



Heron

CREATIVE JOURNAL OF
THE KATHERINE MANSFIELD SOCIETY

HERON

Creative Journal of the Katherine Mansfield Society

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Contents

Introduction: <i>Lesley Sharpe, editor</i>	1
But—fallen—in—love <i>Chris Holdaway</i>	4
The sitting Wingley <i>Jessica Whyte</i>	6 7
<i>from</i> Beatrice Hastings' Journal: London and Worthing, the 1930s <i>Judith Hendra</i>	8
Our ancestor <i>Tony Beyer</i>	13
Brilliance <i>Maurizia Paolucci</i>	14
@thebays.co.nz - a sequence of 8 poems <i>Iain Britton</i>	15
crushingsunberries@daysbay	
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navelmoment@shellybay	
foamdrunk@orientalbay	
amongstvistas@crescentbay	
feedingancestors@mahinabay	
puresilence@evansbay	
Biographical Notes	23

Introduction

'To catch something that isn't there...'

In *The Life of Katherine Mansfield*, published in 1933, Ruth Mantz and Middleton Murry portray a writer whose creative process was one of flux, experiment and repetition, describing how it 'was her custom, in those days (in composing one of the slight sketches which she called Vignettes), to write the first draft quickly under the impulse of her original idea; then to experiment with it—crossing out words and lines, revising the first text; later to rewrite completely, retaining only certain sentences and phrases from the first draft— really giving the idea a new chance to form itself'. She particularly enjoyed going 'to the sea for copy', exploring over and over the language by which she might capture a sense of colour and light:

'I am at the sea—at Island Bay, in fact—lying flat on my face on the warm white sand. And before me the sea stretches...To my right—shrouded in mist, like a fairy land— a dream country—the snow mountains of the South Island; to my left fold upon fold of splendid golden hills...

...Where the rocks lie their shadow is thickly violet upon the green blue—you know that peacock shade of water. Blueness—with the blueness of Rossetti— green with the greenness of William Morris. Oh, what a glorious day this is. I shall stay here until after dark—walking along the beach—the waves going over my feet—'

In a redraft the sun going down has become '—a ruby jewel in a luminous setting—and there is a faint flush everywhere over sea and land. To my right the sky has blossomed into vivid rose, but to my left the land is hidden by a grey blue mist...' This painterly way of engaging with the landscape shows Mansfield's sensitivity to changes of light, of colour and mood, and to naming, as well as her interest in the absolute of darkness. The sea too proves an apt metaphor for this shifting sense of reality, both in its surface changeability, its mirrors and reflections, and in the deeper sense of time which it embodies, its compelling sense of that which might endure.

Many of the pieces in this volume of *Heron* explore Mansfield's relationship with change and permanence, evoking her connection with the sea, with nature and animals, and the way she was perceived by friends and writers close and distant, both in the moment and with the longer view of hindsight. The contributors show us, like Mansfield, the way in which language allows us both to capture and rewrite the present and the past, and the way it evades this closure. In Chris Holdaway's poem 'But—fallen—in—love', a response to 'The Doves' Nest', impermanence brings a focus to the moment again and again:

It must be said

I often stretch out my arms

To catch something that isn't there

Yet colour impresses itself deeply in an act of renewal, in the detail of gardens – imaginative – where 'Roses may still be born – blue against blue'. Real gardens too bring the outdoors inside in Jessica Whyte's poem 'The sitting', electrifying the scene with an exuberance of 'yellow irises, foxgloves/sea pinks, dog daisies.../...a mass of terrifying lupins' which cannot last, but

emphatically exist. And behind everything always the sea, where Mansfield hopes fiercely that 'the air is better than medicine', where 'the sea purrs' and 'seagulls preen'. Normal prosaic life also runs alongside imaginative intensity in the closely observed scenes of Jessica Whyte's poem 'Wingley', drawn from Mansfield's letters, with its whimsical but deeply felt affection for her 'teapot cat' who will soon 'dictate his reminiscences'. Even a kitty can take a long view of things.

Human relationships prove more quixotic. Judith Hendra imagines Beatrice Hastings, with her new-found 'sister' falling into a deep and intimate identity: 'I talked, you listened, wide-eyed taking it all in...our thick dark hair and almost black eyes setting us apart from the vapid Englishwomen' satirized by Hastings in *The New Age*. But her journal charts the flow and flux of the ongoing relationship to expose not only its enduring impact on Hastings, but also to provide an insight into the strangeness and instability of the relationships surrounding Katherine - Ida, Orage, Murry, Carco, Hastings herself. These vignettes chronicle the demise of Katherine's health and her increasing paleness, but also her continuing hold on the imagination of those around her: 'Katherine was powerful—I admit it. She drew people into her life, her problems. I confess I was not immune. Didn't I listen while she told me how frustrated she was with Murry, and how she needed Carco to inspire her—looking sideways at my failing relationship with Modigliani?'

Judith Hendra's journal gives an intimate portrait of Hastings' own transformation as she descends into vitriol and a rejection of 'Katherine's sainthood, Saint Katherine-Little-Flower and Pope Murry the Pius', and introduces the complex issue of haunting and the after-lives of relationships. Tony Beyer's poem 'Our ancestor' also addresses the 'judgements in hindsight', and the possibility that 'among the many things Hemingway/was wrong about was KM'. He absolves her of Hemingway's literary criticisms ('watered-down Chekhov') and the personal vitriol levelled at her by Woolf, claiming for her instead a gift for reaching the 'remote but necessary/galleries of the heart', creating 'narratives' that remain as 'authoritative as steam rising/through the scullery door/outside into clear blue light'. Again, this sense of the flux in everyday activities finds its meaning alongside that which underpins, or frames it.

'Brilliance', fuelled by the exuberance of its title, captures the ironic tone which Mansfield often uses to such dramatic effect. The author, Maurizia Paolucci, speaks through the narrator Giordana to show how far she feels that her 'future stretched before her with absolute clarity'. Moving through the world with 'her detail-oriented eye', the narrator identifies herself as the central pivot of the story again and again, her own name reverberating through the story with each new perception. She even discovers, in the energy of her imaginative instinct, a deep intimacy with an unknown crying woman, presuming to understand her experience: 'What was most amazing, Giordana knew by instinct what the woman's language was'. Every shift of experience is recorded, and, like Bertha's epiphany in 'Bliss', felt, in the moment, to be beyond doubt. The connections become so complete that the woman 'let herself smoothly fall into [Giordana's arms]; and did not cling to her, but slowly hugged her as if she was giving comfort as well as receiving it, as if they were dancing. Their breasts were touching as if their hearts were having a whispered conversation'.

These moments of certainty, imagined or real, are often offset in Mansfield's own writing by sudden shifts of light, by a lengthening of the shadow. The day, like the sea, moves on with its own rhythm. Iain Britton's sequence @thebays.co.nz gives us a view of both. Its beaches and

people, its time frame and shore line navigate the shifts of each bay, each title full of the resonance too of Mansfield's 'At the Bay'. As for Mansfield, the sea is an enduring subject. Against impermanence and change we want, as he says in 'lodedintheflesh@owhirobay':

to reshape
the horizon the steep cliffs
the houses which slide

closer to the sea

Language too, like the sea, is in flux:

waves

break on daydreams

on early solitudes words
stretch & split in the heat

But perhaps language also shores itself up, working against inconstancy, against 'the fragility of this beach/the unpredictability of its tidal clock' ('navelmoment@shellybay'). Perhaps it can have the last word. The writing in this volume of *Heron* makes evident a deep thread of connection, in which Katherine Mansfield is, as Tony Beyer says, 'our ancestor'. The range of her influence endures. In her final reworking of the opening experiment we find her reframing the scene to privilege, finally, not light or sky, but the sea, its voice and its silence, and darkness:

"And near me I see a light upon the blue coast— steadily, tenderly luminous a little candle set upon the great altar of the world. The glow pales in the sky— on the land—but the voice of the sea grows stronger. Oh, to sail and sail with the heart of the sea—It is darkness and silence."

This is not darkness or silence as absence, but its very opposite.

Lesley Sharpe

September 2020

But—fallen—in—love

“The world forgetting, by the world forgot”
Taking the Veil, Katherine Mansfield

It was so completely over—no
 One moment a wonderfully good
 Imitation alone on the stage
 The hero the curtain a tree hung
 With spears the sound of cheering
 Whole worlds were in tears
too late! too late!

I am the reverie itself as you
 Overthink: make a future catastrophically
 Young crying the garden path as you
 Walk it the ruined convent of time
 You fetched the ends of the earth like a cab
 The apocalypse in a wine biscuit
 The distance implied by a box of chocolates
 Remind you undomesticated almonds possess
 A cyanide content no amount of candy could
 Coat or that you only have perfect health
 By accident.

Fairly pretty peach-coloured
 Tragedy practising its scales
ab-me, ab-no

The fashion of self-dissolution
 Come across as a summer pop song . . .
 Whenever blindness and love appear together
 We must assume we'll have it as Oedipus
 Never to give another thought to the world
 Buried in a handkerchief wearing our chapels
 Like robes in cold sun.

It must be said

I often stretch out my arms
To catch something that isn't there
The world's cruel jewelleries sprayed-on
Trees through narrow windows of the first
Time in your life peace comes slowly. How
Could you have done it?

You have not done it.

Roses may still be born—blue against blue.

Chris Holdaway



Katherine Mansfield leaning against the balustrade of the terrace at the Villa Isola Bella, Menton in the south of France.

Taken by Ida Baker, 1920, and reproduced here by kind permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library (image 1/4-059883-F).

The sitting

Heavy as a sparrow in your brick-red frock,
 you settle in an armchair, a hot water bottle
 braced behind your lungs. I bring you oranges,
 caramels and smiles, the scent of strawberry picnics,
 fill your room with flowers: yellow irises, foxgloves,
 sea pinks, dog daisies, vivid marigolds, sweet williams,
 a mass of terrifying pink lupins, a handful of hedge flowers.

While you eat grilled mackerel and toast, with a wisp
 of wintercrack jam, I throw open three windows which hang
 over the sea, facing south. The air better than medicine,
 with its smell of seaweed, elderflower.
 A nimble old woman with one tooth clears the breakfast tray,
 brings hot milk, dispenses cod liver oil and iron
 as she does up your cuff buttons, her voice soothing
 as Cornish cream. I hear the wheeze of your lungs
 as I delve into my bag for a box of paints, find a thermos flask,
 my husband's vest and one exquisite lemon.

I paint your jade-white hand resting on a book, bright
 as the oranges you eat, a sweep of golden-drop gooseberry,
 reflecting the violet, greengage sea on your face,
 your lips a sealed fuschia bud. Outside the bluebells smell
 of honey, the sea purrs, seagulls preen, children sing, we hear
 the sound of a fiddle, a cello, filling us with Sunday sentiments.

You study my just-plucked, periwinkle eyes. I blush
 brick red, know you think I am too stout, too radiant,
 too blood and guts. I lead you to the balcony with a blanket,
 pause for you to cough, settle you beneath a sunshade,
 champion-pink, from where you watch the hale, the hearty
 primp along the promenade.

Jessica Whyte

Based on the painting 'Portrait of Katherine Mansfield' by Anne Estelle Rice, painted in Looe, Cornwall, in 1918. <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/41995>

This poem, and the following, is in the form of a 'found' poem, incorporating extracts, images and phrases from Katherine Mansfield's letters in the text.

Wingley

Born in a stable, our small enchanted brother,
 sweet acolyte, our little anchor,
 he rolls a saucepan down the stairs,
 looks like he's been in a boxing match up a chimney.
 In spring, we give him lessons on the fiddle
 (all the best cats play *hey diddle diddle*)
 on strings made of wool, with a tasselled bow,
 he can balance a paperweight on his nose,
 play the piano with his two front paws.
 I slip him an occasional sardine tail, a birthday cake
 laced with mouse tails of icing. He stuffs his paws
 into his mouth so as not to laugh out loud.

I miss him in Menton, make do with the little stray
 who comes in on a moonbeam, marauding, *malgracieux*,
 seizes a *poisson* from the console table, while Wing is
 at home, etherized, bandaged to the eyebrows,
 watching the lawnmower put to winter sleep.

I hear he's passed through Paris,
 flashing across the world on the end of a string.
 I worry he will eat his way out of the suitcase
 but he arrives in Switzerland, with immense eyes
 and *delirium tremens*. It takes hours to hear his famous purr.
 I get him snow boots for the winter, buy him
 a tiny Jaeger woolly, an airman's helmet of mouse skin.
 His fur, once black as an actor's overcoat,
 turns white as snow, feathers on his legs.

In the evening, he settles down to read Shakespeare,
 gooseberry-eyed, marking his place with a fly.
 He will soon dictate his reminiscences, his little *derriere*
 on my letter, writing with the tip of his tail, so serene.
 My teapot cat, I whisper him my secrets, he understands
 everything - I trust him to behave like a gentleman.
 In bed he creeps onto my chest, sings a light soprano note,
 wants to know if I have the same face at night:
 I long to surprise him with terrific disguises.
 I give him a four-square kiss on his wet nose,
 he dives and swims about under the cupboard,
 leaves with a warm wave of his tail.

Jessica Whyte

from **Beatrice Hastings' Journal: London and Worthing, the 1930s**

Camden, London, 1933

Katherine died ten years ago. A decade ... Katherine, Kathe, from the beginning ours was no ordinary friendship. It was if I found my ideal younger sister (that to myself who despised the tribe of sisters I left in South Africa). I talked, you listened, wide-eyed taking it all in. We looked alike: you and I struggled with combs and hairbrushes, our thick dark hair and almost black eyes setting us apart from the vapid Englishwomen of the novels I satirised in *The New Age*. Those were days you agreed no one wrote like Beatrice Hastings. Afternoons in Rottingdean going over manuscripts, you wrapped in a big shawl and myself in a becoming sun hat looking the part of a lady editor. I offered succinct criticism—more witty stuff, less flapping and wapping, please Kathe. Together we saw your stories appear week by week. For both, a happy time, spoiled only by irritating Ida Baker hovering as if she owned you.

People thought you and I were lovers—now there was an idea! I believed you had your eye on Orage—he certainly had his eye on you. As for myself...I made a mistake asking you to live with us at the flat at Abingdon Mansions. I had enough trouble with Orage and I found your presence overwhelming. Strange things happened: one night I was reading in bed when I thought I heard someone knock at my bedroom door. When I finally got to the door whoever it was had vanished into the darkness. If Orage wanted sex he knocked loudly enough to be heard. You told me Ida turned up at your bedroom door stark naked under a bed sheet and dropped the sheet. You ignored her. I wonder had I opened the door what would have happened ...

You disappointed me. I should have anticipated so: you disappointed all those you touched, lovers and friends alike. I excused your behavior at Abingdon Mansions but once you defected to Rhythm and that ass Murry you left me no option, for the sake of *The New Age* I had to destroy you. I did so publicly with Beatrice Hastings' customary gusto. (Ye gods, in those days no one escaped my pen including the Sacred Ones.) My brilliant critique of your 'Woman at the Store', 'ploughs the realistic sand, with no single relief of wisdom or wit...' now there's a sentence. Were you joking, I asked? 'If no jest is meant, the sickly versifiers whom Miss Mansfield once satirised in *The New Age* are avenged'. You never replied. I kept going. 'Miss Mansfield makes an inartistic stink with a dirty old imbecile who murders cats,' referred to that sketch I, as a dedicated vivisectionist, absolutely loathed.

On one occasion I threw you an olive branch. I praised a story about a Swiss landlady written with your old skill. I was able to point out Murry--so much for him--forgot to mention it when he boosted the issue the previous week. I waited for you to get in touch and never got a word from you. I admit I was disappointed though I couldn't say so. Instead I wrote a Beatrice Hastings' riposte to the effect women's talents were as fleeting as their beauty, yours being no exception. I realize I made a mistake writing 'The Changeling', even though I was proud of the piece at the time—the picture of you clattering around your room and posing in front of the mirror was really very clever. I borrowed the mirror from that French novel about an adulterer,

‘Le Lys rouge’, knowing you understood I detected you. (Yes, I’ve had two husbands, but I was faithful to Orage for years.) I didn’t need to give *HER* a name. I recall my brilliant line: ‘her very nails as she cut them off, dropped with an air’. Murry was mal-de-merish. How you stood that pallid male I don’t know. But you couldn’t survive without love, or whatever it is mortals call love. I myself have spent ten years being celibate. Sometimes I dream of nights with a man—it could be any one, Orage, Modigliani, a husband, and wake up aching all over...

Poor Kathe, stuck with Murry. And so ill, too....

Camden, London, 1936

(In which Beatrice enters into an unconscious dialogue with Katherine’s stories.)

I have wondered ever since what Katherine was really after when she sent the letter that turned up at my poste restante that February morning addressed to Mme. Beatrice Hastings in her characteristically spidery script. She asked for my help. My question—why now, why at all after what had passed—was followed by a nod of understanding once I delved into the letter. She was in love with Francis Carco. And she was coming to France, to meet him! I thought of a dozen unlikelihoods associated with this crackpot scheme and wrote saying I would be in Paris. Her next letter announced her arrival and where I might find her, at Carco’s *apartement* in a building on quai aux Fleurs. I knew the address though I had never been inside. Indeed, I had never met Carco; but that was beside the point.

He lived at the top of a tall, mournful building overlooking the river. One of those buildings that look so romantic on rainy nights and moonlight nights when the shutters are shut, and the heavy door, and the sign advertising ‘a little apartment to let immediately’ gleams forlorn beyond words. One of those buildings that smell so unromantic all year round, and where the concierge lives in a glass cage on the ground floor, wrapped up in a filthy shawl, stirring something in a saucepan and ladling out bits to the swollen old dog lolling on a bead cushion...

It was astonishing to see her. She was thinner than the last time we met and looked pale. I noticed she had trouble using the stairs, which she explained away as a slight touch of rheumatism. Naturally she wanted me to do things for her. Might she borrow my mackintosh? Wide open eyes begging a favour. Evidently she set her heart on it. She left her coat hanging in its place, the one with the buckles and buttons. It smelled of her perfume. When I bumped into it in the dark after getting home from the Rotonde a couple of nights later I gave it a good shake, just in case ---you never know when the cat will pounce.

(That Burberry was very significant. It did not belong to me. I had borrowed it from a friend. My eye lighted upon it hanging in her little dark hall. The very thing! The perfect and adequate disguise—an old Burberry. Lions have been face in a Burberry. Ladies have been rescued from open boats in mountainous seas wrapped in nothing else. An old Burberry seemed to me to be the sign and token of the undisputed venerable traveller, I decided, leaving my purple peg-top with the red seal collar and cuffs in exchange.)

We did some heavy drinking the night before she left. We were uncomfortable with one another and otherwise wouldn't have got through the evening. We joined a group of friends at the Rotonde and I told stories, I remember imitating myself being hopelessly drunk and the table laughing. I was good at telling stories against myself, though Katherine took them seriously, another sign she lost her sense of humor since she met Murry. Besides, her French wasn't up to the company and she relapsed into silence and looked around the room with those great eyes of hers. It reminded me of evenings at Abingdon Mansions when we had guests and Katherine sat there silent, frightening Orage who thought she was storing up his conversation for some sketch or other.

After drinking that much brandy she must have woken up with an awful hangover. She told me later she barely had time to catch her train. She would have missed it had Carco's concierge not shaken her out of bed.

When I arrived at the station I had only four minutes to spare, and the platform entrance was crowded and packed with soldiers, their yellow papers in one hand and big untidy bundles. The Commissaire of Police stood on one side, a Nameless Official on the other. Will he let me pass? Will he? He was an old man with a fat swollen face covered with big warts. Horn-rimmed spectacles squatted on his nose. Trembling I made an effort. I conjured up my sweetest early-morning smile and handed it with the papers. But the delicate thing fluttered against the horn spectacles and fell. Nevertheless, he let me pass, and I ran, ran in and out among the soldiers and up the high steps into the yellow-painted carriage.

Katherine was powerful—I admit it. She drew people into her life, her problems. I confess I was not immune. Didn't I listen while she told me how frustrated she was with Murry, and how she needed Carco to inspire her—looking sideways at my failing relationship with Modigliani? (I was fool enough to bring that subject into the conversation.) After she got back from Gray she told me Carco hadn't lived up to her expectations. Katherine was capable of swearing like a guttersnipe if she cared to. Instead she tiptoed around the subject talking in metaphors. Carco used a "tiny poker" to stoke up the fire in their room while she was lying in bed: It appears Katherine smoldered rather than burned. She meant to write him up of course but Carco knew the game better. He has made a fortune from 'Les Innocents' while she... She published one decent book, the Pension stories, with my help and since then it has been nothing but Murry. I don't believe she would be remembered if it were not for him.

Carco believed Katherine had no principles. I call it having a 'floating conscience'. I define floating, changing to change without knowing, seeming what it thinks people expect; only to take it out of those people later. Carco is the psychologist who inexorably browbeats his patients into self-knowledge. Of course, the K.M. publicity department boycotted 'Les Innocents'.

"Since you left Paris," said I, knotting my black silver-spotted tie in the (also unpaid for) mirror over the mantelpiece, "I have been very successful, you know. I have two more books in preparation, and then I have written a serial story, Wrong Doors, which is just on the point of publication and will bring me in a lot of money. And then my little book of poems," I cried, seizing the clothes-brush and brushing the velvet collar of my new indigo-blue overcoat, "my little book—Left Umbrellas—really did create," and I laughed and waved the brush, "an immense sensation".

It was impossible not to believe this of the person who surveyed himself finally, from top to toe, drawing on his soft grey gloves. He was looking the part; he was the part.

Once Carco found her out Katherine began to play the saint and prate about God. God—I gave up the idea of the Almighty years ago. Sainthood has its appeal, however. Orage liked to talk about God. Someone told me when he left London for Fontainebleau he declared he was going there to find Him. When he walked away he destroyed years of work, ours, mine, with as little consideration as he would give to a piece of paper thrown in the rubbish. He and Katherine lived with pigs and Russians at the Fontainebleau fish-shop, two wriggling souls caught in Gurdjieff's net. I'm certain they spent hours talking, what else was Katherine fit for. She didn't sound like herself in the excerpts Orage published: to do Katherine justice I don't ever remember her being pompous about writing. Orage put words into her mouth about a plot for a novel, as though Katherine believed she was going to survive the tuberculosis. How we poor mortals deceive ourselves about the inexorable finality awaiting us!

This is anguish! How is to be borne? Still, it is not the idea of her suffering which is unbearable—it is his. Can one do nothing for the dead? And for a long time the answer had been--Nothing!

Worthing, Sussex, 1938

Katherine has been dead for fifteen years; though you would hardly know from Murry boosting her as if she were a Hollywood starlet.

I avoid Murry's books. My official position is they are beneath Beatrice Hastings' notice. I'm right to despise Murry, dazzling the public by his miles of Press-puffery: Great Writer, Great Critic--Tiggle this, Tiggle that and the other insufferable baby talk. Friends who couldn't leave well alone told me Murry published letters in which Katherine talks about me as if I was a witch-woman. Murry thought it was all right to print them as long as he didn't spell out my name. She came to my flat at rue de Tournon the second time she was in Paris and complimented my furniture. I invited her to a little soiree the next afternoon. People liked coming to the flat I always had plenty to eat and drink even though it was wartime. I played the latest dance tunes on the piano. Katherine danced shamelessly cheek-to-cheek with the pretty blonde girl who was someone's wife, I forgot whose. By nightfall I was soused from drinking brandy. I pleaded with Katherine to stay the night; I dreaded everyone leaving—the previous night was hellish spent alone in the flat as the Zeppelins flew over. I expected any moment to feel the house shake and wake up in a pile of rubble. When Katherine refused I called her a 'fille publique'. I remember screaming 'whore, fille publique' at Katherine's back and her refusing to turn around. She left the house ahead of the curfew with a man she inveigled into escorting her to quai aux Fleurs.

I never saw her again. I wrote a few times to various London addresses and had no answers. I'm sure she burned my letters. Once I wrote to Murry to ask if he would give me work, he was editing the Athenaeum. I got a refusal from a flunkey—Murry did not have the courage to confront me. Insulting me fed into Katherine's sainthood, Saint Katherine-Little-Flower and

Pope Murry the Pius. Murry is my enemy and will be always and I can't and won't forgive Katherine. This is in spite of what is said to be due to the dead. De mortuis nihil nisi bonum...

Worthing 1940

The world has gone to hell with more hell around the corner. I look in the mirror and have trouble recognizing myself. That distracted woman lost and oh so unexpectedly old, can she be the Beatrice who cowered Orage? The one to whom writers sent begging letters, so they could have their manuscripts published? That Beatrice is gone, gone. I cannot pretend she will reappear.

After flirting with it years ago I gave up spiritualism and with it any belief in ghosts or spirits. Yet I cannot shake the persistent feeling I am being haunted. Sometimes when I am alone in my dimly lit flat, blackout curtains drawn primly against the Luftwaffe, I sense there is another person in the room. She is a woman with dark hair. She stands at a table turning the leaves of a book. I can almost hear her say, 'Biggy B. what do you think he means, by--?' I tell myself it's my bad eyesight and remind myself not to have a drink before luncheon. And yet, and yet...I would like to see her again if only so that we could laugh a little, talk about Orage, and argue about 'The Voyage Out'.

Katherine, did you think of me when you lay dying, did you whisper 'forgive me, Beatrice' before you took your last breathe? They say before it becomes dark and after darkness, nothing, our life passes before us. They may be right, though dying is beyond telling. Katherine, Kathe, when it is my turn will I see you at the last? As I am Beatrice-a-dying and the darkness rolls over me, will I forgive you. Will I remember I loved you---once?

Judith Hendra

Postscript: Beatrice Hastings kept no journal that we know of. I like to think had she mused about her long relationship with Katherine Mansfield she would have regretted a few of her public writings about Mansfield. The Mansfield quotations are taken from the following stories: 'Feuille d'Album' from *Bliss*; 'An Indiscreet Journey' from *Something Childish*; 'Je Ne Parle Pas Francais' from *Bliss*; 'Six Years After' from *The Doves' Nest*. John Middleton Murry believed 'Six Years After' was the last piece written by Mansfield probably in the autumn of 1922 'when she had, for a time, practically stopped writing'. Beatrice Hastings committed suicide in her Worthing flat in 1943.

Our ancestor

among the many things Hemingway
was wrong about was KM
whose stories he characterised
as watered-down Chekhov

Virginia Woolf on the other hand
disliked her smell
and for Lawrence she became
the difficult Gudrun Brangwen

judgements in hindsight
hardly purely aesthetic
yet she remains a direct
and sturdy practitioner

of the language that
goes beyond language
into remote but necessary
galleries of the heart

as miners with their frail lamps shimmering
shore up dark tunnels
through the mountain overhead
poised to collapse on them

in her photographs
the staunch child of the schoolyard
peers out behind an adult mask
with a gaze undismayed by being

hence her narratives
authoritative as steam rising
through the scullery door
outside into clear blue light

Tony Beyer

Brilliance

The street was lined with shops, and a brilliant man worked there. Not in any of the shops, of course—he was a brilliant man in a brilliant career. That was precisely what Giordana Lauri loved about that street so much: its being lined with shops, and its hosting, as well as the shops, the building in which a man she knew did amazing things for a living, that she too was going to do—no doubt about that. Her future stretched before her with absolute clarity.

What was about to happen as she strolled along this loved special street, *this* she could not have foreseen nor imagined. A young woman her age crying in a doorway, not well and truly crying her eyes out, no, just providing a delicate accompaniment of sweet gentle sobs for the slow choreography of pearl-sized tears gliding down her face—something that could have easily escaped Giordana’s notice had she not been so well trained in noticing little things, which was what made her destined for doing amazing things like the man in the building. That, and her nationality, of course. Her people were warm and loving and compassionate. Why there was not a crowd surrounding and comforting the crying woman was easily explained: Giordana had her blood *and* her detail-oriented eye working for her. Impossible for her not to notice pearl-sized tears.

The woman was a foreigner, Giordana could tell. How precious, this opportunity to show her how good and caring her own people were! Something bad had clearly befallen the woman while she was in Giordana’s country, but she would get help from a native. What was most amazing, Giordana knew by instinct what the woman’s language was, and in that language she asked her, gently, what had happened.

Just as she was not violently sobbing, the woman did not throw herself into Giordana’s arms. She let herself smoothly fall into them; and did not cling to her, but slowly hugged her as if she was giving comfort as well as receiving it, as if they were dancing. Their breasts were touching as if their hearts were having a whispered conversation, while their mouths were actually having one—the woman telling Giordana she was crying because of a man, which did not necessarily mean out of the love for one, but did actually point to an amazing infinity of possibilities—Giordana had cried from the excitement of imagining her forthcoming life being along the lines of that of the man in the building. Did that count as crying because of a man? It was not what was commonly meant by “crying because of someone”—it was more like ‘crying happy tears prompted by the thought of what someone does’, but who would say something that complicated? And the woman was not specifying anything, not giving any clues—there was no need.

They were both *brilliant*, Giordana could tell. They were sisters, incestuous sisters locked in a hierogamic embrace. The woman even more brilliant than her, as it turned out—because, when Giordana tenderly urged her, “Let’s go somewhere cosy and have a nice cup of tea”, she shook her head and looked her in the eye, wordlessly telling her *wy not*. What they were sharing could not be taken to an establishment—not to the cosiest tea-room. It was too precious an artifact to be moved around, Giordana thought, who dealt with delicate things. Their brilliance belonged in a different kind of buildings.

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someday someone will let the light in

someone will smack off the topknot of this rock
& tributaries of crushed sunberries
will stain the country crimson someone will

speak to me of lovers incarcerated

preserved will speak of floral tributes
slotted into constellated creases

time to revisit to consider the offers
the colourful harmonies

& yes more sunberries

burst on impact splattering
the orchard's morning roll call

& yes like soft resin the sun's blood
coagulates on a fractured autumn

but i'm here for the peace

the masting forests the soft sounds
of trees rubbing at clouds

for the sight

of an owl tearing off the night's fur

i'm here in the presence of minor gods
squabbling in the canopies

only then will i venture forth
for the girl who sits beside me she

writes of the light the look of it
the taste she takes notes of early lovers

caught in the clutches of something

unerasable that can't burn

lodgedintheflesh@owhirobay

history wets its lips
it smells of a woman

brown-faced self-immersed

forever lodged in my flesh

waves swoop in from the bay sluicing out

the apertures of a tidal hangover

it's hard to believe she still exists
that she walks such beaches

dreams like hers
should be chunked
into small inflatable parcels

& shoved into the cosmic pool

without loss of intention
she presses against me

more desperate now
against this stealth of unease

we want to reshape
the horizon the steep cliffs
the houses which slide

closer to the sea

& often awake at night
i feel her forever lodged in my flesh

sometimes trying to feed me

one candle flame at a time

singlecelledlifeforms@karakabay

sunken outcrops of reefs

rip at sea-light a black
boulder

feeds on life forms
on single-celled suns

which shine on girls
swimming in a world
of crabs & starfish

the café shrugs off a shadow

the sea being the sea

laps at it laps it up

we talk of benefits

of things organic things edible

hacked from bushes waves

break on daydreams

on early solitudes words
stretch & split in the heat

the sea being what it is

threatens a cluttered assortment
of voices

small family entanglements
whisper of collusions

& a child picks up a rock

a full moon's footprint from the sea

navelmoment@shellybay

i cannot reject her
 this morning's meditation
 this navel moment

& the beach
 applauds her & i applaud her

i applaud myself a fable

once gave birth here & now it lives
 with dragons with Lucy in the Sky
 & the last pterodactyl

*

stuck in sand some flags
 cling to heartbeats students take photos

of hills on the move they take photos

of imaginary battles they play
 at converts-in-arms at war babies
 all grown up

*

i cannot reject her

she is black she is white

& between us gold rings
 lighter than air spin musically

& the sky sparkles

*

fabling is a gift beginnings
 & endings are never noticed

& i wonder about

the fragility of this beach
 the unpredictability of its tidal clock

foamdrunk@orientalbay

in the water the girl

strokes through burst white blood vessels & the white blood

congeals & drifts into small white land forms

foam drunk

she cavorts with gilled deities

& she being one of them she with her aqueous tendencies

her smooth body

sucks on water beads

hydrates her veins in rock pools of light

she picks off scaly transparencies

eyes blurred the girl with the godlook

paddles through stars

she calls for the trees to get into line to ward off

prying spectators she insists on preserving

times past on holding them together she treads water

while planets pull ever forwards ever apart

children with mothers traipse through sand

children with small luminous faces

mothers struggle with silhouettes

wanting to run

amongstvistas@crescentbay

amongst scorched vistas the sea

shimmers the beach burns

a woman goes to the water's edge

the sea is loud incantatory resonant
& the woman from the art shop pauses she

paints the sea with her eyes

a pale Godiva stripped

of pretensions of self-love she muses on

islands summit upheavals swimmers
frolicking she sees

the sun on fire in the windows of the city

houses hammered into cliffs cling by their toes

she contemplates the sand hills
the reefs
the weathering gullies

then covers herself in lupin
to avoid the harsh summer heat

at the water's edge
she pulls on a child's mask

at the water's edge she can't go on

she goes on

feedingancestors@mahinabay

to turn again to the sea the transient rainbows

the fast-jingling streams to turn again

to landscapes unfolding to people

collecting fishnets full of colour

she confronts once more the figure of a man

who delves amongst the creases

of long purple clouds she practises

the art of speaking to ancestors

feeding words through touch

through carved wooden mouths

*

i watch as she straddles a rock on the beach
straddling very still saying nothing

the curious arrive to watch her riding nowhere very still
on the beach on her rock i take photos
as if she belongs everywhere she says nothing
she has learnt to go with the bay's packed rhythms

puresilence@evansbay

perforating this woman's daylight
i participate in an early collaboration
signifying where she & the man stand
how she & he hesitate at the railway station
the bus terminal where power lines loop
into the last houses the sea
washes the sand the rocks this woman
shifts from shades of green into a dark blue haze
the sea washes her skin her hair her limbs
i taste the salt on her eyelids the water
trickling off her shoulders i hold
onto the touchstone sensation of who she is

i hold this diminishing phenomenon
of living off scraps of pure silence
pure breath & nothing else

Iain Britton

Biographical Notes

Tony Beyer writes in Taranaki. Recent work has appeared online in Hamilton Stone Review, Mudlark, NZ Poetry Shelf and Otoliths. Print titles include Anchor Stone (2017) and Friday Prayers (2019), both from Cold Hub Press.

Iain Britton is an Aotearoa New Zealand poet and author of several collections of poetry. Recent poems have been published or are forthcoming in the Harvard Review, Poetry, The New York Times, Poet Lore, Wild Court, New Humanist, The Scores Journal, Stand, Agenda, New Statesman, The Fortnightly Review, Bath Magg and Poetry Wales. THE INTAGLIO POEMS was published by Hesterglock Press (UK) 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/iainbrittonpoet/>

Judith Hendra was born in Britain and is living currently in Los Angeles. She studied at Cambridge, and has been researching and writing a biography of Beatrice Hastings for several years. Her pieces about Mansfield and Hastings have appeared in the KMS newsletter, and her extensive study of Wyndham Lewis's relationship to the New Age will be appearing in an upcoming issue of the Journal of Wyndham Lewis Studies.

Chris Holdaway is a poet and bookmaker from Northland. His poems have appeared in Oversound, The Seattle Review, and Southerly, among others, and he directs Compound Press in Auckland.

Maurizia Paolucci is an art scholar, certified librarian, published iconologist, and auction house collaborator offering Information Retrieval, Visual Reference, Collections Development Advisory, and Iconography Identification service, in English and Italian, to institutions and individuals. alartlibrarianship@gmail.com

Lesley Sharpe teaches literature and creative writing in London. Her poems and essays have been published in a number of journals, and she is a co-founder of Lodestone Poets.

Jessica Whyte is a published writer and poet with an English & Creative Writing degree from Manchester Metropolitan University. She is a Creative Writing for Wellbeing practitioner, and is about to begin a Creative & Critical Writing PhD at the University of Sussex. Her thesis will be on Modernism and Illness, with a particular focus on Katherine Mansfield. Jessica is also working on her first poetry pamphlet and a novel.