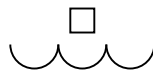


*Alpine Prospect with Castle, River & Shrine*

*Landscapes  
of the  
Heart*

*Collected Poems  
1970 – 2019*

*Diana Bayley*



**Bywater Press**  
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Sample

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*For Two Men*

~ ~ ~ ~

*One who returned  
and brought back my words*

&

*One who gave me  
space and time to write them*

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## Preface

Lost worlds, lost gardens and lost love are the over-arching motifs in *Landscapes of the Heart*. Many of the poems herein contrast the delight of being surrounded by love and beauty in a Paradise Garden with the crushing anguish that can submerge body and spirit when one is shut out of this place of heart's desire – anguish which only increases as one comes to understand that in this life the gods have forever closed its gates against you.

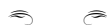
I believe one of the primary psychological conditions underlying human experience is that of Paradise Lost. Only consider – our first experience of being alive in this world comes when we are brutally ejected from the warmth and safety of the womb; thereafter it is as inevitable and certain as life's breath that most of us, whether early in life as a child, or later as an adult, will again find ourselves denied access to some ideal place of perfect felicity. Perhaps this place vanishes with childhood's end, or circumstances remove you far from it, thereby severing you from your heart's dearest love. . . .

Hence quite a few poems in this volume relate the struggles of a protagonist – whether a 'real' person or its soul or ghost – to survive in a world outside one's perfect environment, and the soul's attempts to confound Fate by hazarding a journey or quest into the unknown to seek this garden abode once more – that singular place we always immediately recognize as our heart's true home.

Through the days of my life, many of the byways I have followed have led me a-wandering, lost, through desert wastes, miry swamps, thickets of briars and tangled woods, along barely discernable trails over rocky mountain chains – even to sailing in frail barques over tumultuous seas. Nevertheless at times Lady Fortune, relenting, would set my feet on unexpected paths leading me through sunlit, flower-enameled clearings where crystal streams sparkled; but as an adult, whenever I walk in rainbow meadows filled with bird song and dancing butterflies, I am ever conscious I only need pass a stand of firs, turn a corner and in an eye-blink the vista may change to one of dark clouds piled over dense forests where predatory beasts roam.

The poems in *Landscapes of the Heart* are those I have brought back from a lifetime of exploring these perilous and exquisite lands, countries that lie just beneath the surface of our conscious minds and are profoundly a part of each of us. These places are glimpsed when we dream, whether the dreams emerge in night's sleep hours or drift to the edges of thought in daylight. These are the eternal lands of heart's delight and enchantment, forever vanishing from our sight yet near as the beating heart in each of us.

All manner of folk may be encountered in these lands – dwarves, sorcerers



and wise women, princesses in disguise, high nobles and poor peasants, the faerie races, even certain of the old gods who yet walk among us in dreams. As well, people once known who have disappeared from one's life are seen, or who, much loved, are now dead and forever lost . . . at times one might even be shocked by meeting an aspect of your very self, coming toward you or moving away.

Strange, beautiful and deadly animals, birds, and other creatures inhabit these regions as well, and therein one walks beneath unknown trees through scenes oddly familiar and almost remembered, but always along tracks never noticed in one's mundane life. Yet these half-hid byways must be ventured, or our souls starve, for all our life we seek – consciously or unconsciously – the one road that will lead us to our own rightful dwelling place. It is only there a human soul's inborn restlessness will be stilled and peace found at last – and if one is denied this place in 'real' life, glimpsing a vision of it in the Never-Never can, at least briefly, mitigate the despair inevitably rising from knowledge of our mortal condition.

**The poems in this book are strongly rooted in three stylistic traditions:** old English, Scots and Welsh ballads; English poetry composed from the age of the Tudors through the Romantic era and into the decades-long reign of Victoria; and in the myths and legends from the times of the early Celts and Greeks and on to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the great European and British collectors of fairy and folk tales began recording the old narratives and their later variants.

As a committed artist as well as a poet and a once-upon-a-time dancer, various periods in art and music often provide points of reference; sometimes a specific piece of music or a painting inspires an entire piece. Few end rhymes are found here, nor are traditional verse forms. Instead I employ lines longer than usual in English poetry, and manipulate syntax, rhythm and internal rhyme in my own quirky manner. Such devices, however, always and only serve the main impetus of the poems, which for me is the telling of stories.

**Three collections of poems are included in this volume,** each expressive of a different primary theme:

*Evocations & Elegies:* descriptive reminiscences of seasons, places, people and creatures that have become lost to me or vanished entirely from the earth, along with several scenarios concerning the human predicament and the possible future of our race.

*Figures in a Dream, Voices on the Wind:* the curtain shrouding bygone times parts to reveal fragmented glimpses into lives and events that 'might have been'

in eras distant from ours, from the time of the fabled Golden Age, Greek and Celtic myth, and periods in European history from the Medieval through the Renaissance and the Second World War.

*The Lost Heart – Wayfarings:* the poems in this final section chart the evolving aspects of love – that diamond-complex topic with an infinity of facets reflecting both moods and physical actions. Here is love found, love lost, love bitter and biting, love wry and whimsical, love regained, love eternal – and even after so many poems on the topic I still haven't come to the end of it. How could I? It is the essential foundation of our being, along with the never-ending quest for the lost Paradise Garden.

The stories told in these poems often occur in mere moments, while others take the protagonist – whether ghost or flesh-and-blood human – journeying for days or years in lost kingdoms of the world, or through fantastic dreamscapes – even along pathways leading across the starry heavens . . . all places waiting to be discovered in the enchanted countries lying within *Landscapes of the Heart*.

*Djana Bayley*

Lynnwood

October, 2019



*Evocations & Elegies*

Sample

# The Faery Isles

with Deepest Respects to Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The tall-masted ship crests the swell . . . suddenly,  
through thick-glazed, fogged port-holes, rising under  
the western wind, mist shrouded glass-green islands  
emerge – soft rounded hills sliced by knifing cliffs  
fringed below in frothed cream-lace waves crashing over  
giant-flung boulders are briefly glimpsed behind  
slashing sweeps of rain, fountaining arctic ocean  
spume and obscuring vapor smoke of northern  
cloud swirled by polar-ice winds . . . moments later,  
the ship pitches, slides deep into a yawning,  
steep-walled abyss of cascading, marrow-cold,  
pewter-green water – the islands disappear . . .  
to be continually lost, seldomer  
discovered through all Antiquity's pastel  
washed blue-green, rose-gold primavera years,  
cold, dark epochs Mediæval of iron cruel  
ermine, royal purple, ebon satin, and  
blood-shot Renaissance gilt brocaded, jewel  
glittering decades. Even in distant  
star-brilliant aeons before fable, rare the  
barques that come intact through these high-mounting,  
sickeningly disintegrating seas,  
the lancing rain, sword slicing winds, ice-spear  
frost, to sail at last, battered, proud, into . . .  
a looking-glass harbor of translucent  
aquamarine mirroring lofty bluffs topped  
with high-towered castles, their slim, blade-point

spires rising into crystal sharp, wind rinsed  
skies where untarnished sunlight dazzles sparks from  
metal-capped turrets, gilt weather vanes, wrought

filigree balconies and window surrounds,  
and casts a dancing shimmer of rainbow  
prisms across mica-infused, silver-white walls.

Silken emerald, sapphire, ruby, topaz  
pennons stitched with griffins, lions, eagles,  
yales, unicorns unfurl, flutter and snap

in a brisk boreal breeze as triumphant  
paean rings from burnished, uplifted throats of  
banner-hung brass, bronze, golden trumpets and

echoes to the frost-blue heaven that deflects  
the notes back in platinum showers to spill  
over turrets, roofs, ramparts of each bright

citadel and the water-imaged ship,  
bass and treble staves shattering on the  
mirror-silvered bay and arrowing up

anew in a million fractured notes to  
cloudless empyrean where, falling back, the sound  
reverberates fainter, sweeter again –  
again –  
and finally fainter fading,  
echoes once more fainter, sweeter still.

## Monterey Fog

Through this misty morning fog horns hooting on  
cloud-drowned Puget Sound brings back remembrance of  
childhood's lost-in-long-ago Monterey days. . . .

A narrow, high-ceiling bedroom, warped  
linoleum floor, faded wallpaper, creaky,  
sagging springs on metal railed bed in

a paint peeling, gingerbread cottage  
holding a half-century's secrets beneath  
crowding pines rooted in encroaching dunes . . .

for hours late and early the child  
would lie awake in her warm nest in this  
chill room listening to deep bass fog horns

sounding across the gray ocean's crashing surf,  
picturing with exact, thrill-delicious terror  
huge sea dragons talking each to each and

plunging scaled, long-tailed shapes through vast sea  
kingdoms . . . she begins inventing a series  
of labyrinthine tales to fit the rumbled

conversations and by vacation's end did  
not want to depart – all the hollow-toned  
monsters had become her dearest companions.

*Figures in a Dream,  
Voices on the Wind*



## Three Winds

A woman rests on stone bench of pillar-enclosed  
courtyard in spring, hands clasped on lap of white robe . . .

Boreas gusts cool breaths from the north, tearing  
petals from blossoming plums, scattering them  
across paving stones and shallow pool where they  
form broken pink mosaics on the rippled  
surface . . . a goldfinch flutters from branch to  
branch, pecking buds, brushed enamel gold-gilt wing bands  
flashing – a sword slices white lightning across  
the woman's mind . . . never will he bide next  
to her again and share some transient joy:  
color of a bird's wing – rising sun's slow spill  
of pale honey over sharp limestone crags.

A summer night – the woman descends steep steps,  
sits on marble terrace balustrade . . . Notus  
puffs soft south breezes across gentle sea swells,  
diffuses twining jasmine's scent, sets thin pine  
needle shadows trembling in the ghost light  
cast from a silver-white moon ship rocking west  
whiles glowing, spray-plumed star clouds swirl mystic  
calligraphies across an ebon firmament . . .  
he has left – gone so distant far if she  
sailed leagues across vast oceans, and walked

earth's pathways years through desert, forest and  
mountain till feet bled and hair greyed, still she  
would not arrive the faint track to his dwelling.

One gold-infused autumn blue afternoon,  
the woman meditates on crumbling cliff top  
near sheer, heart-stopping drop . . . wind gods jostle and  
contest from every quarter, contrary airs  
ruffling waves below – to, fro, crosswise on  
water the same dark blue his eyes . . . if she stands,  
easy to let the unchancy winds blow her  
where they list . . . if one pushed her to edge and  
over, the lead weighing her heart's core would sink  
her quick as stone – no more need she lie  
wakeful and weeping, or trouble the gods with  
vain plaints. She rises, paces back, turns, faces  
west – abruptly the wind veers, Eurus pressing strong  
from the east against her spine . . . she moves forward –  
fast, faster – runs straight into air over  
the sea . . . as her body plummets, her head fills  
with an enormous, pulsing white-gold sun –  
bursting,  
its radiance instantly winks out.

## Two Figures in Moonlight

sketch after a lost Caspar David Friedrich painting

May midnight – a full moon veiled by thin cloud haze.  
Two figures stand by a dark mere, its mirror

surface shivering from least air breath that fragments  
moon's reflected orb into silvery splinters

and wanders, sighing, through serried ranks of fringing  
reeds. A hidden, black-crowned heron voices three harsh  
staccato calls then falls silent.

A raised, flat-topped rock – the woman sits, gathering  
summer weave cloak close – the man's hand comes down, grips

her shoulder hard, pressing into bone. All that is  
imagined of heart-shaking desire joined with shared

laughter to ward against parting's approaching  
shadow has already passed between these two . . .

one star-blazed night in their canopied bed, a child  
has been seeded . . . this dawn he leaves on service sworn

an Alamann king, leaving her torn asunder  
before the birth, and him forever riding  
away from his heart's desire.

*The Lost Heart – Wayfaring*

# Heartbreak

Funny about a heart's breaking –  
I thought it would happen once with  
a tearing, ripping kind of hollow  
crunch, and afterward, for years, one  
would be left sweeping knife-slicing  
shards and needle-stabbing splinters  
with broom into pan – left-over  
detritus of that inconvenient  
throbbing organ which then, mortally  
wounded, would soon prove – one hoped –  
a hollow shell and quite utterly *dead*.

Instead I find, dismayed, the traitor  
heart, phoenix-like, rebirths itself  
after every crisis of longing  
and grief, creating itself whole  
once more in a burst of gut-igniting,  
entail-burning orange bitter flame  
that it might, at some *useless* random  
memory's prick, fracture afresh –  
jagged fragments flying everywhere,  
sharp pieces needing to be swept up,  
tossed in dust-bin all over again.

## The Raveled Shift

Golden threads of longing, silver threads of grief  
streak the fabric of my life. Daylight's swift dropping  
shuttle of rayed hours looms and infills over-  
under the shining silver and gold fillet strips,  
concealing them beneath a complex tissue of  
thoughts, acts, syntax. Comes black night, the twists and tendrils  
of day's cloth unstring back to open webbing of  
thinnest metal-glinting filaments. Clad in  
this flimsy spider-gauze I wander dark vaulted  
tunnels, tight-slit windowless corridors, climb  
up, down Piranesian stairs cut off mid-air,  
and confront at every level and turn closed doors –  
iron bolts, hasps, hinges, straps, studs, fierce locks – always  
seeking one rimmed in hair's-breadth of gold I know will  
open into a fire-lit room: bay windows  
diamond paned, some inset with stained glass medallion  
shields or painted Gothic-lettered Latin mottoes,  
book-lined walls, carpet of a thousand twining  
Persian flowers before carved, columned fireplace  
and mantel where, ensconced in high-back brocaded  
armchair, you sit, reading. At sudden, slight draft you  
glance up, then after marking place you close book, and  
your blue eyes looking direct at me, you smile.

One night, I stumble on a door outlined in a  
pulsing gold dazzle, without knob or latch. It

resists push, but I pound and pound, breaking nails,  
running splinters in fingers, bruising wrists till at  
last it grudges open – but instant my foot  
crosses threshold every gold spark extinguishes –  
and I am sitting up in my narrow bed, clutching  
my own bone-sharp elbows, shivering, not one  
raveled thread of shift left to clothe flesh exposed  
entirely naked in blade cold night air.