strickson, Maggie Swampwino, Eleanor Wood, Wendy Young, Julius Howard, Luciana Panbocch, Kalamandalam Barbara Vijayakumar, Jo King, Sarah Frangleton, David Calladine, Gerry Devlin-Kerr. And my blood family, my sisters Irene Carroll and Winifred McCoy, my nieces Julie, Paula, Leslie, Angela and Clare, my nephew Peter and brothers in law Eric Carroll and Peter McCoy. And also a very special thanks to my musical composition teachers Margaret Lucy Wilkins (Huddersfield University) and Melanie Daiken (Royal Academy of Music) and to all my tutors at the Leeds College of Music and Goldsmith University Music Department. And not forgetting the cats Mishka, Teddy and Nemesis. The book is dedicated to the spirit of the Pennines and my mother and father, Florence and Jack Bray. (The front and back cover images of the book are my own original designs).

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Stupid cupids bow and arrow

You went and pierced me to the heart

With your bow and arrow,

I didn’t stand a chance

Now there’s no tomorrow.

Went and hit me with a brick

With all your charms and sorrows,

Left me lying here

In the sweet mire and furrow.

Punched me in the eye

With one mean left hooker,

Should have known what was coming

Should have run for cover.

You went and struck me like a bell

With a thud and a shudder,

Heading for double trouble

For sure I’m a ship without a rudder.

Straight eight down the line

Ace high what a surprise,

Big wheel spinning in the sky

Left me here all black and blue to wonder why.

After midnight walk home

Early morning

Walk home,

Clouded half moon

Looking down from up above;

White cat

In a doorway

Surprises the eye

While toying with the mind.

Caught in the act,

Thin lean rummaging fox

Foraging the housing estate

Steals stealthily away, disappearing

Out of sight, concealed

Amongst and beneath

The parked

Dormant vans and cars.

Late time night stragglers

Swiftly passing by,

Their shadows

Clearly discernible

Through the hazy amber light.

Footfalls amplified

Rhythm conspicuous, sounding

Through the after midnight air.

Heavy timpani

Shoe steps

Insistent and militaristic,

Contained in a regular

Four to a bar

Marching beat,

Disturbing the hushed

Near silent empty streets.

Rooms awaiting us

Each in our own way,

Somewhere to be resting easy

Safe from the cares of the day.

Protective precious keys

Unlocking secure doors to ourselves,

To private uncensored dreams;

The completed self-further revealed.

**Product Details**

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