

5 selected poems

1. A lie is a lie is a lie

I gave them the news
I said I know baby crow I felt
Him curled fist knotted unborn
Just a firm lump in his father's liver
In his mother's breast
A scan showed his feathers
Unfolding as he developed
Grew into his parents chest
Look there is his beak
The little talons on his feet
Look there is his circulation
That gives him life is how he feeds.
His eyes are still closed,
But he can feel you breathe.
He hiccuped and his parents
Coughed up blood, wept blood
From their nipples.
He sneezed and his parents
Had a seizure, writhed in pain.
They bravely said they would
Hold on, committed to life.
Trusting God they would survive.
You are going to die and so am I
But why but oh why but why
A lie is a lie is a lie is a lie.

2. In the Kalahari

Here water on the horizon
Is evanescent, illusory
A shimmering Fata Morgana.
Here an ancient sun is constant,
Relentless heat.
Shadows provide little relief.
Here an older night is constant,
Relentless cold.
Starlight provides no heat.
Life curls around its self,
Holding onto drops of moisture,
Brought at the vagaries
Of the wind, or stolen
From others in hiding.
A desert people
Living between extremes
Would need to notice.

Essences are small,
Overlooked, but important
In abundance and variety.
Details are particular.
Complexity is constructed
From atoms and forces.
In the Kalahari
A displaced people,
The Khoi, say things are
Powerful in proportion
To their smallness.
Perhaps a dry desert
Full of sand, teaches truth
In its smallest grains.

3. Stars in an endless sky

Stars in an endless sky
Discarded colours drift in the dry
Air, emotions are fragments like my
Oldest memories. Why
Is the first and last question
At birth, through life, when we die.

Between touching and feeling
Between sound and hearing
Between image and seeing
Between sensation and response
Is what we cannot know.
Is where we are lost.

Perhaps an answer lies, where words
Are empty, where all stories have been told
Where light intersects, merges with cold
Where it is dark, all movements stops
Where infinity merges with void.

There is no love, compassion, passion
Pathos, empathy outside ourselves.
Anger, envy, greed and hate
Will be with us, despite our attempts
To escape. We choose, our choice
Takes on shape, determines path and fate.

It is so early, it is so late
Stars in an endless sky
I want to hurry, I can wait.
My heart is full, my breath has left
Lies all round me, I am in this world
I am the world, the world is me.

4.Orchestral affair

The composer made overtures
To the first violin.
She ignored him,
Said hello to the cello,
With whom she felt more in tune.
She wanted to move closer
String him along,
Start their love affair.
But this was no duet
Not even a string quartet.
The conductor waved his arms,
Kept them apart.
The flute blew them a note of hope.
The piccolo just twittered.
The oboe was pessimistic,
Blew an ill wind that did
No one any good.
The bassoon
Thought it was too soon.
The brassy trumpets
Blasted harsh protests
About the segregation.
The horn expressed scorn
In a melodious tone.
The bass thought
Rearrangements a waste.
It wanted to keep
The sweet violas near.
The saxophone and trombone
Had no part in this symphony
Sat alone, texting on their phones.
The tympani , always curt
And disciplined marched on.
They had no time to stop
Didn't care about love or song.
So despite all the pages turned,
All the notes played,
Legato and staccato,
All the movements
Allegro, andante
Molto fuoco con amore.
This orchestral affair was doomed
Did not go anywhere.

The audience,
Poorly informed,
Applauded.

4. Serpent

Serpent full of blood
Rigid with his self importance
Invaded paradise
But all his lust
To destroy, all thrusts
Of violence this way and that
Where met with smooth
Indifference and wet warmth.
In disgust, serpent sneered,
Sneezed, blew his nose,
Deflated and withdrew.
This is how we came to be.
Infected by serpent's greed
We were insatiable, consumed
More than we needed
And grew and grew
Until we knew we had to leave.
From an intact world squeezed
Through a canal of pain
From dark where we could see and feel
From weightless comfort
We arrived, opened our eyes
To burning light, were forced to breathe.
Our betrayal made us discover
Our voice and we screamed.
All kept rushing in,
seemed foreign, separate.
Yet serpent's hunger remained.
Overwhelmed by need,
Again we screamed.
Our helpless impotence
Our ability to learn redeemed
Us to life and the universe
Granted us a mother to survive.
We thrived, we smiled.
Love given and received
Soothed our troubled heart.
If there is judgement or not,
There is no excuse, we know
Have known compassion.

Our opposable thumbs
Grasped, our thoughts
Were taught words,
Became their master and slave.

We touched, we heard
Imitated, created ideas
Building blocks, toys
We learnt to build and destroy
But our play is still
Contaminated by serpent's
Need, seed and will.