

1975

A Green Man

Nigel Wells

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small readership, which this "Symposium" will, one hopes, do a little to alter, and are all, at present, resident in the United Kingdom. But here, I think, the similarities end. There is no easy generalization to make about a "Symposium" that includes work by poets living, and writing, in North-East Scotland, Bolton, Devon, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge, Northern Ireland, Manchester, and West Wales. Their areas for concern vary, as do their environments—another reason for interaction, and a strong indication of the differing energies in British poetry.

The job as editor was, as it usually is, a combination of pleasure and frustration, but I hope the result will prove worthwhile to the reader, as it has been to those taking part, in whatever capacity. I must thank Jon Silkin for his considerable support, and, finally, I would like to thank all the eight for their willing cooperation and efficiency, which occasionally straightened my own erratic course.

A Green Man / Nigel Wells

(1) Squirms

Tasting the earth
Out of the loam and the foliage come
Some self to the wood from the ground
Some stuff
Feeling its life starts to stir
Takes to the light
With inkling eye marks its length
Pants by and by to its height
Strains
From the crouch to the bend to the stoop
Stands
The finally straight
The momentary pause
Testing the breath
Then
Hares
Through wild and the wonderwood flares
The streak
Loosely tears like a seam

(2) Stalks

Seeing the world
This thing sees but what it sees
Fastens its feel to the needley mould

Soft pads
Taking the sights to its heart
Follows the path
In tunnels and runs measures tread
Moles through the whispery wood
Hears
The scurrying, patter and press
Snakes
Over leaf to advantage
The silent approach
The wriggly way
So
Snails
Through tangle creeps crawly to peer
The stealth
Studies with stare the slight life as it teem

(3) Stamps

Taking a turn
Blur in a spacey place sways
Once more the reel and the round
Steps out
Shaking a leg to alive
Quickly the limbs
Nimbling shins toe the line
Heels on the packed dirt drum
Bound
Over the falling and fallen and felled
Twirl
The onesome and ball
The treefully leap
Clearing the stumps
High
Jigs
Through hedge hoops as when and as please
The spring
Bouncing bare in the air and lean

(4) See's?

Sweating it out
Stupor of wood steam and drool
Some stiff of a suddenly starts
Sits up
Sensing some sense to itself

Claws at perhaps
With fingering think takes a chance
Collars the maybe the way
Makes
For the outstretch of aim and idea
Grasps
The likely the truth
Something at least
The offered escape
Slopes
Off
Through half light the faith heeled not what he seem
The shade
He grow rare but he grow God-green

Saturnalia / Nigel Wells

For old uncle Cronus and barleycrow Bran
This spirited lad
Groomed to the throne of unreal
As King of unreason got up in the guise
Ass-eared for the reign of misrule

Made master of revels in elder tree time
This jewel of the blood
Picked of the many and more
Decked in the garb for the seven day whirl
This youth in the bloom for the fool

For the posture of God and the romp
This sport of the locks
Dolled in the holly green hue
Draped as the keeper of festives and funs
Daubed with the squeeze-berry blue

Oh lords of the sown and the sprouting seed
In mime of your age
This brightsome boy tread the dance
Light steps tell the course and the briefness of rule
Bright blood crowns the term of the prance