

## Down by the Water's Edge

by Jane Spurr

All along the big grey walls  
you walked past red roof, flat roof, n some stuff inbetween  
you count 10 pigeons circling, swimming overhead.

See the rebuilt, demolished, old, n very new.  
Hauntings, gone ferries, departures, arrivings,  
Now glaringly absent in the soft wet ol drizzle.

Quiet streaks of remembering  
photographs recapturing  
silver hillslides n gullies,  
bleepings n clanks.

Well, twas decades ago  
still same empty pint glasses,  
lie quietly rockin  
As you walked right on past them  
Down by the water's edge.

All boarded up door now,  
it's there on a corner,  
hair mousse in the window,  
and turned into flats.  
You know this old place,  
specks of stories returning,  
All squashed down n squished n condensed in my mind.

You recall jostled splatters,  
steppin over a threshold  
try out the benches,  
as that's all that's left.  
Down by the water's edge.

Three bladdered girls.  
Belching  
onto roundy rough cobbles  
A napping on backs splayed akimbo,  
in sun.

What with all that nattering  
the purple - silk - 40's  
dress - long n floaty  
ties - pretty flatterin,  
Whitterin on,  
bout flippin tangles, n visual triangles!  
The leopard print coat one  
shuts sun shaded eyes,  
Whilst the boilersuit one,

rolls hers to the sky,  
sees 10 pigeons circling  
Then lights up a fag.

3 halves of 6x  
washed away down their gullets  
til murky green rivulets  
jostle Doc boots awake.  
And painful note strainings  
from a Sunday pub singer  
calling Time please  
Which reaches their silver-hooped ears.

This sent them escaping the tide  
and that crooning  
Straight back up the hill  
They tottered back home.  
Past so many peoples,  
their histories, all layered  
All in the same place there  
Down at the water's edge.

Her stories, their stories,  
ours - in between,  
in a beery breath of imagining gone  
Then returning unseen now  
through them streets leading backways  
By dampen walled grey skies  
framed in starry steel bowers.  
Those pigeons still circling  
10 swoopin n squeakin  
Though you've run out of roads now  
long that great big flat wall.