

## Poetry Series

# Frances Macaulay Forde

- poems -

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## **Frances Macaulay Forde (Virgo)**

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my website: <http://www.francesmacaulayforde.com>

Works:

'Hidden Capacity ~ a poet's journey' published by MMB Publishing, Cork,  
Ireland 2003. ISBN: 0-9544723-0-6

## A Found Memory

Fossil: Dry. Smooth? Not smooth – rough.  
Light! Weighs nothing. I move my finger  
to slip over the top end and find smooth.  
A clean cut. A harsh chopping off.

A crack has appeared. It's old,  
dirt-encrusted, making the fissure  
stand out from the beige of light  
and dark mottled skin.

This portion of dead branch has been displaced,  
into my warm, clutching hand.  
It is bowed, perhaps with the weight  
of brilliant blossom in fertile times.

But with age and exile,  
the object bears no hint of past profusion.  
No scar of leaf or flower.  
Only grooves in dry, brittle skin.

Viewed from the smooth top,  
a solid golden core betrays its strength.  
Marred by a red blemish - perfect oval,  
tree blood showing the pain of dissection.

Where did you come from, my severed arm?  
You stood in proud grandeur.  
High, looking down on sheep  
grazing green grounds beneath.

Your ghostly mother, her children  
housing nests, hollows, where new life begins.  
Waving in the sweeping wind. Bowing  
to earth's elements. Dressing for season's ball.

A young boy climbed your sturdy limbs  
seeking adventure, chasing the sun  
to knock a parrot's nest – not caring  
about fragile eggs of new families.

You remind me of my mother.  
Her honesty. Loveliness.  
No frills - just lines of age.  
Her purpose obvious. To bear fruit.

The golden core of subtle strength was always known.  
The ability to bend when winds buffeted.  
Fissures evidence damage – results of force  
against will or ability. Life wasn't always easy.

My mother has been gone for a long time now,  
but hugging this piece of dry, light branch,

comforts me. The memories of mother.  
The naturalness of her protection.

I remember her hands at the end. Dry,  
mottled, beige and brown. Clutching  
mine in death. Cold. The heat from my warmth  
trying desperately to infuse life.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **A Mother's Love**

Make your bed.  
Pick up your clothes.  
Straight to school.  
Don't pick your nose.

Who was last in the loo?  
Put the bloody seat down.  
You'll spoil your dinner.  
Don't eat that now.

What's the problem?  
I won't be long.  
Turn that down.  
I'm sick of that song.

D'ya have to swear?  
Be home by four.  
Wipe your feet.  
Don't slam the door.

Excuse me please.  
I was watching that.  
Where's my shampoo?  
Key's under the mat.

Where are you now?  
Didn't you hear me call?  
Don't worry about us.  
Just go ~ have a ball.

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## **A Nobel Prize, Kim**

'Sunshine Policy".  
The flower has finally  
blossomed in peace.

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## All Stops

I'm tired.  
Two hours last night.  
Three, the night before.  
I want to  
    green flashes  
    puddles of gold  
    blue sky contrast  
        close my eyes.  
The gentle sway  
    is soothing.  
The gray shades  
    of my eyes  
    are heavy  
as if someone  
    is pulling,  
    dragging  
    them down.  
Flicker of sunlight.  
Spring back up.  
Oh, just a few moments  
    I'm so tired.  
Sit up - deep breath.  
The bright pains  
    skewer the tender  
    part behind my eyes,  
forcing me to squint  
    and frown  
(more wrinkles) .

If I succumb,  
    they'll show  
    even more  
Neck is waving,  
chin sinks into throat.  
Tongue fixed to roof  
    of mouth.  
Relaxed.  
Still  
except for the sway  
    - gentle -  
then slight bumps.  
A forward push and  
    I'm saved.  
- nearly folded.

How embarrassing!  
Sit up - deep breath.  
Matchsticks - I need  
    matchsticks!  
(How come everyone  
uses lighters these days?)

Drooping

leaning  
closing  
pulling to

"PERTH STATION

Frances Macaulay Forde

**And I am....**

looking through photos of days gone by  
your women - sharp intake of breath

a caressing finger  
tells me more  
than words or deeds

words or deeds obvious  
thoughts feelings secret  
subject to concealment

a hidden agenda  
when revealed  
shocks absolutely

you laugh 'Ha' and say  
'We're talking about  
20 years ago! '  
OK yes we are

but

in that moment  
in our time  
you experience  
pleasure  
the same tingle  
you experienced

20 years ago  
when your penis  
responded  
to a girl  
everyone  
lusted after

.....

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **Bar of Grief**

Upturned bottles once lined with military order  
on dusty, termite-rotten shelves. Fingerprints,  
clear spaces of use, caught by the shafts of daylight  
through pin-holes where nails have been.

A puddle of spilt pain, beneath an upturned bench.  
Life, wasted in boozy stench lies forgotten,  
punished for excess, while determined creatures  
march with hunger towards rotten snacks.  
Dirt's secret world survives in semi-darkness.

Corrugated walls, rusting-red and brown. Drips  
where rain had been, left tracks as if guiding  
to the next place. A dark, dank, mud-bed  
suitable for long soft round things  
to slither and slide through eyes now closed.  
Still focused on nightmare dreams, gone before.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **Beach Babe**

Rippled by rolling heart-waves,  
inexorably advancing -  
constantly,  
consistently -  
towards our Us.

This resurgence,  
pounding our shifting shores,  
destroying sandy barriers...

A rapid relentless tide,  
washing,  
wiping  
our beaches clean  
to start anew...

Far too strong and  
absolutely,  
positively,  
undeniably  
irresistible.

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## **Blue Moon**

The wavering moon

Coaxes lines of poetry

From an uncertain heart

Frances Macaulay Forde

## Call Waiting

I killed you!  
I took away your power to insult.  
    Never again will your strident,  
    insistent beeping  
intrude on intimacies between friends.

No. I struck you off.  
I pressed the buttons that devoured you.  
I ended your rein of terror.  
Then Pauline rang  
'A new baby? Wond....'  
Beep - Beep! Beep - Beep!

You didn't die!  
From happy jubilation  
brain switches,  
buttons pressed,  
retreating "Call me back."  
I lost the war.

I don't blame Pauline.  
Rudeness is forgiven under pressure  
from the mighty "I wonder who it is? "  
Someday I'll explain  
and continue my campaign  
for courtesy.  
I died a little.

Aren't I important too?

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### **Cinquain - No 1 - Trust**

I have  
taken your words  
folded both hands over  
then held them tightly to my heart.  
Have you?

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## **Cinquain - No 2 - Trust**

Don't  
let me drown  
in a cruel sea without  
that life raft of honesty.  
Promise?

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### **Cinquain - No 3 - No Love**

You glow  
with love for me.  
Accepting all I give,  
never questioning if I love.  
I don't.

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### **Cinquain - No 4 - I Love**

Tears fall  
like rivers of  
pain. Rejection will hurt.  
Just touch him and say goodbye to  
your heart.

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### **Cinquain - No 5 - Love Me**

It glows.  
The safe ribbon  
of light, meandering  
on toward home. But my path was  
unlit.

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### **Cinquain - No 6 - Unloved**

She lay  
prostrate. Waiting.  
Will he stay a while when  
their beating hearts have calmed down?  
Never.

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## Cockatoo Chorus

"We'll meet in the eucalypts down by the lake.  
Discussion is needed - you have to partake! "  
Black clouds flew from the oval, park and golf club  
to raucously weigh down trees out in the scrub.  
"Juicy larvae and insects prove harder to find  
all the spraying and logging - ground being mined  
has taken our homes, our gathering sites.  
Together, in numbers we'll fly up for our rights."

From once sacred ground now suburbs, they flew.  
From gum-tree nesting hollows, so precious and few  
hundreds gathered early, in loud morning debate -  
the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo parrot's fate.  
Discussed at great length in the eucalypt trees  
for young; less food, meant less ability to feed.  
"Stop clearing, spraying - playing with our lives!  
If we die, what hope have you got, to survive? "

Frances Macaulay Forde

## Computer Messenger

Banter that backfired because  
literal interpretations got lost  
in considered connotations,  
(re-read a thousand times)  
of what went way-back-when...

Juxtaposition of judgements.  
Hastily harnessed how-comes?  
Stopping me still, seriously!  
Making me question us both.

My passionate banshee tears  
initiated by tactile responses  
to words type-tapped carefully.  
Sometimes in casual jest  
to test my reactions?

Is it natural to anticipate  
disaster - dismissal and defend?  
Not normally for me - I search  
for more of your positive essence,  
confirmation of my impressions.

I want you - all of you - now!  
Every nuance of normality  
shared secretly, sensually...  
But other stuff too - thoughts,  
reasons, why you do what you do...

I can't 'see' the whole of you  
touch your skin - breath you in.  
Sense your hands on my breasts  
holding me, stroking me softly.  
I want - I need - I crave to.

Insecurity inserts itself  
firmly forcing doubt-feelings  
to well and grow without witness,  
until you answer; you calm; you claim,

cover my heart and soul with caring.  
Linger in my love, lay there  
until we're both sweetly exhausted  
by this power, this perpetual passion

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## Doors Closing

How often has the door closed  
on opportunity for me?  
How many times have I shut it?

'Well, open it again.' You say.  
Not so easy when it's wedged  
with prejudice, locked with lies

about your femininity,  
jammed with judicial errors....  
I am an opportunist and

I do truly believe as one  
door closes, another - you know...  
But sometimes, for my sanity

I take the easy way out. My  
heart's the same. I'm not brave in  
letting that door stand ajar, the

solid barrier protecting  
my comfort zone... A jack-hammer  
wouldn't be heard now! I'm deaf to

desire and numb to need. Wrap the  
woollen blanket 'round my feelings,  
keep me warm, lock the door, pocket

the key - work and love in secret.

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## **Eros Strikes Again!**

Valentine's Day. You  
pierced me with the past.  
Forced me to recall  
feelings suppressed...  
and reminded me  
of my ability to love...

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## Exploring Possibilities

Memories,  
cling-film wrapped  
fresh  
and clean for whenever.  
Weighted  
with life's necessities,  
baggage  
that I cannot leave behind.  
Snap on my seat belt (I'm not a good traveller)  
and ask the flight attendant 'When do we arrive? '

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## **Five minutes ago...**

you toddled up  
slapped my face  
stumbling  
grumbling  
running race  
football jumper  
muddy shoes  
teeth that loosened  
legs that grew  
homemade bow  
brand new shoes  
not worn-out yet  
underdaks the ones  
that stretched  
cotton socks  
jeans that fit  
it seems 5 minutes  
where did you go?

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### Haiku - Freeways 1 to 3.

1. cars storm-trooper lined  
ants determined migration  
towards work or play
  
2. radios thundering  
constantly changing tempo  
sudden silence awes
  
3. don't break formation  
deviate at personal risk  
incur road rage storm

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## **Haiku - Writer**

the wavering moon  
coaxes lines of poetry  
through uncertain dreams

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## **Hands Free Cancer**

How stupid do you feel  
standing there, talking to yourself?

Immaculately dressed,  
the epitome of elegance.

Power stance with eyes distant,  
he breathes money!

How stupid does he look emphasizing  
his point to the argumentative air?

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## **High Court Question**

How can money recompense  
all those stolen years?

Memories don't have a price.

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## **Husbands**

Not all bamboo are runners,  
some quite happily remain  
exactly where you put them.

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## **I Know You**

I know you.  
We have loved before.  
We have explored  
each other's landscapes  
then visited different shores.

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## **Ideal Meal**

An irresistible,  
delicious, gluttony -  
consuming  
act of lust.

Licking, tasting, biting,  
all senses uniting -  
savouring  
my life.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **Image**

White bird flickers

across a gray sky.

Monochrome beauty

before the storm dies.

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## **Instinct**

There's no place for love at this time in my life.  
I envy those who achieve the balance of need.

Opportunities ignored in the interest of  
safe-ness, flying toward my ability's

determined focus. Children gone in their own  
living-dreams direction, their lessons learnt

and heeded. My job's complete. Is this my way  
of avoiding the 'empty nest' syndrome? Gath'ring

materials for comfort as I settle to old age?

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **Irish Lourdes**

Where it is said 'Our Lady appeared ' to Knock faithful,  
enterprising vendors parade their wares on sidewalks.  
You'll find a large range of rosary beads  
hanging in silent prayer - necklaces of every hue  
to match any outfit you choose – posing for photos.

1 hour processing while you worship, Extra film,  
Holy Water Bottles in the shape of Mary,  
small enough to send home with the postcard  
or buy a granite headstone for Father, Son,  
ready-carved - off the rack, just in case

for those times when you are caught unawares...  
Plastic floral wreathes, colour matched, some  
have see-through domes to protect or preserve,  
all kinds of religious mugs, pens, cups, mouse mats...  
the soul wonders as eyes boggle in Knock shops.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **Is This the End of Faith?**

- 11.11am - 7th March 2003

amongst the threats  
(no regrets)  
Mesopotamia's verdant fields  
about to be trodden by US heels...

a break from balletic visuals  
three second take-off's  
while KittyHawk  
danced on the waves  
below

'Adam Faith has died  
at the age of 62'  
after a stage performance  
~ heart attack  
such a trooper  
parading...  
performing...

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## **Isradella**

Isradella waits  
for ghosts of lovers past  
to homogenize

Perfect recipes of want  
ingredients elusive  
beg materialize

Abundant beauty falls  
shorter than ideal  
too rarefied

Hope ever lives in one  
who strives for vision  
so eulogized

Reality proves tepid  
in life-dreams eye  
and Isradella cries

Disbelieve the sellers  
unattainable perfection  
and real-eyes

Love no longer exists  
the world's forgotten  
to individualize

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## **Lotto Life**

It unites us,  
this dream  
to have choices.  
Whether to work  
or laze,  
decide our futures  
instead of waiting  
for opportunity.

The universal language  
of need - not greed.

We've lost control  
caught up in the flow  
of magazine lifestyle.  
The one we desire  
and reality...

to walk through town  
- not asking the price,  
carrying the labels  
which define our success,  
- purchases we don't need.

It's universal  
the conviction that money  
will right all our wrongs  
and make the world spin  
in our direction.

When we buy a ticket  
we've planted the seed.  
The seed of our fantasies.

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## **McDaid's Folk Club**

We carefully stepped through the seated crowd,  
she smiled in surprised delight  
and pulled you down  
to whisper invitingly.

I watched the young guitarist finger-pick,  
thought about her possessive  
hand placed on  
your willing arm  
and felt sick.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## My Car

Red used to be my favourite colour.  
I'd just get Tinkerbelle (my 1983 Mitsubishi Colt)  
cruising nicely at sixty kilometres an hour  
then red.

I'd have to slow down.  
Pump the breaks.  
Change gears gingerly in case her clutch drops out...

An old girl now, she needs TLC...  
takes her time to build up speed,  
then I see red. (Or orange.)

Bugger!

But, once she's there (sixty K's) she sings like a bird.  
I think it reminds her of her youth.  
I've tried dressing her up (covering the rust) .  
The silvers don't match and I know she feels the shame.

The petrol pump makes her feel better.

Once I insert that nozzle,  
she almost smiles.  
Her seat greets me tenderly  
and we smoothly swing away,  
high on fumes.

Yesterday,  
a young man washed her windows.  
She sparkled and purred.

Yes. Red used to be my favourite colour.  
Now mottled shades of silver have loyal appeal!

Frances Macaulay Forde

## No Love for Valentine.

March 2003

Valentine's Day 2003 Hans Blix'  
will deliver his report to condemn or  
free a rebel country held to high ransom,  
ruthlessly sanctioned, surveilled and surrounded.

It's supposed to be the day we say who we  
love (or secretly admire) want and desire.  
A day for smiles - not hate and guided missile  
range - 93 miles! Colin Powell talks about

what they didn't do - how they didn't comply...  
(He seems uncomfortable with his soldier lot.)  
News TV says 'Action could be imminent,  
the second Weapons Inspectors leave Iraq.'

Think about that! Thousands who wait, prepare  
for, even expect death. North Koreans re-  
assemble their power plant and stand ready  
to defend against George Bush who says his Armed

Forces 'are second to none' and can prove it!  
Donald Rumsfeld 'has confidence that we 'can  
do whatever needs to be done...' But Tariq  
Aziz - Iraqi Diplomat with a cool

head declares 'we have not violated  
1441'. France vetoed, now Russia and  
China won't agree to protect neighbouring  
Turkey if there's a war... They've also applied

recently for oil licences along with  
all the rest of the world... 'Keep Britain Safe. Be  
alert but not alarmed.' No need for tape or  
plastic yet, though across the sea, every 'good

ol' boy' stocked up on water, food and batteries...  
Retail giants rub their hands as Mac's sets  
up next to Pizza Hut, in the sand. A news-  
paper carries a notice - 'US Used Car

Salesman required in the desert.' Seems that the  
liberators aim to stay a while - smile and  
saunter armed to the teeth. Shannon protestors  
gathered to demonstrate against the US

Air Force making our space a target. Naked  
solidarity for peace - against a war  
that hasn't happened yet... Give it time! 6'  
6" soldiers wander empty airport halls

at Heathrow and Gatwick. Stanstead has joined  
the guarded group and Windsor wonders what's  
going on... People in the street ask what to  
do if 'something happens'. I don't know - do you?

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## **Photographs**

Though  
my skill is micro  
you have shown me  
the beauty  
of landscapes.

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## **Rail Tales**

parallel bars ride the sand  
silver bullet steered by hand  
expressed in kilometre speed  
human flotsam to concrete greed

Frances Macaulay Forde

## Senses

hear

tender words  
questions answers  
your current reality

see

furtive glance  
visual dance  
clever hands and fingers

touch

tentative press  
to shy flesh  
still clothed in other loves

smell

breathe you in  
where've you been  
through all my loves and life

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## **Tanka - Mature-Age**

Autumn reflecting  
Springtime opportunities  
before Winter ends.  
Regret to soon pass away  
without youth-dreams realized

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## **Tanka - Passion**

Heat melts the shy face  
deep inside the soul.  
Gentle wind blowing.  
Tinder touch of gentle hand  
brings calm to tempest therein.

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## **Tanka - Rain**

Heavy metal skies.  
Cloud's pregnant waiting time.  
Releasing their juice,  
shards of silver arrows fall.  
Running rivers of relief.

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## **The Bar of Grief**

Upturned bottles once lined with military order  
on dusty, termite-rotten shelves. Fingerprints,  
clear spaces of use, caught by the shafts of daylight  
through pin-holes where nails have been.

A puddle of spilt pain, beneath an upturned bench.  
Life, wasted in boozy stench lies forgotten,  
punished for excess, while determined creatures  
march with hunger towards rotten snacks.  
Dirt's secret world survives in semi-darkness.

Corrugated walls, rushing-red and brown. Drips  
where rain had been, left tracks as if guiding  
to the next place. A dark, dank, mud-bed  
suitable for long soft round things  
to slither and slide through eyes now closed.  
Still focussed on nightmare dreams, gone before.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **The Boffin**

bookshops are like lovers  
they numb in black & white  
then seduce you with colour

titillate and tempt your soul  
until you finally let go  
find the courage to close

the book ~ pages which leave  
you gasping ~ the breath of air  
on your face feels like a slap

This poem WON 3RD PRIZE in the  
"Inner City Life" Literary Competition 2004'  
December 2004 - NSW Writers Centre.

Frances Macaulay Forde

## **The Return of Rainbows**

Driving down Alexander,  
(early morning rush hour)  
lecture on documentary film.  
Eager for knowledge, I notes  
low, broad bands of colour  
spanning the sky above Uni.  
Ignoring the grey clouds,  
I welcomed the return  
of rainbows to my life.

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## **The Table**

completely round and fruit-laden  
one side decorated  
myriad colors  
swirling  
curling  
bright confusion  
represented by rainbows

hopeful imagination must present  
determined contrast  
an empty plane  
public persona  
secrets kept beneath  
a varnished empty half-surface

waiting for confirmation of ability  
struggling academia  
eating knowledge  
chewing  
tasting  
swallowing slowly  
production increases  
as confidence releases unique recipes

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## **Traveller**

train conversations drift  
snippets of gossip  
electronic reassurance  
folded into the seat  
it's safer to stare  
at your own reflection

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## **Venables Dropped**

March 2003

Leeds United  
has managed  
to stop the war  
for less than two  
missile minutes...

Frances Macaulay Forde

## Website Walking

When keyboard-bashing signs and space,  
I seldom see a familiar  
face. Though it's possible now to  
meet, see, hear, your dream (but not touch)

drift mouse o'er icons - double click.  
Life-secrets revealed through Window  
layers. Welcome to my website!  
Cerebral sex, flirting on-line,

erases the risk of truth. Be  
anyone for everyone on  
the safe World Wide Web of deceit.  
Construct a distant mirage for

the lonely, scared, ugly, who  
can't fit the ideal, to complete.  
Click here - Click where? Comment. E-mail.  
Enter my world and 'know' me there!

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