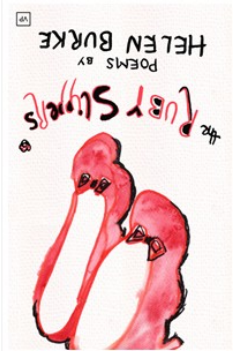


Helen Burke lives in York, England and has been writing and performing poetry for the last twenty years (and is the recipient of various awards for it).

Helen's latest book, *The Ruby Slippers*, is published by Valley Press and available at Amazon.co.uk



It came in a cheap box,
 but, the thing itself
 quite dear, I understand.
 It would take years, they made that clear to us.
 I was all for a nice geranium,
 but, the idea of longevity drew you.
 A little bit of immortality – and you were sold.
 My cigarette burned strangely bright
 as they unwrapped it, lovingly.
 Already I loved not to water it,
 foolishly thinking I was giving it a chance.
 It could live or die by its own devices,
 this stunted seer of the ages.
 The ash from my anger flops
 into its saucer daily, and it thrives,
 languid in its pebble-base
 like some weird and ancient crane.
 I tell you frankly, it makes me nervous.
 Other plants wither, if placed too near.
 My hands look pale beside it.
 It has roots that lie beyond time's grasp.
 It has seen too much and now it seeks revenge.

BONSAI

It seems a strange sort of night to any other.
 A night when friends can call to each other and remember,
 Hold each other close.
 We notice the moon is crying, tear by tear.
 The tears fall over the castle and down the hill.
 My eyes cannot see all of the picture, though the moon hangs low obligingly.
 Someone brings out the wine, we stir it with jasmine stems.
 The picture almost complete.
 Only my heart hangs back. Only my heart says wait.
 There are two moons tonight (the one watches the other).
 We bring nothing but ourselves to this silent space, why, the moon herself
 Has brought no more.
 She is a silver guardian, a panther that walks before and behind us.
 Which moon are we to believe?
 We follow the braids of her long black hair.
 We ascend star by star, following her panther stride.
 We take each separate moon as we find her – in the root of a tree,
 In the hoot of an owl, in the thumbprint of dawn.
 This crying moon is the moon in truth – and tonight as ever –
 The moon never lies.

THE MOON CRYING

Please recycle to a friend.

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Cover art by Helen Burke

Origami Poetry Project

THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT
 BY HELEN BURKE © 2011

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THE OTHER SIDE OF MIDNIGHT



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THE MIDNIGHT BOAT

The boat that bears your name, she is midnight.
 The boat that you my mother took – and yet
 I never saw it land.
 Only caught the sound of it – myself stood at the door.
 Heard the soft beat of a gull's wing as I held your hand,
 Then the rising into air – the two of you – the call of midnight's shore.
 The picture on the wall behind –
 A felucca setting sail – the gleam of the oars
 And the waves that bear your name.
 All that is, is beyond time and time itself – the key.
 Flying high towards the boat – you are the joyful gull
 And glad to go. I do not blame you – for such a boat that who
 Could bear to stay.
 The midnight boat stands watchful on the shore.
 The waves are quick as heartbeats and pull the oars around.
 See, the white gull rises.
 (Tomorrow - it's a lovely day.) And the midnight boat is gone.