

Spoken Word

(Manx Authors. Year 11 and over)

D9b

Kissack Trophy

One poem from the following. Choice to be stated on the entry form.

High Tide

by Cushag

The quare conthraptions there would be at times
When I was goin' awakin' in the night.
I'd see a shadder slippin' down the stairs
Behind a drowsy blink of candle-light.

Scritch-scratch among the cinders in the grate,
An' then, the light come leapin' through the floor
All bars an' dazzlin' lines across the room
Between the boboards and where the rug was tore.

An' then a sudden scutch of salty air,
An' footsteps stoppin' at the door below,
While all the house was rockin' with the noise
Of waves an' shingle teerin' to an' fro.

"An well! So long!" I'd hear my father say,
An' then, "So long," goin' callin' by the crew,
An' then – it's like my mother'd give a sigh,
But I was fast asleep before I knew.

An' still I'm wakin' when the tide is high,
An' still the breeze comes through the clappin' door.
I hear "So long" goin' echoin' down the street,
The waves an' shingle teerin' on the shore.

An' for I'm oul', an' wore, an' full of years,
My sleep once broke will not come back to me.
But all the wakin' hours are not too long
To pray for them that's out upon the sea.

Ploughman

by David Callin

My father worked with a horse plough too,
long before I was born.

I recall a few vivid tableaux:

Monty-like, in a field of unalien corn,

directing operations, issuing orders
to hard-swearing men who spat, a gang
that nodded grimly, but worked as hard as
he asked, though he only said dang;

or in the cowhouse, after dark, his shadow
thrown fantastically against the wall,
slipping, deftly, over an ardent udder
the milking apparatus, every stall

a potpourri of urine, milk and straw;
not knowing the names of woodland flowers –
what should he know those for? –
and working all hours.

There only remains this picture: him, the horse,
the seriousness, the half-apotheosis.
He never lost that look he has here,
of a man who has worked with horses.

I Turn

by Chris Callow

Deep you delved till, foiled by water,
High you raised me, scarlet painted, proud three legged
The sluice was raised:
I turned.

Deep in the ground you moiled and toiled.
Drilled and blasted, air thick with dust.
Then black with grime, you climbed to grass;
I turned.

Stiff petticoated, parasolled,
They climbed my stair to gawp and gape.
Paid their pence then tooted home –
Spurned, still I turned.

Malcontented, black with anger,
Sullen, bellicose you struck,
Wrestled immovable wealth,
Then slunk back, lesser men, averting eyes;
Still I turned.

Stone tips dwindled, charas trundled,
Rods renewed leapt up glen on flying arches,
Rockers nodded silent dances;
Regilded, afresh I turned.

A hundred years and fifty more,
I count no time, you come and go,
I see all, remember all;
I will ever turn.