



Katherine Stockton is a Swansea-born, University of Warwick-educated, poet and writer currently completing her Masters in Scriptwriting at the University of East Anglia. Katie was published in Black Bough Issue 1 and joins Issue 2 as a Guest Reader

IN CONVERSATION WITH *KATHERINE STOCKTON* GUEST READER

Q. Tell us a little about yourself and where your work is published

A. My poetry, more often than not, is based around the interplay of intimacy and loneliness (for reasons I cannot quite identify). My work has been published in *Frontier Poetry's Where Shadow's Fall*, *Young Norfolk Art's* 2019 zine (and performed at the event 'The Fountain of Youth'), in *Black Bough Poetry's* pilot issue, *Gold Lit Hour* and most recently, in the Kunsthalle Cromer poetry anthology *Like the Sea I Think*. My poems have also been featured in three café-exhibitions, *The Song of Sapwood* in Square Peg (Swansea), a lovely charity-based coffee shop, and Brynmill Coffee Shop (also Swansea), and then again in Brynmill for an exhibition called *Homeground*. My poems accompanied photography by South Wales based photographer Lesley Davies. Her emotive photos of nature and home-spaces worked as brilliant ekphrastic material for my writing.

Q. How long have you been writing poetry and how did you start?

A. I've been writing poetry for five years. I started as many do, pushed into it by a teacher that caught a glimmer of potential in me. In the summer of 2017, I attended weekly poetry workshops run by Lesley and Peter Davies, in my local coffee den, Square Peg. Having this feedback in a specifically non-academic environment propelled my writing, and my publishing successes have all come from there.

Q. What poets are your favourites and what was the last collection you read?

A. My favourite poets are a true mix. Caroline Bird, Mimi Khalvati, Ocean Vuong and Larkin stand out to me. I've also always enjoyed the odd spontaneous limericks that my father comes out with. The last collection I (re)read was Larkin's *The Whitsun Weddings*, which truly lives up to its reputation.

Q. You have recently joined Black Bough Poetry as a guest reader, what drew you to the publication?

A. My poetry doctrine and Black Bough's align. Though poetry, at its root, is about emotion and expression, my belief (and my best writing) stems from the practice of removing emotion from the poem and leaving behind images. Words, placed in the right order, can ring out an emotion in a more delicate and sparing way than narrative poetry can. It is the epitome of 'show don't tell' – something that has been hammered into me in my scriptwriting course, too.

The flagship poem by Pound also drew me to this publication. I remember reading that particular gem, near the time I read *I Know A Man* by Robert Creeley and having a lightning-moment that poetry can be this small, indivisible, origami-bird like thing. Language thanks you for allowing it to be light.

Q. Any tips you can give poets wishing to be published by Black Bough?

A. Don't be scared, to be daring! Push language to its very limits to see what images you can create. The themes of the magazine invite out of the box poets who want to see what new, unfamiliar images they can cast to evoke all-too-familiar feelings. If the poem is too obscure but shows imagistic merit, you are likely to get feedback rather than a rejection! My next piece of advice would be to then heed such feedback, as it is not often you get feedback from an editor and editing team that are willing to work with you to get your work published. The poetry submission void can be, well, a bit too much of a silent, consuming void sometimes.

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