

Poetry Series

Jane Brunton
- poems -

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Jane Brunton(1942)

Many of my poems were inspired when I lived in Ecuador, South America for ten years (1990 to 2000.) I had never written poetry before but the sheer wonder and beauty of that country was a source of sensory stimulation compelling me to write.

After languishing in a government job for over 20 years I now free-lance for a local paper and have a monthly column on creativity.

Other interests include sculpting in clay, fibre art, tai chi, yoga and gardening.

A Bud□

A bud! What joy! Fulfillment of life's purpose.
The never ending circle of life and death and life.

The bud is resolute.
Clinging fast to the branch; neither growing nor shriveling.

Is she opening? Is there a hint of pink under that brown shell?
But no. The promising pink is tinged with brown, and wrinkled.

Next evening she is lying on the soil of the pot.
Inside she is rotten to the core, putrid and black.

A broken promise, a tease, a cliffhanger no more.

Jane Brunton

Cricket

Spiky cacti sprout cloth flowers of purple, pink and orange wool. Bushes bear sequined, bell shaped, skirt flowers. It's laundry day.

Home-bound sheep hurriedly crop their last bite of the polluted provender masquerading as wayside grass.

A scrawny lame dog ambles by with nose to the ground. I throw bread slice by slice from the clouded window. A crust flies over the precipice. I close my eyes at the thought of the animal plunging to his death in search of it.

The smell of diesel fumes hangs heavy and we can neither come nor go. Cars have arrived from the direction of Puyo creating a hopeless snarl on this one lane open to traffic.

Night rushes quickly in and spoons us into a bowl of purple jello with cherry tail lights and pineapple headlights. Whip cream clouds ride below the setting sun.

Blackness now and we are finally moving. Mercifully we can no longer see where death awaits us inches away.

We rush past cool-blue fishbowl rooms as swim with red velvet chairs and gilt tables.

Finally we reach humid Puyo and our hotel. During the night I awake to a cell phone imitating a cricket.

Or is it a cricket imitating a cell phone?

Jane Brunton

Dead Things

What's he doing at the side of the road?
He's sleeping In his matted tatted fur,
Weathered leather and crushed bone.
Sleep on squashed squirrel

Tail waving like a pennant at the passing cars.

Jane Brunton

Did She Scream As She Fell?

Cocoon-like, she clings to the very tip of life. She clings through the gentle spring rain that swells her tender body till it bursts its crisp confine. Then she opens like a tiny green fist and blinks in the spring sunshine.

She gathers strength and toughness and when the autumn comes, unafraid, she turns her ruddy face into the wind, proud of her new clothes. Buffeted, she clings stubbornly to life, refusing to be torn away by the whim of the wind, but her strength is sapped as the tree draws into itself. Rain and hail and savage winds tatter her gaudy raiment but still she clings, hanging by a filament till one day her tenuous grip gives way.

Did she scream as she fell?

The newly fallen are still enjoying the adventure. Children gather them in heaps and burrow their faces into them, drinking in their musky scent. The fallen do not seem to notice the fate of those who have gone before. As the days cool her companions curl in on themselves for protection from the chill wind.

Ah the Wind. She gathers handfuls of their crisp bodies and tosses them about like toys. They are powerless in the face of her playfulness or rage.

Some come to rest in quiet corners where they sleep, slowly fermenting. Others land on thoroughfares and are trampled by boots and wheels. They are grey now and brown. They are soggy from the rain. Worse yet, some are combed from the earth where they lay, methodically gathered into piles and relegated to the fires of hell.

Did she scream as she burned?

Jane Brunton

Fatima

The animals and birds seem to exist only in books now.
Or were they someone's fantastic imaginings – the ravings of a mad man?
The rivers and woods are as silent as my book of colored pictures.

Or are the creatures trembling somewhere hidden from OUR cruel fangs?

God made a big mistake giving us dominion over these gentle things.

If in fact they did exist.

If in fact did He.

Jane Brunton

Frozen Moment

The world is a frigid waiting room of pebbled glass.
We make the chipping chopping sounds of an ice-storm morn.

Quick-frozen cars and trucks leave a tinkling trail from their frost-fringed fender skirts.
Plumes of warming cars blow black holes in the frigid air.

Brittle branches clad in crystal hide their humbled heads in snow.
Crybaby willows shed chandelier tears.

Bearded STOP signs scare me for I can't.
But the inscrutable fields are a pristine page on which to write spring's promise

February 2003

Jane Brunton

It's Summer

It's summer.
Dogs barking in closed cars.

It's summer.
Blisters from your new sandals.

It's summer.
Flabby asses eating their shorts.

It's summer.

Jane Brunton

Out Of Alausi

Oh Mountain! You've a froth of cloud pinned to your voluminous green lap like a snow-white hanky pinned to a lady's skirt

The mountains are rounded like a giants cast-off hats; here banded by straw huts; there adorned with cows.

Just out of Alausi, Indians in red ponchos are jammed into truck beds like strawberries in a crate. The lion-mountains are clothed in yellow velvet, panting in the drought.

The road is walled at places by dried mud cliffs.

Smoky Indians descend the bus at remote spots. No sign of trail nor hut, just endless crags, roiling cauldrons of trapped clouds, gorges and scrub.

Where are they going?

A ragged boy with twice-too-long sleeves flaps by like a fledgling condor.

Roadside bushes, color of clay, gasp under their dusty crusts, tremble to free themselves and curse their luck.

Stone- faced outcroppings like bald, old men sport grass eyebrows and grey bromeliad beards.

I have deftly avoided seat mates till now; small boys with stale shit clinging in the crotches of their pants wearing high tech, falsified toe-jam shoes, fat old farmers with unlikely cowboy hats and Indian ladies with leaking babies.

But now I have a sniffing lady who primly picks beans from a small plastic bag. Her thumb and forefinger are perfectly curved pincers. The remaining digits fan out like a grand dame's. She doesn't offer me any.

Jane Brunton

Rape

The valley, green and flat as a pool table, stretches in the protective embrace of a jealous mountain. Like a ripe young woman she is too beautiful to last. Even the craggy arms of her mountain lover cannot stay the ravages of man.

He will slice through those arms and rape her flower-filled womb. From the rape will issue the children, Rock, Sand and Mud who betray her.

The giant spiders of communication and light will string their unsightly webs from prickly poles. Deep cuts of asphalt and cement will scar her face like a razor wielded by a mad man.

Her eye-like pools will become dry sockets unable even to weep. Her mouth will belch poisons and her nostrils become encrusted with grime. Her hairline of silky trees will recede, torn from the very roots. Her ears will long for birdsong but hear only buzz saw.

When they've stolen her beauty they will tire of her, as all men do, and leave her dying, alone and forgotten.

But in her darkest night, gentle rains will wash her clean. Dawn will see the tender vines begin their climb across her bruised face, smoothing sharp edges, healing her scars.

She, Mother, will survive us all.

Jane Brunton

The Condor's Back

Clouds at my feet; the condors back glistens in the misted light below. We glide,
he and I, through the steaming cauldron, oblivious to the villages hidden below.

Far beneath me slides your disappearing majesty. Sad, solitary one; your mate's
the victim of Indian sacrifice. Your children are in zoos. Hated enemy of the
poor, whose scrawny sheep you carry off. The enveloping mists obscure you like
a shroud.

(near Puyo Ecuador, 1998)

Jane Brunton

The Thaw

Overhead-passes spit contemptuously at passing cars.
Power lines emerge from dripping silver cocoons.

Black bark peeks through the ice like worn silver plate.
Pine trees, released of their white cargo lift up their arms like schoolboys at recess.

Winter's dirty secrets are revealed.

February 2003

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Union

The man ploughs his field and sows his abundant seed into the furrow's depth

From this union of man and earth are born their edible children

The man gives the mother nothing but dung and water
Somehow she survives and rouses her exhausted womb again and again to bring
forth fruit

She feeds at times on the rotting bodies of her progeny and is satisfied

She waits

The man is old and stooped now. Soon he will die. There will be other men to
plant their seed in her warm belly but all will become hers in time.

Totally and forever.

Near Alausi, Ecuador 1998

Jane Brunton