



The Zebra Stood in the Night

Kerry Hardie

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Human life and the passage and rhythms of time and the seasons come together in *The Zebra Stood in the Night*, the seventh collection by one of Ireland's leading poets. Grounded in the natural world, this is a book about landscape, loss, belonging and transformation. As everything in nature grows and decays, so 'everyone is always inside the act of dying at the same time as being inside the act of living', Hardie writes in her essay 'Aftermath', a meditation on grief which precedes a sequence of poems on the death of her brother in India. This is Kerry Hardie's second collection since her *Selected Poems* (2011), following *The Ash and the Oak and the Wild Cherry Tree* (2012), and continues the arc of the latter, 'a dark and gorgeous hymn to human mortality' (Claire Askew), questioning, celebrating and challenging all aspects of human experience. A number of her poems are narratives or parables in which experience yields a spiritual lesson and consolation; others chart a coming to terms with death or illness and an acceptance of inevitability or flux. Human life quivers in consort with other lives in these seasons of the heart. 'Our trust reposes in such clear, open writing. Hardie's later poems are barer, more strongly narrative, and sometimes read like parables and portraits at once... The poems speak to us from gardens as well as graveyards, from private homes as much as churches, and, most often, from the borders and boundaries that the poems speak so often and beautifully of breaching or attempting to breach' - John McAuliffe, *The Irish Times* on *Selected Poems*. 'Kerry Hardie's newest collection is a dark and gorgeous hymn to human mortality. Death is, of course, such a common theme in poetry that it's difficult to find anything new to say about it, but Hardie succeeds, injecting into these poems her usual quiet originality... Death in Hardie's poems is a release from the process she finds truly terrifying: the slow decay of ageing... The feeling that runs throughout the collection is that of time running out: seasons changing, the familiar disappearing, death approaching ever faster... a book of poems that celebrates the wonder of our small lives as much as it laments their brevity' - Claire Askew, *The Edinburgh Review*, on *The Ash and the Oak and the Wild Cherry Tree*.

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