

Ghost Station

SUE HUBBARD is a freelance art critic, lecturer, novelist and poet. Her first poetry collection *Everything Begins with the Skin* was published by Enitharmon in 1994. Twice winner of the London Writers competition and a winner of a number of other major prizes, her work has appeared in *The Observer* and *The Independent*, as well as in numerous anthologies and been broadcast on Radio 4. The Poetry Society's first ever Public Art Poet she worked in Birmingham to create a series of site-specific poems in the jewellery quarter and was commissioned by the Arts Council and the BFI to write London's biggest public art poem, *Euridyce* at The South Bank. In 2002 she was writer-in-residence at The De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea.

A regular columnist for *The Independent* she has written for *Time Out*, *The New Statesman*, *The Independent on Sunday*, *Contemporary*, *Tate*, *Art Review* and *The RA* magazine. The founder member of *Writers inc.*, she also teaches creative writing at the Royal College of Art, has taught at Arvon and run workshops at Tate Britain.

Twenty of her poems appeared in *Oxford Poets 2000*, published by Carcanet, which won a PBS Recommendation.

Her first novel *Depth of Field* was published in spring 2000 by Dewi Lewis. John Berger called it "a remarkable first novel."

Other publications by the same author

Poetry

I dreamt I remembered what love was (Priapus Press, 1987)

Venetian Red (Hearing Eye, 1993)

Everything Begins with the Skin (Enitharmon, 1994)

Opening Spaces: poetry as Public Art (Poetry Society Publication, as part of Poetry Society's Poetry Places scheme funded by the 'Arts for Everyone' budget of the Arts Council of England's Lottery Department.)

Novel

Depth of Field (Dewi Lewis, 2000)

Ghost Station

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*For Tim
who could not make sense of it all*

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“And so we keep pressing on, trying to achieve it,
trying to hold it firmly in our simple hands,
in our overcrowded gaze, in our speechless hearts.”

RILKE

“Some have a great dream in life, and fall short of it.
Others have no dream, and also fall short of it.”

FERNANDO PESSOA

Stereotopica

Nude in Bathtub

After Bonnard

Between the edge of the afternoon
and dusk, between the bath's white
rim and the band of apricot light,
she bathed, each day, as if dreaming.

From the doorway he noted
her right foot hooked for balance
beneath the enamel lip, body
and water all one in a miasma

of mist, a haze of lavender blue.
Such intimacy. A woman, two walls,
a chequered floor, the small
curled dog basking in a pool

of sun reflected from the tiles
above the bath. Outside
the throbbing heat. So many times
he has drawn her, caught the obsessive

soaping of her small breasts,
compressed the crouched frame into
his picture space, the nervy movements
that hemmed in his life.

The house exudes her still,
breathes her from each sunlit corner,
secretes her lingering smell
from shelves of rosewood *armoires*,

and the folded silk *chemises*
he doesn't have the heart to touch.
And from the landing, his memory tricks,
as through the open door the smudged

floor glistens with silvered tracks,
her watered foot prints to and from
the tub where she floats in almond oil
deep in her sarcophagus of light.

Eurydice

I am not afraid as I descend,
step by step, leaving behind the salt wind
blowing up the corrugated river,

the damp city streets, their sodium glare
of rush-hour headlights pitted with pearls of rain;
for my eyes still reflect the half-remembered moon.

Already your face recedes beneath the station clock,
a damp smudge among the shadows
mirrored in the train's wet glass.

Will you forget me? Steel tracks lead you out
past cranes and crematoria,
boat yards and bike sheds, ruby shards

of Roman glass and wolf-bone mummified in mud,
the rows of curtained windows like eyelids heavy
with sleep, to the city's green edge.

Now I stop my ears with wax, hold fast
the memory of the song you once whispered in my ear.
Its echoes tangle like briars in my thick hair.

You turned to look . . .
Seconds fly past like birds.
My hands grow cold. I am ice and cloud.

This path unravels.
Deep in hidden rooms filled with dust
and sour-night breath the lost city is sleeping.

Above, the hurt sky is weeping,
soaked nightingales have ceased to sing.
Dusk has come too early. I am drowning in blue.

I dream of a green garden
where the sun feathers my face
like your once eager kiss.

Soon, soon I will climb
from this blackened earth
into the diffident light.