

# Three Poems for Barbara Hepworth

These poems were first published in *Four Poems for Barbara Hepworth*, a booklet published by the author in a very short print run as a gift for the audience at a reading for Hepworth LIVE! on the 9 April 2016 at the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Gardens in St. Ives.



## SCULPTURE FOR A MODERN WORLD

sophisticated understanding  
self-imposed constraints  
discover the essence  
play with space and time  
space and time must be  
sculpture must be touched  
to be truly experienced

explore virtual spaces  
distances and topographies  
discover the sculptures  
discover the trail behind  
echoing the eclectic design

a projection of forces  
translated into a single form

a projection of forces  
towards a particular end  
exhibition spaces  
resonate with profiles  
weaving their spell  
self-imposed constraints  
sophisticated understanding

play with language  
discover the essence  
how the image should be  
multilayered language  
multilayered structures  
the carving is large  
allow your mind to drift

the blue marble  
came out to drift  
the blue marble  
came out black  
long time lines trail behind  
echoing a faith integrated  
in sculptural realisation

several levels of meaning  
in your writing  
a chisel of light everywhere  
words weaving their spell  
capturing the forms  
words making up  
your own textures and angles

your own deliberate dialogue  
more like a projection of forces  
several levels of meaning  
see the relationship between  
a work and its image  
see the sculpture alive  
in relation to nature

confirm the patterns of the world  
find words for what she had  
find words for what she dreamed  
the beauty and perfection of forms

a particular abstract beauty  
the images should be  
the end of the story

A TRIPTYCH FOR BARBARA HEPWORTH

(Tate Britain, autumn 2015)

'They've stolen the moon  
The magic is gone'  
– David Sylvian, 'Midnight Sun'

*1. Wounded Bird*

The man who looked like a crow  
flying along in a fringed black shawl  
is accompanying a child on crutches.

Together they circle small maquettes,  
models where wood and plaster  
have been freed and given flight,

having an endless discussion  
about what they find if they look,  
and how – and why – it was made.

*2. 'Conversations with Magic Stones'*

The rock was silent  
but sparkled in the sun.

I sang to it,  
cajoled it,  
commanded it.

The rock was silent  
but glinted in the rain.

I spoke to it sideways,  
whispered endearments,  
pleaded and whined.

The rock was silent,  
its magic stilled.

I walked away  
and left it  
to its own devices.

The rock called out  
or so I heard.

I didn't go back.  
Magic can never be  
secondhand.

### *3. Last Day of Show*

There are a hundred visitors  
being told how to look  
and what to look at.

The stones are lifeless,  
have been overwritten about,  
theorised and conceptualised

until it is hard to find  
their beauty, see the poise  
and balance Hepworth made.

The stones have been boxed  
in plastic, labelled with words  
and ordered, spirit broken.

Give them back to the wind  
and sea and sky and waves.  
It is where everything is.

INSIDE OUT: BARBARA HEPWORTH  
from a photo by Cornel Lucas

The sculptor pulls open her heart  
and stares at you from inside.

She is silent and out of focus;  
only the work speaks for her

and to us. If you do not hear  
the stone or wood singing

then sit and learn to listen  
in her garden or gallery.



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