

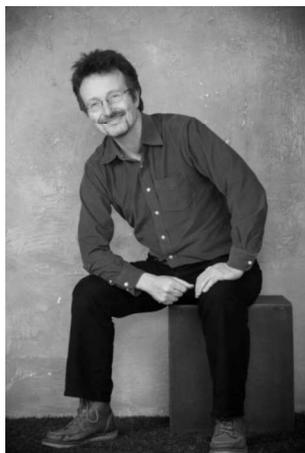
The Curious Dance Between Life and Death

Martin Dean

Martin Dean is a prolific poet who draws on his experience as an acupuncturist and observer of life to produce work which continually challenges his boundaries.

Martin's break in poetry came through the DIY Poets collective, a group which encourages writers to take their work to the stage and to get it published. His poetry has been published in various anthologies and magazines, and he is a regular contributor to the Nottingham open mic poetry scene. In 2017 he was fortunate to be official poet to the grave re-dedication ceremony of Victorian photographer Robert Howlett.

Although a Londoner by birth he now lives in Nottingham, a UNESCO designated City of Literature.



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Death

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Jack's Last Journey

Golden rays pierced the slats, streaking the machine as it pinged its heartsong. Jack's chest rose and fell to the rhythm of his past. Sweat gathered and streaked; voices called his name. My mouth grew dry as shadows lengthened. I awoke to the absolute stillness of the night. All hush.

Brick Wall

If you were an X-ray you'd scan
the shadows of my heart, if you were an eye you
would see how my lips bleed each time I say these words.
If you were a mouth you'd answer my prayers.
To your reddish bones and your plaster skin I would
confess my all. I am smitten by the way
the sun dapples your coat like a clouded sky.

But in truth I do not know what is mortar-bound
beneath your hard shell or cemented
within the spaces between your ribs, so today,

I'll say nothing.

Icarus of the Rope

Observe in finger gnawing cold
Sabrina seized of winter ice
Where solo skater pirouettes her large
And graceful figure eight
Frozen bubbles slipping from her
Pretty pretty pearly mouth
And red hat like a rosebud waits to bloom.

Echoed clack of wood on wood
Rum and song to warm the bones
The huddled scarf of faces cheer
As skittles fall upon the ice
Bent backs under bundled wood
Pies for sale and whispered threats
A whistle calls a dog to heel
And red hat like a rosebud blooms.

Raise your head and you will see
The rope that bridges church and field
And way below a fishing boat
Locked in ice and gripped in awe
As flying man in black and grey
Slips into place upon his stage
And offers to the gathered crowds
His 'tricks and trades upon the rope'.

Shots rebound around the towers
And open ears of Shrewsbury
Smoking pistol in each hand he scales the rope
A voice is heard to offer that
'He must be made of spirit and gristle', a trumpet sounds
And red hat whirls and spins her way amongst the
churning sea of heads.

Open jawed and fists clenched tight
The crowd is one as Icarus
Above their heads is seen to hang