

HEATHER BARKER

THE YEAR
OF LAST
TIMES



Poetry & Photography Book 2021- 2022
NCAD Degree Show
Fine Art Painting with Visual Culture

THE YEAR OF LAST TIMES

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Blue Light

I moved here,
From forest to sea,
Climbing boxes,
Took a break and ran towards the
water,
The sunset is different here, like
pink cotton candy.

Unloading anywhere.
The dents help me hold your
awkward shape,
"I'll meet you at the lift".

Can I keep moving forever?

"Leave me space to crawl".

Like a cat that eases through the
roads.
I am elegant and glowing.
I leave my delusions behind.
Paralysing newness makes me go
into autopilot.
My closet is overflowing.

Sets of two photographs hang.
The walls have bluetack and nails.
I ignore them for me.
He wasn't what I would call zany.
Great disdain he noticeably oozed.

I lay my warm head on the cold
pillow.
My skull loses memories in these
flowers,
Poor tired pillow.
Its floral patterns don't look
like me anymore.
This pillow is one of those few
constants.

My new moments are recorded by
space.
I turn my light on.
A new face and arms and stomach.
I stride through like ectoplasm.

An orb guides me.

2007, written in sharpie,
Sun Bleached books.
Aquamarine books that say shush in
the morning.
Little futures twirl and spin
around my bedroom.
Every possibility has been thought
and planned.

Dust twinkles in the pathways of
light.
Exhilaration blurs and bounces,
As I walk through the white,
bright, straight rooms.
I see in fluorescent colours,
Natural ecstasy of possibilities
and transformation,

I Turned into Blue Light.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 1

hypochon- driac

Stark white wisteria falls on me.
I want dearly to change them to
black
Or purple or green.
Slowing my pace to look,
My back aches and then disappears
in formidable timing.

The garden is outside the
building.
I have been here before; invalid
and invalid.
Valid the answers not the
valetudinarian.
No one picks up the frail petals
Nothing so far has turned me away.

I came out of the building after.
I close the yellow door and hold
the yellow parchment.
Reflecting on your quick and
snappy answers.
Your reassuring smile
Testing your soft quilting.

Air goes through you to me.
I inhale. No! I exhale, again and
again like wool.
I became two dimensional.
A piece of silky paper.
Pressing jupiter along the
triohålning.

In the garden again with sun
shining on my front,

glow of the yellow door on my
back.

I see the three moss-hugged steps
differently.

Is this malva for me?
Medical or motherly.

I don't just see, I hear flutter
and buzz.

The snap as I walk on twigs like
cracking knuckles.

The light, cool air is fresh.
Its notes are precious.

Time can roll and run and rapture
Just not too quick, please.

Eyes wide until the sleepy next.
Until the next mean and shaky Red
Columbine.

Gravity doesn't want my force, I
float.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 2

The Divine Femine

I heard a woman
And stood faceted.
Face and thought of elegance.
Smart and unwilling.
Bright, not bossy.
Exclamation point out!

Eyes glaring!
I couldn't see the suspicion.
How could this be?
Not a mother or a daughter.
How could they be soft and
indignant?
Are they all?

If so, do we stand a chance?
And am I too a woman?
With my dark bearded chin
And rough husk.
No gleam, just a sensitive look?

Shaping a rug with a GUN!
Holding inflexibly and not
smiling.
Focusing on a multitude of things.
Do we stand a chance?
Can I be this heroine too?

I just saw her laugh.
Pulling entertaining faces.
Cross-eyed glee on original mask.
Can this be?
Do we stand a chance?
This one looks like me.

Is she a woman or a man?
This being is too complex.

Frantically, I want to hang it up.
Label it.
Package it.
Expiry date it.
Sell it.
Eat it.
Kill it.
Devour it.
So I can consume its power.

The divine femine.

Then it grew again.
In someone else.
Oh no!
Half the population are this.
Do we stand a chance?
My greatness doesn't feel so
great.

Can we join them?
Will they take us in their loving
embrace?
They always do.
Do we stand a chance?



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 3

Mómó xoxo

She called me Hedy Lamarr.
After the film star.
This is an old fashioned humour
that's gone.

Three of us on the camellia quilt.
All eating toast and tea.
Warmed by humming sand underneath
the mattress.

She was a lady.
That's what everyone says.
She would never leave the house
without lipstick and Chanel.

Oh but she could protect,
"I" "DON'T" "CARE" written in
skinny arms.
This was the kind of quiet
protection a lady was allowed.

She held my hand so tight.
Her French pearl nail polish
vanishing in my pale chubby hand.
The hat box with old love letters
sat beside her bed on the floor.

Snow White is what I called her.
A robin visits her before she
left.
Now that robin visits me.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 4

The All So Annoying Happy Chapstick

Whose Chapstick is this? I think I know.

Its owner is quite happy though.
Full of joy like a vivid rainbow,
I watch her laugh. I cry Hello.

She gives her chapstick a shake,
And laughs until her belly aches.
The only other sound's the break,
Of distant waves and birds awake.

The chapstick is compassionate,
solid and deep.
She has promises to keep.
After cake and lots of sleep,
Sweet dreams come to her cheap.

She rises from her gentle bed,
With thoughts of kittens in her
head.
She eats her jam with lots of
bread.
Ready for the day ahead.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 5

Spanish Guitar

The road you are on is a
comunidad,
People and dogs and cars.
The footpath gets washed from the
hot sun's microwaves.
A halo covers the ground on the
slightest hill.

The crown of my head is radiating.
My blonde hair gets bleached by
you during the day and glows like
the moon at night.
I listen to the rolling and
laughing.
Flamenco is an aspiration to
entertainment here.

Moroccan doors and tiles become
kaleidoscopes in the heat.
The dizzying effects amplify the
sound.
The beautiful sounds are alive!
Jonathan plays these memories on
guitar.

Spanish Caravan being strummed
On a Spanish guitar.
Its strings are from Everest.
A nomad plays it like rekki on a
stubborn muscle.

Acclimatising is difficult for me.
I am fair and quiet.

This city is not shy or
unfriendly.
Cruzcampo sweats a sweet cold
water.

The guitar sounds are soothing.
Hypnotising and moon striking.
Crossed brown legs under every
table as we eat.
Bending over tables that almost
say Nestle or Coca Cola.

Children are children here.
The purification of sun kills and
awakes.
Dogs are wonderfully weird, like a
fox with mutton chops.
I long for any of these small
experiences.

Please play me some Spanish
guitar!



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 6

Spacetime

No hands-and-knees crawling.
Towering adults that look too old
to have babies.
They were my age years ago.
A backwards phenomenon.
The article said a date.
Which I know means five years.
A long five years!
Close your eyes and blink.
When you got your name, mine was
not on the way.
I liked Polly Pockets and you knew
algebra.
New experiences change over time.
Time is relative.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 7

Cyber Space

Avatars that stand apart,
Our data is collected.
Profile is recognised.
How much can you take for free?

Privacy is gone.
You can know so much about me.
Millions of screens and people
behind.
All feeding a sleeping monster.

Capitalist Information.
Drumming into our sleepy eyes.
I lie with capitalism too.
It's numbing is a pain killer.

'Certainty is the end of freedom'.
When we know, we don't ask.
When we ask, we learn and shape.
Our hands are weak with clay.

We know so much more.
How much information is useless?
When will the eyes turn to us?
Ethical practices and lawmaking,
Avoided in this landscape.

There are no green hills.
Or bushes with little treasures
and bottles.
Evolution will cut our senses
Or spontaneity.

Our flowers heal.
The trees give us air and shelter.
The water replenishes life.
Why don't we love this as we did?

Everything we need is outside.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 8

A love letter to: Irish Rail

Dun-dun...Dun-dun...
Whistle and tap,
Puff and squeal as you break.
You are an inspiration orchestra.

Your windows have breath,
And dirt and stains.
Someone washed your friend's
graffiti.

Sitting on the left now.
Metal spotty chairs
With bright yellow handle bars.

You are a big cat.
Will you tell me your stories
Of winos and first dates?

Your gap is a Black hole.
'Please Mind The Gap!'
Who told you to say that?

You are Destination and Departure.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 9

Conversation with a Canvas

You just stand there
Staring at me,
Waiting for my response.

Your face is primed,
Tention, awkward lines of gesso.
We start with small talk.

I give you a compliment
Of oils and remarks.
You shine back at me.

Standing back now.
I heard what you were trying to
say.
Let's break the ice!

Nearing the end of our session,
I wonder if you have said all you
needed to.

I thank you for our chat.
Let's see if others come to our
conclusion.
Did we agree or did I cut you off?

I stop you mid sentence.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 10

Pink Is Punk

Protruding scars on lesbian eyebrows.
Intelligent people with respect and love.
Not just for femininity.
Keep your bullshit to yourself.

Is there something wrong with pink?
Sisters and brothers with breasts.

Pink is terrifying.
Unyielding and rioting.
Nice little girls.
Kicking the door that men hide behind.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 11

Hearts

Supposedly a drawer of flowers is
an obsessive compulsive.
But what of a drawer of hearts
I wonder why?
Less stress and reduced
negativity.

I wonder why I draw hearts?
And why do I hold my hands like
that?
Nature or nurture.

Why hearts?
Do they decorate or signify?
I attract them and they attract
me.

I can always get used to them.
They can be only anything.
Finding them in rocks on the
beach.

Why not flowers?
A small garden on every page.
And what would that mean?

A drawer of flowers can be
compulsive.
But can sketching hearts be
obsessive?
It doesn't seem to matter.

When someone draws a heart for me,
do I see it the same?
Are mine for me and yours for you?
Small abstract portraits that can
never be wrong.
Maybe the likeness!

Can you draw a heart with love?



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 12

Serenity

My heart feels
In weighty water.
A labyrinth inside that's
impossible.

I want to relax.
These waves can tide
In and out of my chest.

The waves will calm,
And I will rest in a small boat.
Dipping my foot into its pools.

Water then reaches inside my aura,
But I don't hold all of it.
Neutrality. That's contentment!

My heart will have air inside.
Golden perfume in my lungs.
Pitless olives in my stomach.

Serenity is where I'll be.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 13

Swan Lake

Irish dreamers sang to pointed
legs and stretched out hands.
Chimes prance over the orchestra,
violins and cellos.
Beautiful warriors that watched
over our Eire.
Ballerinas tiptoe in a line under
white lights.

Caer Iborneith is asleep and
dreaming.
Her song harmonises space.
These children are hybrid birds.
Their aching toes and muscles are
hidden.

An Eala Ghlorach gliders swiftly
in the water.
They are near me as I sleep.
Soon they will go to Iceland to
rest a while longer.
Tulle and blush and tiaras make
this metamorphosis.

Four new beautiful swans.
Curling their necks in embrace as
they dance in the lake.
Lovingly whispering lullabies.
Lay on each other's delicate
wings.
As the night darkens, the leaps
get smaller.
The crescendo peaks the
excitement.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 14

Lough Dan

We set up camp in Lough Dan.
Setting up a makeshift house in a
valley.
The Guinness Lake was black with
white foam.
The artificial sand on our
rucksacks.

We washed our hands in the cold
water.
The black pool was a real mirror.
That's when we noticed little
dishes of ripples,
And then more and more.

Torrential rain.
Large fat raindrops that landed on
our forehead.
Black rain coats looked like
otters silky fur.
The weather said clear this
morning.

Unprepared was an understatement.
The rum hurt.
As it glugged down the bottle's
neck.
The tent's zips sounded like
drinking bells.

A sense of adventure lifted us up.
We complained under one tree.
Wet rollies hung out of soaking
mouths.
No one thought of leaving.

Once the fire started, the race
began.
Pupils started to dilate.
A little piece of moss was passed
around.
We could see its pulsing body
heaving in our evil finger tips.

A cult was made.
The leaders varied.
The trip guided us into a hive,
like bees.
We could read minds and change
time.

The night was hell.
Demons, wild animals and spirits
Crash into our tents continuously.
We had an internal demon toxifying
our veins.

The relief in the morning.
Beans and tea bags of coffee.
They burst and we chewed on them
in water.
Chairs and tents were flung and
broke.

We have never felt more awake.



HEATHER'S LIGHT # 15

These poems are freely written expressions of my own experiences of daily life. Heather Barker fuses painting, poetry, photography and video with psychogeography to make transformative serene constructions that are at once intimidating and soft. Her work components range from everyday objects to theatrical performance images. These are frequently anchored by visual image, video or photographs of; sense of self, kitsch object or kitsch place. The works are timeless and conceptual.

In this book, Barker captures the rhythm and atmosphere in these poems in the same fluidity as she paints. Alongside these poems are polaroids. In these, she performs; emotions, personalities and attitudes depending on the site-specific place. It is left up to the viewer to determine what they believe each emotion is. This intertwines the process into the outputs, making an internal infinity space. Common themes throughout the poems is a yearning to relocate and psychogeography.

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