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Independent Writing Project

And the Runes Were Cast

Jane Manley

Abstract

This book is a celebration of the island of Westray which is part of the Orkney archipelago; go to John O’Groats and keep heading north towards Scandinavia.

A frequent visitor to the island I am keenly aware of its individualistic character, dialect and above all its sense of place. It has a history full of intrigue, myths, legends and magic, Neolithic dwellings and Vikings.

And the Runes Were Cast is the story of Westray told in poems, weaving the actual with the imagined into a new narrative for 2020. Weaving is the theme that runs through the three parts of the book, the different strands coming together at the end in the final poem.

In truth it is a love letter to the people of the island.

Dedication

For the people of Westray who have made us welcome so many times.

My husband for spending the summer in the damp of Westray while my research was done.

Westray the island for making life complete

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And the Runes Were Cast

Poetry from Westray



By Jane E. Manley

A Work for Poets

To have carved on the days of our vanity

A sun

A ship

A star

A cornstalk

Also a few marks

From an ancient forgotten time

A child may read

That not far from the stone

A well

Might open for wayfarers

Here is a work for poets –

Carve the runes

Then be content with silence

George Mackay Brown

A Poet of Orkney

To Westray

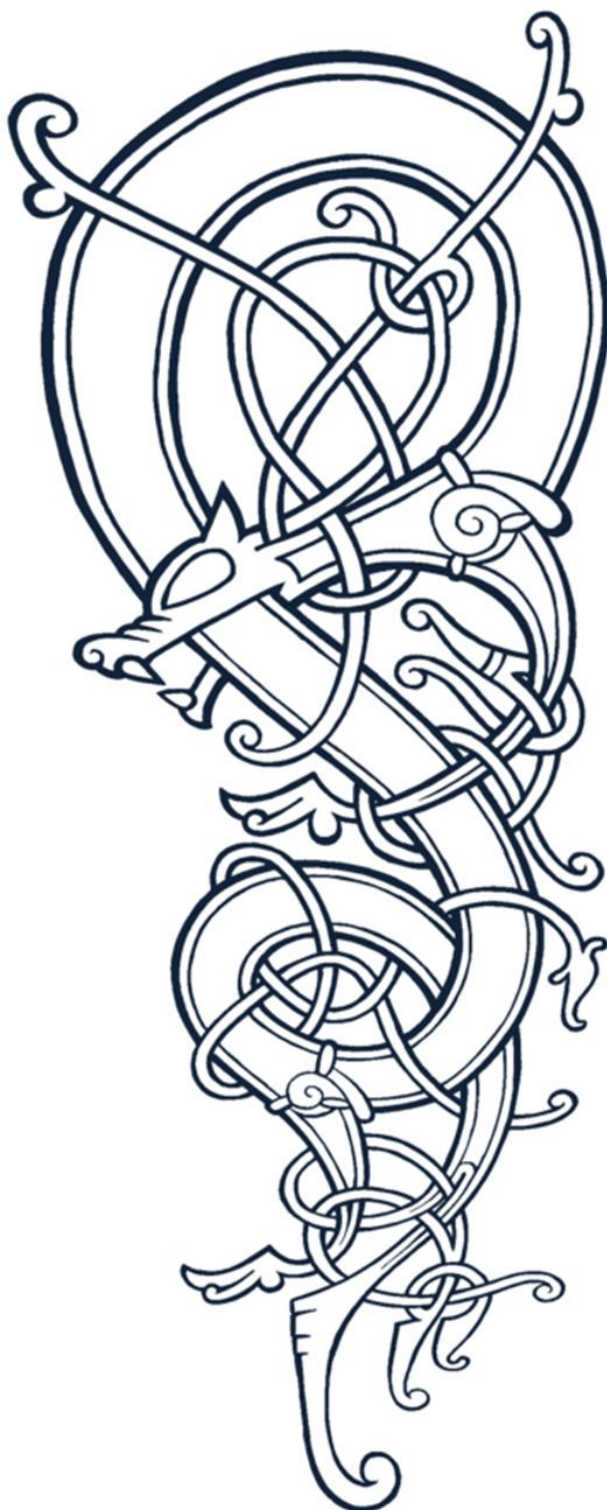
And the Runes Were Cast is the story of Westray told in poems, weaving the actual with the imagined history into a new narrative for 2020. Weaving is the theme that runs through the three parts of the book, the different strands coming together at the end in the final poem.

In truth it is a love letter to the people of the island and my husband.

Part One

where the old world collides with the new

Rán Cast the Runes Across the Oceans



In the Time Before the Time Began

and the Runes were cast across the oceans
spiralling down past mermaids and wrecks of lives.

D

O

W

N

as the old souls turned their heads away
from the truth engraved there by the Earth Goddess.
down as images mirrored in luminescent light
carried the memories deeper.

D

O

W

N

until settled and hidden in the earth's mantle
deeper than any ocean trench.

D

O

W

N

where Rán blessed them for the mortal world to find
in whatever future there may be

Pangea stretched

her continent too massive to console as one.

as she eased the plates over eons

furrows fissured and fractured

tearing the plates apart

roots wrenched from the earth's crust

their tenure impossible to endure

nascent life confused as it rearranged in new worlds.

Rán powerless watched the Runes disperse

moving north

then west

the comfort of the old place was lost

no longer cocooned and softened by the touch of siblings

and washed by the Atlantic Lake

the land was lost in an unfamiliar latitude

surrounded by new water with geology contorted

an island lost to her landmass

then Rán struck the rock marking the Rune's resting place

earth still spun on her tilted axis

and stars were seen in new constellations

the sky gods sent colours and dancing to brighten the night

with ebb and flow the tides seduced her

enhancing form

serenading with songs from the sea

Westray was birthed from Pangea's toil

Westray
Queen o' the Isles
The pearl of Viking Orkneyjar



"Beyond Britannia, where the endless ocean opens, lies Orkney."

OROSIUS, FIFTH CENTURY AD

2019

i found the runes
recognised the marks
struck on the rock.
striations gouged deep by
forces incomprehensible to me.
how i read them i must presume
came from the inheritance
passed down through
interminable
generations of the women who
transferred their gift of
knowledge to me.
my fingers traced the marks
left by the Sea God
intuitively ordering the ornament
out of chaos
and into the intended device.
they instructed me
the demand was impossible to refuse.

'you must complete the task set here
your antecedents knew of the Runes
sought them but were denied
by death
unfortunate birth
denial of the knowledge
as the new gods
battled for supremacy
and clouded the minds
of those who followed the
old ways
but your grandmothers
hid the secret as the
diaspora
slunk across the world
away from their intended home
now you have returned with the cipher
from those before
set in your heart
it is time to unlock the words
and tell the story of this place Westray'

Don't just commit them to the SMT solver

NON RATTENDEMP DI TEM RATTES

SONXNT TNMA BNT PMRM XMHMX

NYORNTM BRTN

ᐃᓄᓴᓴ ᑲᓯ ᐱᓂ ᑕᓵᑳᓂᐸᓂ

FS TMM TMD XODS

BT TMD FOR SDCMMS

THESE

$\Delta \nabla$ $\uparrow$ $\nabla \Delta \Sigma$ $\Pi \nabla$ $\nabla \Delta \Gamma \Delta \Pi \Delta$ $\uparrow$ $\Pi \Pi$

BNT JONR XRF4XMQTNMRS

$\text{NID} \uparrow \text{NM} \text{SM} \text{RM} \uparrow \text{FS} \uparrow \text{NM}$



STNK CROSS THM PORD

FROM TMM

HTMNDXMM NQAM

FROM THOSE INFORM

SMITH JOHN NIMRAT

I T IS THE TIME TO NOX TM PORDS

FXD TMT TMM STORS OF THIS WTM JMSTRN,

After

after the Runes were read

i sat watching the ocean's

ebb and flow

pondering how this monumental task

could be approached

by a woman like me

no Viking or Scottish blood

just a trace of the old Celtic

running through my veins from mother

the Welsh family tree traced back

over centuries

to the land of myth and dragons

Llewellyn Glyndwr Myrrdin

Coed Rowan Ceridwen

and of course always the druids

she said we were witches my sisters and i

had the sight and could always read the people

i thought back to a black and white childhood

as seen on TV

big dresses cool cars
with me taking the Mabinogion as gospel wide eyed
as it played in my head
full colour
the swash backwash rhythm of the waves
soothed me into a waking dream state
open eyed
counting the crests as if saying a rosary
click click click in my head click click click click
seven in
then the eighth rearing up and proclaiming
i'm here look at my beauty i lead the way
cold salt water from the undertow woke me from reverie
my path was clear
my mother
telling the truth to her teenage unbelievers
whether luck or curse it passed
to me
until the task is done
and Rán is placated or denied there is no answer
i read the Runes

with language I did not know i possessed
retrieved from another world with this key
my fate was written
during the time before the time began
𐌺𐌹 𐌺𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌺𐌹 𐌺𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌸𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹 𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹𐌹
the waves transverse with trough and horses of foam
at the apogee chase up the beach
towards me
the compressions and rarefactions
of the opposing longitudinal leaving behind
kaleidoscopic fractals
the ripple patterns in the sand disturbed by the swash
of discordant water reminds me
of spirograph pictures not multihued just the white of wet Orcadian sand
Rán chased
me that night through Pangea's world
extending her hands out bearing a
golden quill
and a quire of seaweed sheets in a basket
she repeated the message in the
Runes back to me

you have returned with the cipher from those before set in your heart

just

weave the

Westray strands

together with words

then let the world wonder

at its beauty earth sea sky

beasts of the field raptors and voles

boats ships waves of invaders war strife resolution

mindful always to keep the people at its heart

without them there is only rock and the barren field

the wind moaning across this flat place cutting deep

rearranging the coastal land extending the old shoreline

where humanity should roam sing and love

this land is only an island

on maps drawn by men

look to the heavens

the answer is

always found

there

it is time to unlock the words and tell the story of this place Westray

Panic

i woke as if surfacing from the depths of the ocean gasping for breath tasting salt on my tongue the bladder wrack seaweed decorating my pillow is this from Rán herself or just blown in through the window chanting focus vesiculosus focus vesiculosus i'm still dreaming i'm still dreaming but i know this is real as the coffee on the bed side table is hot the mug set there by John my companion partner lover significant other focus vesiculosus how many words from that no
slow breathe slow breathe

concentration can't do it now the window is closed the coffee smell mingled with the bladder wrack's salty tang on my tongue can i change my mind can i renege on my decision made on the beach where i found the Runes under the rock do i have the spirit is there the old knowledge invested in me i have never found it before is it the wrong woman perhaps it was meant for my sisters not

slow breathe slow breathe

me or the following generation who would probably kill for such a gift the niece with an old soul has the gear to go with it spirituality reads the cards so probably the Runes as well thinks deeply and believes in a world beyond this one but could the golden quill work in her hand and seaweed sheets inspire words on
slow breathe slow breathe

a country she has never seen or spoken about to me she has worked runes of wood by her own hand cast them on a table i don't know if she has the power passed on or it's one each generation and her time will come when i'm gone

slow breathe slow breath slow breathe slow breathe slow

breathe slow breathe slow breathe slow breathe slow

it is my responsibility

i breathe slowly

again

slower still

again

slower

again

slower

i am calm a slow pulse

throbs in my head

the room is peaceful

coffee cold

the singing of the seals

in the bay

brings to mind

tales of changelings

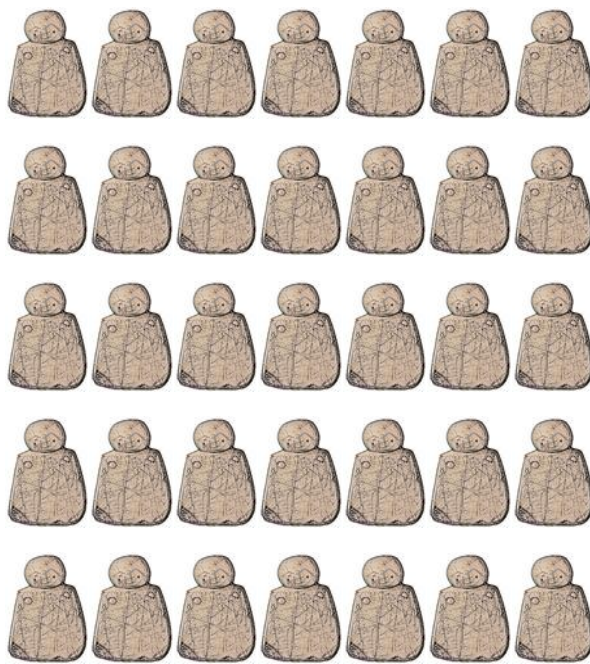
myths

and legends

as i leave the bed

i am ready to start the task

Westray Wifie Neolithic Muse



as you hold a china Wifie and turn it in your hand

Letter to Myself

to me

as you hold a china Wifie

and turn it in your hand

trying to absorb any power

or vibrations that

may have been transmitted through time

from the child or parent

who fashioned it in the

Neolithic age

you will reprimand yourself

a replica has no capacity

to represent anything from the past

it is surely mute

a synthetic money spinner

designed to give an

illusory connection to a

forgotten time

but

you read Runes
maybe it does speak to you
take notebook and pen
listen question look really look
feel the wind and the power of the sod
start the odyssey today
it is time to record the history
of this island
and although not born to it
your heart is here
or perhaps it is your soul
inherited from the others
or Rán herself kept it safe
until you arrived
and validated her belief
in you
and the gift she bestowed
turn the Wifie a few times more
and keep it close as you chronicle
the people and their land

Two weeks on Westray

as decided by fate the work began with notebooks and recorder filled with
words

and sounds

from the sea and wind

birds on the cliff next to the beach and fields singing on the stone wall or
gunwale of the fishing creels

puffins flying and oystercatchers complaining

lined up on the quay or down at Rapness ferry where the ro-ro docks three
times a day

to the school surgery small shops

hotel post office factory gallery campsite chippie and bike hire

counting cats and dogs

on the road and a horse parading around the fields

communing with the

Aberdeen angus bull in a pen by the Neolithic site up by the golf course with

its undulating green a challenge for the visiting golf nerds

travelling in from across the world to give their best and

tick it off from the online list

because i'm doing better than you

conversed with many artists obsessed with the feel of the air

colours sky sea and creatures of the place translating into

words paint sculpture spun wool cards and film

gallery is plural each a workspace to meet and greet and hopefully sell

then afternoon tea in the Buckie Groatie with coffee cake

and gossip to consume by the page full or on the spool of the recording
machine

Kalisgarth where the older folks stay

or just gather round and talk about lives led

and for some tender loving care sunshine streaming in through the windows

onto Mary Madghi and Colette in from other islands

to catch up with shopping and oldest friends

who understand the past

onto the fire station airfield and pumps all for one and one for all

those rooted in the past and the blow ins

making new roots and histories in the shallow soil that covers
the rock

only a multi-tasking community will keep the island alive in its church's kirks
chapel and hermitage

the heritage centre with histories stored in ring folders illustrated by the young
islanders bring them alive in your head

many invites into homes such kindness i hope to repay.

A Prayer to Rán God of the Sea

ᚿ ᚱᚰᚢᚱ ᚠᚳ ᚱᚰ ᚰᚳᚳ ᚳᚢ ᚠᚢᚱ ᚰᚢ

help me to succeed

ᚢᚢᚢᚢ ᚱᚢ ᚠᚳ ᚰᚰᚰᚢᚳᚳ

in the task you set

ᚢ ᚠᚢᚱ ᚠᚢᚰᚰ ᚰᚳᚢ ᚰᚢᚠ

this great responsibility

ᚠᚢᚰ ᚰᚢᚢᚠ ᚱᚢᚰᚰᚰᚰᚢᚢᚠᚰ

to do justice to the

ᚠᚳ ᚳᚳ ᚰᚢᚰᚠᚢᚱ ᚠᚳ ᚠᚢᚱ

islanders and your domain

ᚰᚠᚢᚳᚳᚢᚢᚰᚰ ᚢᚳᚳ ᚰᚳᚢᚰ ᚳᚳᚱᚢᚢ

to cause no harm

ᚠᚳ ᚰᚢᚰᚱ ᚠᚳ ᚢᚢᚢᚱ

with my words

ᚱᚠᚢ ᚱᚢ ᚱᚳᚢᚳᚰᚰ

or recollections

ᚳᚢ ᚱᚢᚰᚰᚢᚢᚢᚰᚢᚰᚢᚰᚰ

of time spent

ᚳᚢ ᚠᚢᚢ ᚰᚰᚢᚠᚠ

in the heart of yesterday and today

ᚢ ᚠᚢᚱ ᚢᚢᚢᚠᚠ ᚳᚢ ᚰᚢᚰᚠᚢᚢᚢᚢᚢ ᚢᚳᚳ ᚠᚳᚳᚢᚢ

Travelling

we travel south from the island heads full of plans to realize the instruction i received from Rán the sea God who i obviously do not believe in until i did when i had to conclude that perhaps there may be some truth to it after all

two ferries down through the Scottish Highlands the Borders Northumberland and finally the centre of England before turning for the next border back to the hills of Wales and another language almost home

but now the worry of will i be able to complete such a story away from the atmosphere of the island whilst listening to the sound of a different sea and legends with other themes gods and meaning will they be affronted these Welsh magicians while the work of another God takes place in their homeland i decide that as Rán instructed her anger would be the greater

the pages that follow are the history of yesterday and today penned for the people of Westray who custom has declared are known as Auks for the beautiful black and white diving birds common on the island

Part Two

where stories are spun into threads

For Me To Tell

this place i read as though my own land

but before you hear her

history you must be told

where to find her from here

or over there

wherever your space on the planet

just the bare necessities will suffice

too many facts will

befuddle and confuse

a tidy list i will compile

then give guidance on how to secure her safely for the rest of time

O.S. grid reference: HY461461

coordinates: 59.3° N 3.0° W

area: 47 km²

population: 600 approximately

coastline: 430 km

Torc

if an island

could be	secreted in a home
this would	surely be found
in the secret	drawer of a
grandmother's	jewellery box
wrapped in the	silk of her wedding
gown last seen	sixty years ago
she lies a	red sandstone jewel
threaded onto the	currents that roar
where the North Sea	meets the mighty Atlantic
and whirlpools whip the	waters into magnificent
vistas of	destruction

WESTRAY

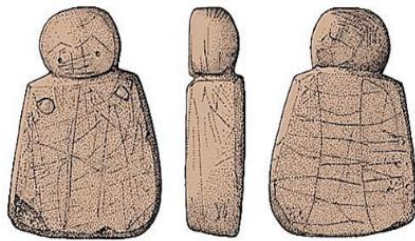
VESTRAY

QUEEN O' THE ISLES

Wifie

the Westray Wifie my Neolithic muse poses more questions than gives answers
each time i turn her in my hand the facsimile can never answer my need for truth

so who were you and
come from mister
as the books in the
studied for years who



from where did you
Google says the same
many libraries i have
really knows the truth

and do we really want your secrets outed to a world where they would be sullied
by those whose careers have been pure supposition for so long all is truth

Spirals

while carving spirals making dice and a Wifie for the peedie ones to play with
during the long dark nights of a northern winter did you have creation tales to
tell around a fire in those circular stone huts dug into the dunes at the Links of



Noltland not that you would have known that name then so many families
sharing to sustain and dry the seaweed on the low sea walls did you think of the
generations to come or just the ancestors in the cairns by the beach to touch
the stones you moved i crave to feel a connection to you to touch feel and taste

i am a daughter of yours

did you walk here

before the ice

melted

and the

waters rose

or sailed on a boat made of wood tar and twine

to find land fit for

your children and

to keep them

safe from harm

or did your

gods demand

penance for

for the sins

of fathers

or left here

as prisoners

when the war

was lost in a

different time

or as slaves

too weak for sale

hidden hearts

abandoned those

who may survive and be ripe pickings for the journey home

When the Rains Came



when the wind took the trees and the rain fell

fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell

fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell fell

fell storm storm storm fell fell fell fell fell fell

fell storm fell fell fell storm raging fell storm raging

fell heavier fell fell storms raged fell

fell again falling for ever storm life

fell ferocious fell always and the land bowed its head

the bere would not grow the moor destroyed and

starvation walked freely with a scythe for souls

an apocalypse greater than the one today

the old life

few survived but those that did became the

men of stone

and then

through bloodlines

always mingled with others

willingly

or not

became historical labels

written in textbooks

where heirs learn to chant the names

to recite dates by rote

stone bronze and iron ages

Picts Vikings

with ships and helmets sir

forgetful then

of the others too modern

to commit to memory

Norwegian Scottish British they are unconcerned

as the DNA in us is so diluted they say

until there are bragging rights

when the ancestry industry says bingo

and they are entitled to wear the winged helmets at play

in accents from across the planet

We all Want to be Vikings Today

we all want to be Vikings today
stand two metres tall in our imagination
with flaxen hair unleashed from braid and ribbon
flying tangled with debris from hedge and bead box to decorate

the image of myth from book and screen
is stored deep in memory banks
printed from playing as a child with plastic steel and wooden sword
waved in the air as we roared around our spaces

the battle sites of tarmac or field underfoot
dustbin lid shields banged in unison by fist or sword hilt
borrowed forgotten curtains musty in the daylight
wrapped around shoulders

we all want to be Vikings today
not shabby with the reek of the past as we thought
but shiny new elegant and deadly
Netflix and Sky box set fresh

A Vernacular Evolves

invading from the super-fast marine highway
these sons of Odin Thor and Loki took Westray's
land and stock for their own
Norwegian raiders
became all too soon those to pay allegiance to
with goods daughters cattle and fish
the painted ones who others called Picts
no longer in the ascendance
Tacitus and Ptolemy noting in Latin
the demise of the mother tongue
did Rán ever intercede on your behalf
i think to myself as these lines take shape on the page
I THINK TO MYSELF AS THESE LINES TAKE SHAPE ON THE PAGE
through the centuries
the mutation of vowel and consonant evolve
weaving the strands together
the cloth woven is strong and will endure
this new lexicon both spoken and put down
on page and memorial stone

runes + mother tongue + Pictish + Old Norse = the Norn language

the common man's vernacular now gone after a thousand years
across all the islands of Orkneyjar a new Norwegian moniker for the old
non written to survive for the scholars to pore over in the ivory towers of
academia save the recordings of the seniors
as the middle of the century last recedes in memory to black and white images
with the crepitations of the gramophone imprisoned and catalogued
by YouTube
for those who will only digitally research in this intimately
connected but now socially isolating new world
just two greats before us would have spoken the words daily
spoken not scribed in green lined school notebooks with their names on the
front page to denote ownership
or confirm whose graffiti decorated the wall at the back of the gym
will the time come when it is mourned and nationalists demand its
resurrection
then Nornify the everyday word with the moribund hybrid
vocabulary of yesterday
maybe not but an investment worth making is never easy

today the dialect spoken sounds like the wind whispering in the trees

some have tattoos in lieu

of a prayer

it is time to leave behind the Scandinavian bandits who for so long

commanded fear and power on Westray until they became

a chapter in history

before moving forward there is time to enjoy

roll the names around your mouth and taste the r's

full of salt water an indefinable texture better than any picture book

so excuse me while i indulge

please join me at the feast

Amundi - Anakol - Erlendsson – Bjarni – Brusi - Brynjolf – Dagfinn - Einar Belly
Shaker – Svein Asleifarson – Einar Hard Mouth – Einar Buttered Bread – so
many Einars – Eirik Stay-Brails – Erlend Haraldsson – Earl Sigurd – are you full
yet – Haflidi Thorkelsson a Westray man – Eirin Bloodaxe – Paul Thorfinnson



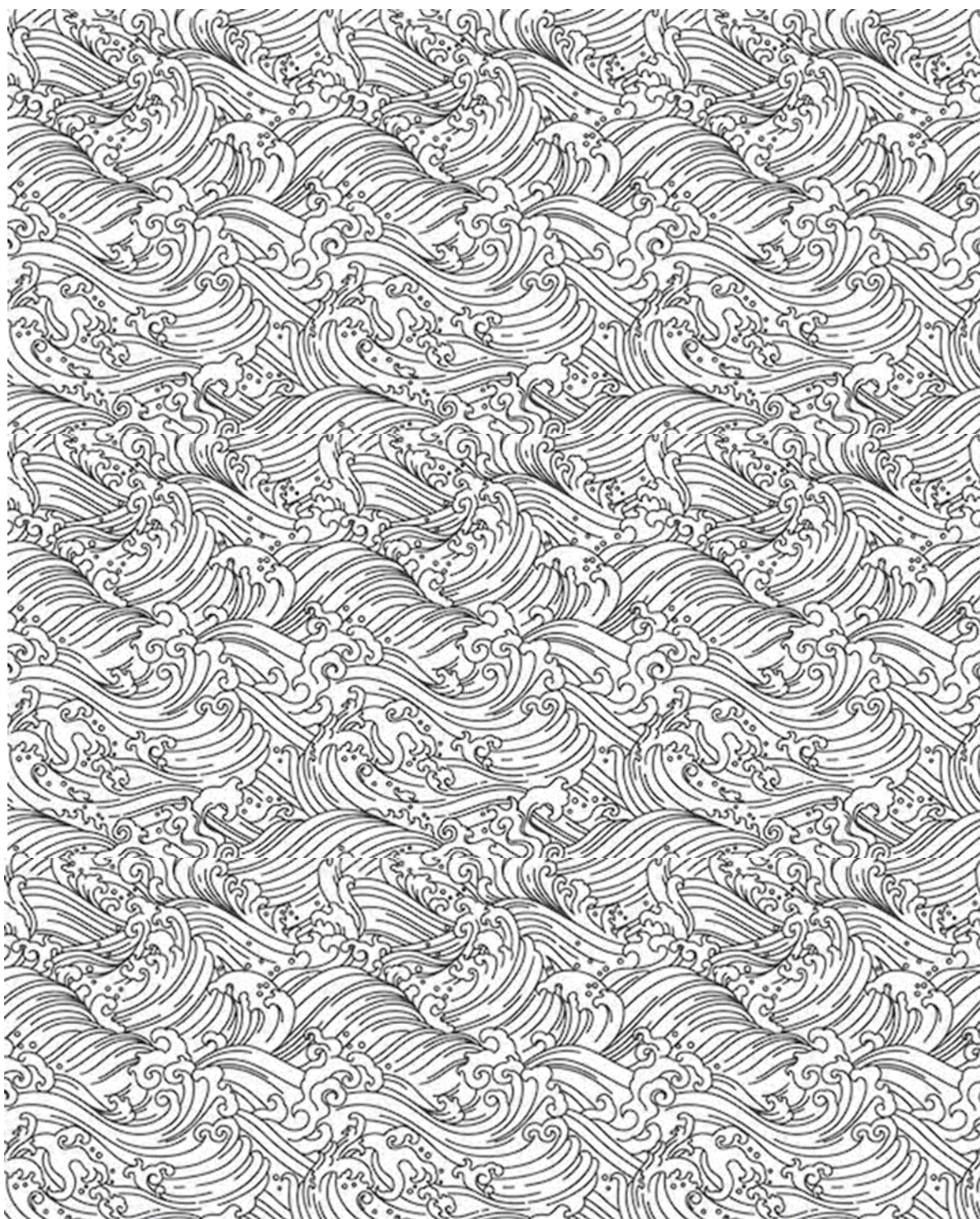
one last request as the maker of this book
i must leave you with the
names of poets and skalds who penned the stories
we still read today
seek them out where you can

Armod - Bjarni the Gold-Brow-Poet - Bjarni Kolbeinsson - Oddi Glumsson the
Little - Saemund Sigfusson - Snorri Sturluson – Kormákr Ögmundars - Egill
Skallagrimms - Olivr Hnufa – Eyvindr Skáldspillir – Óttar Svarti

i wish you hours of joy in the pursuit of these scribes from the past
that you are replete
with images in your head that fill dreams
but most important of all
the smell and taste of the sea

treat the seas with the respect that all seamen do
for she is a fickle mistress
a wave may be benign and bathe you in warm water
gently easing grief or
a death bed where the body may never be retrieved
for others to mourn
and flowers cast on the sea will have no meaning

The Taste and Smell of the Sea - Close Your Eyes and Listen



taste and smell the sea

close your eyes and listen

do you hear Rán and her nine daughters

or just the sound of the waves

easing their way across the sands

or crunch around a rockier shore

concentrate

open your mind to the possibility of another realm

one beyond the everyday

if you don't believe it doesn't matter

neither did i

but as you have learnt

it is all consuming to me now

there is no need to be concerned

the Runes will not change your life

i read and answered the command you have no need

you are aware of

the wholeness of the language and music

it is weaving the separate skeins together

until the words can be understood

and recited at will

look it is there laid out beside you

trace the text with your fingers through the air

Ægir lover spouse and father to all Rán's daughters

this Jötunn son of a giant or perhaps just a troll

entertained the gods

feted for hedonistic hospitality

the blaze in his hearth uses precious metal as kindling

gold of the sea

the glow as if a thousand candles lit

whether to flatter or ape Valhalla is not for us to know

Ægir like his wife Rán an essence of the sea

he gentler than she

her woven nets harvested sons of the land

when they strayed into her domain

a thief of souls she claims those who drown

they will rest in her bed for ever

in the Queendom of the dead

poetic edda's despised her cruelty

raged against her deeds

read the fabric carefully then return the memory to the sea

and hope Ægir is more powerful in our lives than she

An Intercession to the Daughters of Rán and Ægir

nine daughters

named for the waves or so i read in books

can you help me as my task progresses

i must honour the promise made

when the Runes were found

or provoke the wrath of your mother

i am fearful i am a sea traveller

if your true title is recorded here

will you intercede

Unn

Dufa

Kolga

Hrönn

Dröfn

Hefring

Blodughadda

Himminglaeva

i am afraid of the sea

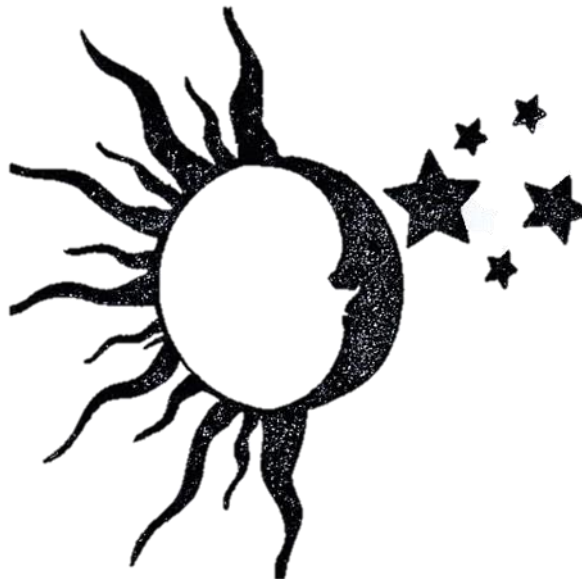
i offer this prayer

Rán's Daughters

daughters are always stronger than sons
the X^2 doubles the strength:power ratio
you who continue the line
have the fortitude to control the fluid dominion
where battles with aeriform zephyrs
agitate then irritate the planet's oceans
campaigns fought without rules of engagement
as those on the edges or navigating the seas
prayed for their lives to be spared
not one wished to enter your mothers' nets
tempers fraying in seconds
from the seiche waves in the bay
where children among the pools look for limpets
to you spilling water onto the land
plunge surge collapse refract
until all energy is spent
only the power of the moon is impossible to conquer
you cannot fight her insistent demands
to creep to roar back and forth

restrained by magnetic shackles

impossible to discard



until the world

tilts again on its axis

What Lives Beneath

put on a diving suit

or just hold

your breath

jump from a boat

off Rackwick bay

and go down

deep with

eyes wide

no camera

instead

store the image

in your mind

ready for the

time when you

no longer

control your

will

and others

always decide

forget
myths and legends
it is
time
to be now
and live
CE
not
BCE
past
memories
remain even
when we
cannot
retrieve them
the Neolithic
Vikings and Gods
remind us
to be living
our fables today
a new mythology is born

Medusa of the Sea

Medusa of the sea
your form terrifies and delights
in equal measure
serpentine tresses flowing in the current
as you pulse up then down through the oceans
no brain heart nor eyes
yet you may overwhelm some day
while you clone and replicate
respect
do you light the waves darkness
with your special powers
we just prod with sticks from the shore
anxious to classify without the venomous sting
your translucence dulls in the sun
even when wetted with sea from plastic buckets
so the kids can be brave
when performing the post mortem
when sliced through the gelatinous umbrella

parents will say

don't be scared look

it's just like a piece of sliced apple



This is Not Your Domain

if you are brave enough to travel
down to the sea bed
do not lose your way as the forest
of kelp and seaweeds
becomes impenetrable
for those without
the knowledge or map
the selkies are friendly
once you are routine
but beware their bite will
leave a scalloped detail
on a flipper
or tear a suit
if a welcome is out stayed
admire the pups at your peril
these mothers are



as ferocious as you

in protecting their young

such wonders nestle in the weeds

a buffet from the sea

otters diving birds

steal from this pantry when they dare

gorging on anemones urchins and scud

chasing the brittle and sea stars

as they dive from above

look at the nets floating down

not for the souls of the drowned

but chasing for cash salted cash

perhaps a lobster or three

brown crabs by the score

the best way to admire the selkies

is from the shore as they

banana on the rocks in the sun



Selkies

grey or common

i'm sure they prefer harbour common is so demeaning

heads following your walk along the beach

to disappear as you walk closer to gaze

into ostentatiously lashed eyes

and wonder how the practical has such innate beauty

kayak past and marvel at such insouciance

languid

stoned from the heat of the rock although

the sun declines to appear today

they roll and yawn bark at passers by

if enough energy can be mustered

to bother with a creature so uneasy in its environment

it must sit in a cocoon of

wood plastic fibre glass or skin

dependant on faux flippers to propel themselves along

ungainly often unbalanced and prone

to attention seeking exclamations

resplendant in gaudy colours skins to exclude sun and sea

acceptable to entice a mate or predator but
confusing to those who cannot read the signs
the greys dominant here on land and sea
other species subordinate to their numbers and survival of young
who are we to complain snort the harbours
i cannot refer to the common
more helpings for the orcas to consume as they
cruise on their way to who knows where
apex predators the bastards
only humans can conquer them to near extinction but then
worship their sleek monochrome beauty from a comfy armchair
these Westray based selkies
may stay in Pierwall or Brough's bay all year
but their likenesses can be seen in billions of pixels
shared around the planet so we can compare files
and explain look there is Splitfin or Baby Thor
my how they have grown and we are sad we aren't there
to anthropomorphize a new generation
and as i shall do here advertize my learning and bid adieu for now
to sigillum commune and halichoerus grypus
such mysterious creatures

Shapeshifting

as written in the pages before here
the selkie is the dialect word for seal
please do not confuse it with the inferior variations
from the isles to the west
nor the Irish Celtic cousins who insist
on using the incorrect vowel
such aberrations
oh we are not Celts
the language is not ours to own
the correct lyric is inserted here
and remains until the prose is complete
there is another tale to tell
of the colonies who thrive around our shore
they are the shapeshifters
not as well known as Zeus
but to the folklorists so much more than him

selkie-folk some believe
dance with fairies
in the company of fallen angels
and the drowned broken souls of sailors
plus the lovers who waded into the water to heal
a broken heart
others condemned to live in the depths and stink of fish
for some long forgotten misdemeanour
doomed to swim for ever in briney oceans
tossed in the air
persued by whales in need of a meal
or looking for fun when the boredom
of the long migration kicks in
and all only allowed one day of the year
to celebrate in human form
your assumption is
magnificently mistaken
for here is the truth

on lonely moon lit shores
and quiet sun warmed skerries
skins are shed
a transformation to the human form occurs
outrageous in their beauty
perfect alabaster in their underneath skin
libidinous when roused by human design
often returned with open arms and promises
of partnership with
freedom to return to the seaway as desired
but it is recorded that some were deceived as skins
were hidden or destroyed to bind to the earth for ever
such aquatic loveliness
maids on the land keen
to aquire a beautiful accomplished lover
must walk to the shore at high tide
must abide by the custom
must gift the ocean

one two three four five six seven
of her salty tears
if any selkies should appear
and like what they see
skin will be shed to reveal
the shining nakedness of he or she
the only decision to be made
is whether to dance or fornicate
i wish them both
through who's agency none of us can know
if when she is lost on the sea
in the bay collecting scallops
then her selkie
can claim her for himself
she will be in the depths with him
whether she shapeshifts or is merely drowned
we cannot know
he is the one with the magic

all we can do is wonder
if the love is strong enough
if her soul remains complete
the frequency of the selkie
transformation
is not of our concern
midsummer eve for the romantic
full moon for the
astrologically inclined
high tide
spring tide
the equinox
or whenever they
are inclined
you may spot them
with sirens or mermaids
as you look through
binocular or disturb with a drone
leave them in peace
they will come to you should they wish

approach with care
every crash harem herd or plump of seals
your preferred collective noun is irrelevant
wherever in the world you may be
because to surprise may result in
selkie-folk
unable to return to the sea
without their lustrous coat they drown
or fade away
lost in the human realm

Take Your Partners

take your partners i've checked the app
tonight the merry dancers should be in town
swaggering through the sky in peacock finery
stars embroidered onto the cirrus cloud gauze shawls
sheets rivers and feathers of colour trailing
tendrils of purple green pink yellow
never still
waltzing over the sea and island
no hills few trees in this place to obscure the view
grab a coat put thick shoes on
we'll walk past the airfield along the coast path
make sure Edwin's gates are shut on the way
no beast can survive the fall if let loose
then follow the old wall down to the cliff edge
too close move back or you'll join the mermaids at home
sit on the stone here put the camera and notebook down
how long they dance is never announced
burn the image into your brain instead
to recall at will in a different time

how they shift apart divide and weave across the sky

replicate each other

we hear the solar wind as it crashes

into our atmosphere's

magnetic charisma

i don't have the science

stay with the wonder

merry dancers aurora borealis the sunrise wind

they cavort in full view oblivious to their effect on us

all hope the spectacle will never end

have you read that some nations fear the dancing divas

their spirits must be darker than ours

souls of the dead and don't whistle or you will join them

no way and angels fighting impossible the gods would

singe their wings for such dereliction of duty

stick with the Romans I was taught at school

it is Aurora flying through the sky to meet brother Sol at dawn

who cares

take your partner tango or fox trot all night

Horizons and Sea Swallows

park the car by the farm not far from the Ness of Tuquoy take the path to the
beach down past the eroding sand dunes where cattle stare
and sand martins numbers dwindle

Cross Kirks remains are just a bump in the ground congregations long gone
if you want to commune with the ancestors Kestros mound of indeterminable
age may oblige if you linger by its side and lay a hand on the grass

not there yet

you must continue down through the gates and steep incline
to Mae Sands count the shells on the shore from oceans far away from here
footprints are few and the sound of the birds explodes in your ear
waves crash and tumble at your feet

smooth a dry patch of shore or make a bed of kelp then look out to the horizon
it's infinite this afternoon

turquoise fades to blue black then nothing

are the flat earthers correct after all as a skiff is lost from sight
sailing straight over the edge hoping the anchor will tether them to earth

arctic terns reconfigured as fighter bombers scream from the sky
the payload of guano detonates on contact too little to fertilize its victim
just enough for the odour to linger

the small sea swallows so feisty when brooding the egg
rittock rittock its nasal screech when you step too close
the noise belies its size this palagic beauty
as it parties in Westray when the hatching and fledging is done

our thousand mile home journey so faraway on the road
to these sea swallows insignificant just a short hop

in my head i hear them say
you humans too often presume you are the master race
top of the pile number one but the time will come
when you slide down the list
we're orange now
how long before you hit red

Bay of Tafts

if lying on the sand

never close your eyes

unless you travel with a companion

that never sleeps

for if the wind should rise

you may wake sinking

down through the waves

towards Rán's net

or atop the cliffs with the

devil's custard in your hair

from a nearby geo

so solitary sleepers beware

the winds from the atlantic

are rarely gentle

look around and see

how few trees gain purchase

and islanders tend to wear their hair

in a north east direction

Part Three

where the threads are woven into cloth

The Housing Project and Takeaway

take the road past the castle then left and right

see Bisgeos on your left looking out to sea down and up the hill

mind the bridge if your camper is wide

finally the lighthouse sitting on Noup Head

take the path through the gate and head for the cliff

wear a hat in case the bonxies attack watch the rabbits scatter at the sound
of your giant footsteps stumbling across the ground

the smell will assault your nose éau de ammonia

with a base note of sand eel

before the wall of sound brutalises an ear drum

the first resident is sighted breath sucked from lungs before the

wind tosses it away

thermals carry the juvenile and adult suspended in spirals above the rocks

chicks with carer huddle against the walls of the tower block housing projects
they hope to inhabit each year

if food supply winds and disease allow

happier now they no longer provide an islanders next meal

edging slowly forward to obtain the optimum view

beware the overhang and the gusts on your back

here the solan goose -gannet – is supreme speckled young and the

peach hued head with kohl ringed eyed parents

plunge down to the sea arrow straight backs metres under the surface

of the always turbulent sea

all are settled in ghettos no species diversity here

each to their own it appears rammed together in

endless regulated formation

strops of razorbill – cooter nebs – in evening dress

sharp as always with flashes of white

skarts and scarfs – shags and cormorants – at the bottom of the stack

the mallimack – fulmar – glides past at eye level

guillemots – aak – by the hundreds

don't let those lenses fall

kittiwakes strut their aerial stuff

delighting the enhanced eyes of those lying on the ground

and always the gulls fighting squabbling stealing from others

sod you they scream got kids of my own

common herring great black backed
is the lesser black backed held in contempt
by its blacker backed cousin
round and round up and down the walls of the estate
a landing or two aborted when an awkward approach is taken
or a neighbour decides to defecate
at a crucial time during the manoeuvre

a puffin - tammie norrie - or two are uncomfortable interlopers
ousted maybe from the premier location at Castle O' Burrian
(down on the east coast)
painted directions for land locked creatures to follow
eager to be so close as to almost touch
the mini penguin look alike that burrow there
and capture them for all time in a book
or in one the clouds where they will disappear for all time

back to the housing projects
if you wish to study the human as closely as the bird
Noup Head is a spectacular spot for sightings of all races
it is a delight to classify by nation and birth then guess the cost

logos of such exotic plumage that identify

by class and bank balance

those who are ornithological demigods

and the others

this sport is generally friendly

hello what good bad weather where are you from

where do you stay is exchanged and stories of

extraordinary sightings revealed

Westray's community now tapped into the trade

provide the visitor with wildlife and history tours a trip to the heritage centre

and always leave time for tea

where questions can be asked of an enthusiastic guide

but i have to admit that during those cliff top exchanges

i never spoke about the bloody takeaway below the lighthouse

when Orcas circled the rocks sweeping the selkies into the water

the foam turned pink after their snack

gruesome but impossible to resist

Angels 1730

Mrs Rendall sat spinning at Seaquoys plot
peat smoke in her eyes
the storm in her ears
under a dark sky through which
the most evil of the winds blew
that cold north wind took bites from all
snapping and shrieking
through the doors and roof
a pool of soot underneath the fire hole
then flickering on the wall
shadows from the seal fat lamp for company
thrown through the door by the elements
her husband is here
down near the arches of Rammigeo
there's a ship near the bay
it's no safe the day to be oot tak care
she said to him
as he left with the other men
to see what help may be given

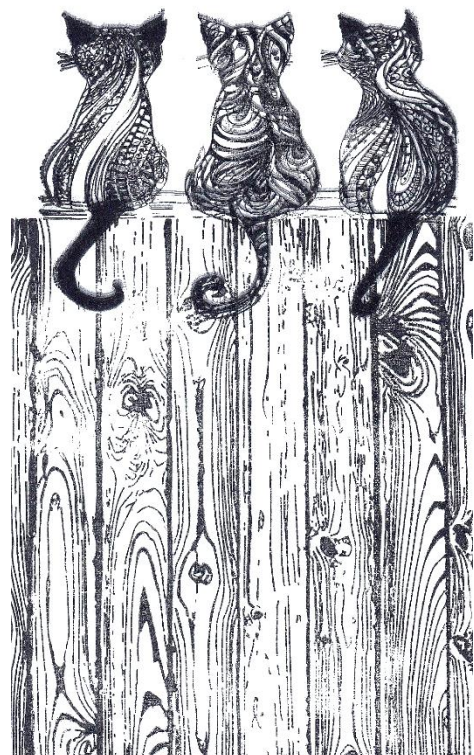
none
the crys of the victims were heard
keening above the howl of that heartless wind
all night
at the dawn wreck search
in the cave a woman was found
with a bairn in her arms
just alive
cradled in the dead arms of his mother
Mrs Rendall nurtured him
with warmth and porridge
naming him after the ship's russian home town
archangel
Archie Angel's
blood still runs through Westray veins
although the name may be gone
it lives forever in stories told
on the knees of Grandmither and Fither
and where the north wind
still howls and squawks at will

21st Century Rune Reading

such an exhausting task
is Rán's command that now is the time
to pause and look at the island again
stroll along paths then
traipse across a field
doze next to the anchors on the front
before coffee and cake a dram or two of Scappa malt
tasting of honey and smooth as nectar
gossip and laugh collecting words and sounds
before the magic fades as it often does
under the relentless tap tap tap of the keyboard
look for otters down at Rapness among the boulders
where the ro-ro docks
back to the village and admire the art
finishing at Grobust beach to build
shell palaces for mermaids and friends
a few hours are passed else where
with us together
on the beach

Midnight in Broughton in July – This One is for Me

still only dusk at 23.00 hours no need for a torch
unable to sleep in the unseasonable heat
kicked off the quilt pulled on some clothes to wonder down the lane
to capture the perfect selkie composition for a book
i heard them singing in the bay
or it may have been celebrating teenagers camped at the lodge
maybe witches on a coven night out
looking for love or off round the barns to net bats for potions
past Jacks the chippie i'd kill for cod in an orange coat of batter
i informed two mallards who appeared to be pacing
me step for step by my side in the water
down to the end of the road as far
as you can go before the need to
dive into the bay is apparent
sitting on a pallet box fence three cats
of the night partying as if hallucinogenic
substances had been consumed ignored me
all the lost cats with pictures in the windows
i know where they are



New Age Rain

rain is still talked about here as frequently
as back in the old times
when it drove thousands away
some live on the bread line still
though starvation is kept at bay
bere grain seen as a specialist crop
for the wealthier sort of shopper stocked
as grain and bread
rarely seen in the discount stores
rain is an inconvenience
for the cruise ship tourists
devouring the sights and smells of Kirkwall
chasing their eighth generation heritages
clad in uniform robin red breasted plastic
name penned on a badge
in case they forget it
rain cursed in this beautiful but
god forsaken land of the north
when only sunshine was seen in the brochures

back on the island to all those with an address there
rain is never bad weather
impressive collections of waterproof raiments
and footwear lurks in halls and lobbies
green frogs rose sprigged rainbow stripes
side by side with a size 12 boot
yellow brimmed hats that drip down necks
sit on the bannister post
leggings or thighboots when completely inclement
rustle when walking to the byre
or lifting the nets at the salmon farm
trench foot sometimes occurring as in France
where great grandfathers fought
change those socks cos trench foot hurts like hell
rain in Westray has too many adjectives to list
you may classify into four
horizontal vertical drizzle or dry
the bouquet of it is different here
rain lighter and fresher than city rain
that glazes clothes with an oily sheen
i would bottle this Westray rain to dab behind my ear

Dressmaking the Old Way

if she walks to the top of Fitty Hill this morning
in the rain
then climbs the windmill stairs and sits astride the top
with just one hand she can punch through the nimbostratus
to reach through and steal a metre or two of the blue
return home with it under her arm
then fashion a high necked cloak that billows behind when she walks
come evening just as the sunset is brightest
return to the Hill with the longest boat hook she can find
catch a thread of orange from the sky
then wind it round the blades and spin into yarn
her Grandmither can still weave on the loom in the byre
or ask the night fairies if she's unwilling
next morning all gather in the kirk hall
where the woman of Pierowall will cut pin and sew
her wedding gown
threading wild pearls through a veil of spider gossamer
starfish in her hair
she is ready for her selkie lover

Oystercatcher

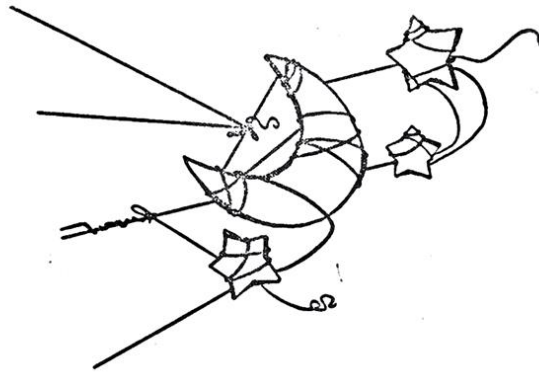
they are called Skeldros here nobody knows why
could be for the cacophany of noise that comes from the air
when they pass overhead or hammer and stab at food on the shore
a parcel of Oystercatchers but a stew better suits
as they bubble and pop with indignation when interrupted
sensitive as a five star chef playing in their kitchen and service is slow
or the oysters he boiled won't open
not that they care they don't often eat such gelatinous slime
that looks like snot even when served with garlic and lime
such flash dressers that black and white gleams in the sun
classy long curved bill to probe and penetrate invertebrates
relentless focussed
finished off with handsome legs in the same hue
i'm not a mathematician i can't tell you the numbers involved
but know its written in orange now which clashes with red should be black
squadrons in scruffy formation pipe past your head
after fifty years i still can't capture them in a frame
the most - i'm a little biased
beautiful commonplace bird on the planet



Home Schooling

i wanted to be home schooled or sent away to Mallory Towers
my institution was féted at the top of the league
all girls all girls of old girls and their mothers
regulation everything no different coloured shoes here
hyphenated headmistress whose husband was killed in the war
log tables parsing lines of bone dry black on a page
no colour to match the uniform designed to hide the difficult problem
that we were young women and the unfortunate fact
we breathed without asking
if i had been born here I would have flown so much sooner I'm sure
up to the sky and down to the beach
count the shells and grains of sand classify and record genus for fun
in a huge scrappy notebook full of flowers seaweed and secrets
fall in rockpools and fish with my dad
the nautilus swimming there on the other page
used for a geography session or two
writing on the sand with stones when learning the power of a b c
maybe the kids down the road shouting as they play at the school
will feel the same when they look back as far as me - world don't let it be

Hanging the Stars 29th April 2020 23.30 hrs



if you had looked up to the sky like we did
weaving down the Howanbrek road
after a session with the painters and poets
at whose home I still can't recall
identical thoughts would have crossed your mind
as you tried to unravel basic concepts of the universe
what are the forces that keep it all up in the air
and prevent us being crushed by random falling stars
on my star gazing guide they are all connected by fine lines
are they titanium or a planetary engineering solution
about which we don't know
space spiders I suppose with super powered spinnerets
could be weaving webs of silky graphene to keep everything in its place
or Luna throwing a frayed gossamer shawl

cwctching them tight to her breast as if infants
why can't I see the connections as I look from below
my weight tethers me to the ground
up there doesn't need us has friends of its own
who don't need to research the physics of it all
no how why where what ifs it just is
gravity is heroic pushing and pulling
hundreds
billions
hundreds of billions
of galaxies together like tension set diamonds in a wedding band
but if the world stops spinning on its axis
shuffles across a few degrees do we fall through the web
slip through a curved space time fourth dimension tear
back into where we were a thousand millenia ago
to console ourselves we watched Hydra and Draco
snaking above us in opposite directions
and contemplated if Cassiopeia could be as inebriated as Finn
in the morning with the condom packet unopened
we thought Gemini for a boy
Andromeda if a girl

Edwin's Emerald

the Emerald pride of the Larvick yard launched in 1866
ten years on sailing from New York to Göthenburg
Ole the captain with wrong bearings from the chart
had not cleared North Ronaldsey
plunging through heavy seas sleet snow and wind ran aground
the mast cut to stop her tipping into the sea
next morning patched and refloated with crew intact
towed to anchor below Pierowall's kirk
where scavengers scavenged didn't waste a plank
off came the cabin hauled in one piece
named it Wellington House

old Miller came down from Buckleberry farm
i like what i see
money changed hands then dragged over fields
used as a bedroom to sleep his growing brood

between the wars George Rendell thought
i fancy that

paid good cash for the farm and cabin
sad neglected with rats in the hay its heart was breaking

for years it remained til it came down to Edwin
he was an artist farmer who wanted a space
a modernist but still bound by the ropes
of the past that anchored the Emerald to ground
he built his gallery by hand slate by slate
a perfectionists palace the Wheeling Steen
step into the time machine of Edwin's Emerald miracle
the cabin restored just enough paintwork not pristine
look up see the shadow on the wood where the mast came down
a portrait of the Emerald in her prime on the back wall behind the easel
smells of oil paints linseed water colour boxes all round

i want to steal the oily rag used to clean brushes
put it in my treasure box next to the shells and sea glass collected last year
and my image of Edwin's Emerald
will be stitched appliqued painted shimmer with the turquoise of the sea
his paintings embellish my walls
the ozone is always there

Costie Boys

Geordie was a crustacean man
crab and lobster his passion
his big brother Alec not so keen
so one took the boat and the other his own way on the sea
their Spanish name came from the storms of 1588
Captain da Costa thrown into the Atlantic and
shipwrecked with the Armada's fleet he made it to shore they said
it must be true
Geordie has a book full of cuttings from the papers
Westray names adopted with Spanish and Norse blood
mingled in womens' wombs a new line was sired
Geordie selling crabs to make a living
boats in the garage and pots on the lawn
every Don's son a fisherman from time immemorial
Alec headed south one whaling trip enough
thirty three blue whales sitting outside the bay
took thirty that day finished them off the next
all sold to Bovril and boiled down to drink for a healthier life
working in South Georgia stripping the blubber

we're killing to the brink of extinction he said
and declined to return
working on the fishing boats to earn for his wife
till retirement called
art college for two years blood mixed with paint
a common condition on the island
innate to those born there and the blow ins who sense it

Costie Boys are best boys cocks of the hoop
telling tales of old times showing treasures from afar
pictures of shells fish from the deep and knots I can't tie
i asked them if palagic birds were hefted like sheep
it's the only thing they didn't know
gentleman of the sea i salute all that you are



Warp and Weft

at the industrial show which wasn't
no machines with regular heartbeat
no Swarfega perfume or oily note in the hall
as we found when we entered in August

at the back of the queue in the gym at the school
with the laughter and chat combined
the decibel level was frightening
until the sweet zone was hit

tables of fruit and veg grown with determination
in patches next to the house
Westray is where polytunnels and greenhouses go to die
forget the veg and head for the cake

sponges so soft the urge to bow your head down
and consume the confection in one
is overwhelming a victory hard won
edible creations

assaulted willpower with brute force
from every side
pies muffins bread fairy cakes scones fruit cakes tray bakes
i'm in a sweat writing the words

later with coffee in one hand
sandwich in the other observing the crowd
i could see the fabric of the island
laid out before me
threads drawn together
skeins of hair from the sea stories
mermaids sea gods and serpents
seaweed and the grass from the ocean floor weaving
ropes for rigging of ships and hanging the guilty

Mrs Rendall sitting at her spinning wheel watching Archie play
look at the crochet macrame and hand knits
stitching memories of yesterday
for tomorrows treasures
seashells imprisoned

behind ropes of spun baler twine

from the Balfours a metre of woven cloth in sea hues wool

did they sing as the shuttle was threaded through

repeating the pattern

in song as was always done

stories images and sculptures placed on the wall

from the artists weaving

with words paint wood and stone

not one strand of this community defines

warp and weft are as strong as the other

or the fabric unravels

all that came before

has been spun into threads of gossamer steel

which binds the heart to this place forever

among the crowd i swore i saw Philomela admiring the exhibits

a nightingale was singing in the trees as we were leaving

We Weave

we weave
fantasies
for others
to believe
our life
is
perfectly
spun from
silk thread
not worsted
if the
spinning is
interrupted
the threads
of life
will tear
as the
warp and weft
fall from the loom



yes you will see fairies if you lie in the grass

and try hard enough

but beware they are human size

otherwise they would never survive

the storms in this place



Epilogue

the story is told as you bid	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ
not every	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
birth or song	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
included	ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
it's essence	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
i have tried	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
to describe	ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
on the page	ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
next year	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
i will return	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
to the rock	ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
with a fistful of	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ
groatie buckies in one hand	ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ
best moonstone	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
Runes in the other	ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
murmer Rán i am done	ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
cast them over the ocean	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
catch them with your net	ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ

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Illustration Information

Front Cover: personal photograph taken in 2019

Page 5: Dragon Tattoo free clip art available at < www.tattooimages.biz >

Page 9: Map of Westray courtesy of Visit Orkney's *The Islands of Orkney*
< www.visitorkney.com >

Page 19: Line drawing of the Westray Wife/Venus courtesy of
< <http://www.orkneyjar.com/archaeology/linksofnoltland/venus.htm> >

Page 30: personal photograph of Neolithic spiral stone from Westray Heritage Centre

Page 41: Japanese water wave seamless background. – Vector Royalty-free stock vector ID: 1207072834 courtesy of
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Page 50: Jellyfish Free Clip Art from Jessica Farley Art available at
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All other images are craft stamps from my personal collection

Appendix 1

Consent Form for Collection of Words & Images

My name is Jane Manley, I am a student at The University of Trinity St. David in Lampeter, Ceredigion, West Wales. I am in the Orkney Islands researching for my dissertation for a B.A. Hons. in Creative Writing.

My plan is to produce a short volume of prose and poetry based on the history of the islands, pre-history to the 21st century; this is an academic work for my degree, and with luck publication in the future.

If you are happy to talk to me about your childhood memories, how the island has changed over the years, stories and legends of the past it would be very helpful. Those of you who moved to the island as an adult, I need your stories of the community and how you settled in as well.

As I write slowly by hand, I am hoping you'll allow me to record your words to transcribe at a later date. My husband [REDACTED] is a photographer, and if you consent to him taking a portrait that would be brilliant. I do need your formal consent to agree to me using your words and images in my final project.

My contact details: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Mobile number [REDACTED]

I consent to Jane Manley using my image and/or words for her dissertation & any future publication.

Print name.....

Date.....

Contact details

Appendix 2

Web Addresses of Interest Relating to Westray

www.aurorawatch.uk – for information on aurora sightings

www.orkneybalfours.com>spanish – relates to Spanish wrecks

www.orkneyjar.com – information on all aspects of Orkney

www.orkneyringer.blogspot.com – ranger on Papay Westray

and the Northern Isles – relates to the *Costie Boys*

www.smithsonianmag.com – all known shipwrecks around Scotland can be found on this map which relates to *Edwin's Emerald*

<https://ssns.org.uk> – volume 25 – information on the Spanish Armada invasion

www.westraycommunity.co.uk – island community site

www.westrayheritage.co.uk – a vast collection of historical artifacts and information relating to Westray includes a centre for tracing family histories

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxpB1HAOiFQ> – to visit *The Housing Project Site and Take Away*

Appendix 3

Dialect Words spoken in Westray

bairn	small child
chukie	wheatear
dodgel	something large
dunter	eider duck
ennis	dilapidated house
ettercap	spider
feefly	foolishly clumsy
groatie buckie	tiny cowrie shell found locally
moosiehaak	kestrel
malimack	fulmar
selkie	seal
skart	shag
solan goose	gannet
sugg	labour under a heavy load
swarbie	black backed gull
tout	to sulk
yammals	people of the same age

I have heard all these words on the island they can be found in:

Lamb, G. *The Orkney Word Book*. 3rd ed. (Kirkwell: Byrgisey, 2012)

Appendix 4

A Found Dialect Poem

In the evening tilly lamps were lit
And roond a peat fire we a'did sil
Makan simmons and haein a smoke
Weeman knitted and gied the cradle a rock

When supper was awer and a'body fed
We wad crawl awa tae wur auld box bed
We really didna need any central heat
There was two at the top and another at the feet

We hid no much money as weel ye ken
Bul were happy, content in a wee but and ben
Hids dime us no herm as ye all can see
For wur all here the night as bright as a bee

Tonight when the programme awer and done
We hope you will have enjoyed the fun
Well have done our best tae entertain
In twa years' time could be back agin

Anon

I have no name for the author of this poem, it was found in a second-hand book shop in Kirkwall, the poem slipped between the pages - secret treasure