



Book :- The Hawk's Mewl

Author :- Nigel Humphreys

Cost :- £4.99 plus £1.00 post and packing

Publisher :- The Arbor Vitae Press (38 pages, stapled)

Reviewer :- Idris Caffrey

I have seen the work of Nigel Humphreys over a number of years in magazines like Borderlines, Coffee House Poetry, Poetry Monthly and Roundhouse – all very good publications. It was therefore pleasing to get a copy of his latest book to review.

A very well presented book this with a lovely front cover and well presented poems. It is obvious that the editor has taken great care over the presentation of the poet's work and that is always good to see.

It soon becomes obvious, after reading three or four of these poem, that Humphreys has a great love and knowledge of the natural world. The title poem itself shows his humanity and sensitivity and introduces us to the collection. It also underlines the poets obvious craft. There are some beautiful poems in the collection. One of my favourites is "The Beech Tree," describing how the tree has fallen – "to a night wind" and I love the last two lines of the poem – "and there is nowhere/ to hang a rope." This is the poet at his very best.

In the poem "Cowrie Shells," the poet tells us about how his mother collected them –

*"but she never did anything with them
not even a bangle strung on thread;
just hoarded them on a pantry shelf
in a Kilner jar with her hopes
because they were hard to find."*

If there is one slight criticism I have of the book it is that I had to dive for the dictionary at least fifteen times during the reading of the collection. This of course is probably due to my lack of knowledge of the English Language or indeed of the world of nature but I'm sure quite a lot of readers would be stumped by many of the words he uses. Keep it simple Nigel!

Having got that off my chest, make no mistake, I recommend this book without hesitation and it has been a real pleasure reading it.