

INTERVIEW ISSUE 12

{POETRY}

Poetry Editor Hezekiah Seretch with Anne Marie Corrigan

Anne Marie Corrigan is a captivating writer. You might want to segue to the three poems she shared with us this issue before imposing any context on the sideways interview she demurred to do. In the end, she kindly responded with infinite patience to, unquestionably, the most inane queries that could have possibly been posed. She is a great sport which calls to mind another fine quote, no doubt, Benjamin Franklin had also stolen, "She that lieth down with dogs shall rise up with Fleas."

HS: Your poetry appears to be distinctly eclectic. What Fleas has published here seems so diverse in form and style. Are you genuinely this complicated?

AMC: Sometimes I'm so twisted with complications, I'm a pretzel. Other times I'm as simple as a toddler who only needs to be fed, burped and put down for a nice long nap. Perhaps my poetry is eclectic because I rail against having to clarify the "genre" of art. Can't we be whoever or whatever we want to be at any given moment without having to put a name or a rigid box around it?

HS: Do you blame being Irish for your artistic afflictions or would you define the question as a microaggression?

*AMC: If you came from, *inter alia*; the land of saints and scholars, soft rolling mists, tricky leprechauns, malevolent, child-stealing fairies, irish stew, soda bread, the best butter in the world, The Wild Atlantic Way, Sheeps Head, Thin Lizzy, Yeats, G B Shaw, R B Sheridan, Daniel O Connell, Oisín, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, Grace O'Malley, Deirdre of the Sorrows, Heaney,*

Kavangh, Sean O'Casey, Beckett, and Doireann Ní Gríofa, (someone stop me please) you'd be artistically afflicted too.

HS: *"Fug." I have lived in a fog a good deal of my life, but I have never moved in large enough circles, other than holding tanks, to experience a fug. Do you often find yourself in fugs? Do you know when you're there? And, do you prefer to stay or go? More to the point, can you imagine the dearth or our existence if you hadn't employed the term in your first poem?*

AMC: Gosh, isn't it only delightful. Fug, fug, fug. I'm delighted you got a kick out of the word. There are some fugs that are pure cashmere. I want to wrap those fugs around my shoulders on a chilly evening. My favourite fug of all is (and it's a Proustian fug because we don't smoke anymore now, and if we do certainly not indoors, and if we did Dante would create a tenth level in hell where you are cursed to smoke yourself to a crisp wisp and start all over again) a pub in Ireland, circa 1989, where the smells of rising damp, whiskey, stout, smoke and *craic*, would warm the cockles of your soul. The fug in Vegas was not entirely to my taste.

HS: *Do you feel it important to struggle and deprive yourself of things to be truly inspired?*

AMC: *Au contraire*. You must avail of all the bounty that this beautiful world has to offer and then sing its praises from the rooftops.

HS: *In my youth, I used to macramé, it was more manly--you knotted cord with your bare hands. As it relates to 'Ripping Good Yarns' ...do you knit and could you elaborate?*

AMC: I tried to knit when I was younger and was atrociously bad at it. I would way rather be out on the green having a game of football or rafting on the Two Pot River. My mother was an Olympian knitter. It was said that she could knit a personality for you. As it relates to the poem, I studied Pirandello many years ago and was struck by his books, *Uno Nessuno e Centomila* and *Maschere Nude* in which he talks about the masks we wear in society and the league of personae that stomp around within. Ripping Good Yarns is a simple little ditty that plays on the notion of unraveling those masks to have a glimpse at what lies beneath.

HS: *Are you moved to write daily or do you find yourself getting backed-up occasionally?*

AMC: I tend to wander around for days or even weeks without writing a single line, an empty-headed eejit, and then am struck by how scrumptious two words sound together and I'm off to the races.

HS: *With reference to your piece, 'Unmanned and Damned!' Oddly enough, I have done extensive reading on the subject of Parenting and I have never come across anything specifically discouraging having children wade in shark-infested waters. As a mother, do think that perhaps, at times, you are too hard on yourself?*

AMC: I often drive myself batty wondering if I am a help or a hindrance to my kids. "Are you shadow or shade?" I ask myself on a regular basis and then I think of the opening lines of Philip Larkin's wonderful poem *This Be The Verse*:

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.

They may not mean to, but they do.

They fill you with the faults they had

And add some extra, just for you.

I think it should be prescribed reading for all parents.

HS: *I think we have covered just about everything here. To conclude, on a sliding scale, how sorry are you to have agreed to this interview?*

AMC: I am absolutely tickled pink by this interview. Your questions have made me really think hard about the craft of poetry writing, which I am still learning, learning forever learning.

