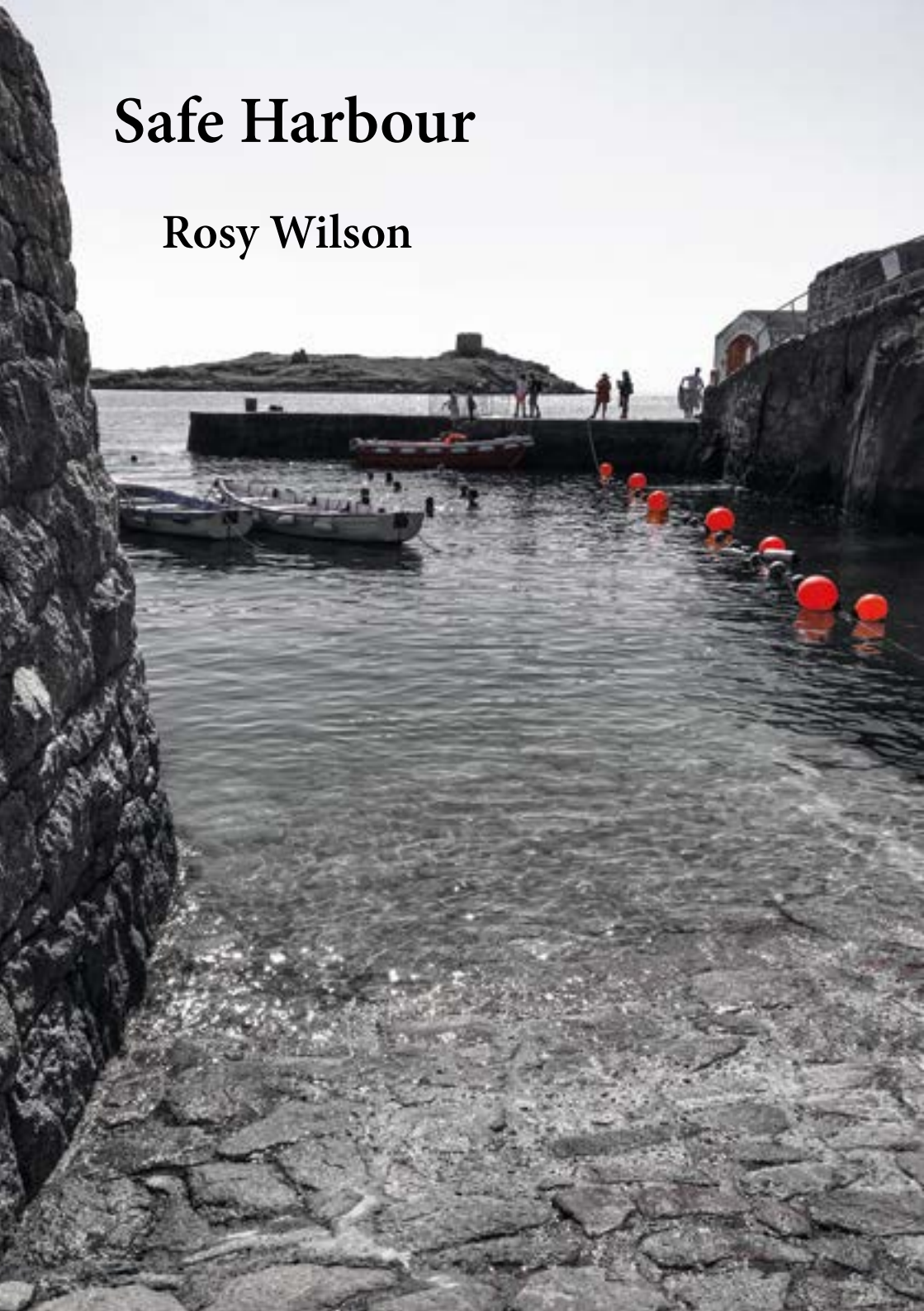


# Safe Harbour

Rosy Wilson



## Musings in the Time of Corona

### *Easter Day*

rising before dawn  
no chorus, one blackbird sings  
I hug an ancient yew

over calm waves  
three cormorants fly low  
oyster catchers converse

cast your cares on  
choppy waters, waves will return  
their own songs, make  
lace patterns

### *Dawning*

same shore-line  
same time of morning  
yet always changing

sky colours  
wave shapes  
serenades

### *Sea Mists*

waves sing mysteries  
Howth is invisible as a ghost  
a silver ship floats  
on the horizon

wisps of clouds,  
rose, grey, mushroom colours  
move slowly over rain-  
washed sky

*Along Sea Wall*

sun returns  
after days of cold rain  
cormorants sweep the surface  
common gulls dive in  
one man rows a red boat  
to the island

*Corr Eisc*

our grey heron  
flies with me, shelters my spirit under  
out-stretched wings  
lands on rough rocks  
stands tall

*Storm Francis*

blusters sea walls  
bursts river banks, breaks  
elder branches

unlike his holy namesake  
who loves donkeys, doves, forests  
the whole of nature

*Irish Hawthorn*

fairy tree of folklore,  
flower of the may, delights  
country lanes, nectar  
for butterflies, bees

understorey of  
forests, woodland pockets  
with ash, hazel, rowan, sacred  
to our ancestors

*Where the bee sucks*

wild flowers grow  
little-blue butterfly sips nectar  
clover, butter-bright celandine  
marigolds

nature's colours  
remedies for skin  
and chest complaints  
period pains

*Breathing In*

sea-salt, seaweed,  
bluebells, wild grass seed  
dog-roses on hedgrows  
resin of huge Scots pine  
I hug every day

*Feeling the Blues*

midnight on the way  
a blue hoop holds light circles  
on star-lit navy tapestry  
full moon pulls  
full tides, waves swell and fall

I'm in them over my head, head  
over heels  
years ago we would wake  
in our ultramarine bed  
safe in one another's arms

*Samhain*

once in a blue moon  
when the veil between the after-  
world and ours is tenuous, spirits  
and children roam

*Holy Trinity*

three in one  
three trunks, one tree  
branches reaching, leaves falling  
starlings perch on  
my hugging tree

Covid 19

Cocooned    Coralled    Cooped up  
what's in a word

closed in    indoors    remote control  
no swims    no walks    no company

yet I can watch clouds clearing  
streaks of dawn light

white horses mount black rocks  
on wild Spring tides

leafless branches blowing in the wind  
cream and yellow daffodils, pink valerian

birds on my feeder, early bumble bees  
I scribble lines, drink more cups of tea.

## Carraig na Gréine - Closed for Covid 19

This stately home became a convent school  
Loreto nuns were teaching little children  
some friends, now artists, poets, once went there  
fond memories of their childhoods, views of sea.

I dream tonight, fetch down old walking stick  
begin my stroll, but oh ten nuns emerge  
descend the steps, a wide lake opens up  
they discard habits, bathe, I swim with them.

Waking, I quickly dress, walk to the sea  
two black-backed gulls stand tall, synchronise  
on highest rock, five oystercatchers fly  
colours defined so clearly, black and white

legs and beaks brightly painted orange.  
Spring clarion call as nature carries on.

## Home in Nature

Puffs of thistle seeds  
teasing teasle heads

purple, pink willowherb  
welcome bees, ladybirds

we stretch, smile, breathe

follow badger tracks over  
white clover, shaly grasses

young tawny fox, white muzzle  
and brushtail tip, scampers

grey days, sea mists glaze vistas  
sun rises only in time to set

below the horizon.

## Morning Moon

As I sit at my late father's desk  
under windows facing due west  
relishing an old friend's new poems

of Carrigskeewaun  
Burren flowers, fen violets  
petal-wort, dead nettle  
of his artist daughters  
of old soldier father

the full morning moon fades  
from gold to pale platinum  
recedes behind beech trees  
roof tiles, hedges, my horizon.

## Giving Thanks

As dawn streaks broad brush strokes  
orange on dark sky and one star twinkles,  
I begin morning mindful stretching outdoors  
where badgers dig holes, follow fox trails:

breathing in I raise my arms  
breathing out touch my toes  
paddle barefoot in damp grass  
look out to sea, nature's gifts.

Corona virus closes shops, cafes  
even our homes, yet Creatives go on  
sharing paintings, videos, poems, care  
of one another - special presents.

## Rhyme Sea with Trees\*

These long-drawn-out  
covid-restricted days  
without kindred spirits  
we lean into nature:

I cuddle up to broad trunks  
of Scots pines, hug slender silver birch  
reach spreading ash tree branches

stroke different-textured  
bark, breathe in scents of  
these native Irish trees;

on daily walks along sea-walls  
of Carraig na Gréine, Coliemore  
Harbour, I watch waves' curves

as they rise and fall, silver, sea-green  
or dark, hear their roar or range of music  
feel showers of ocean spray;

I miss sea-shore sand, coarse shingle  
long to paddle again, join early morning  
swimmers, run into chilly water

skin glistening with sea minerals -  
we'd rub down with rough towels, share  
the day's news, thermos coffee;

trees and sea-water bear  
my weight, free me from  
a cluttered mind, in my being  
sea rhymes with trees.

\*from The Patternings by Paula Meehan

## Walks in the Woods at Devil's Glen

These late Corona days, we walk again  
in Devil's Glen, sculptures in woodlands,

Seamus Heaney's lines inscribed on benches,  
'The river bed's dried up half full of leaves

us listening to a river in the trees.'  
We stare up through over-arching branches

then remember when you drove me to this glen  
away-day from the nearby hospital,

a fine October day, you brought a picnic, autumn  
raspberries, home-made quiche and apple tart

conversation, a stroll on fallen leaves, searching art  
works in trees, discoveries - I was reaching for recovery,

healing autumn walks, soft underfoot, light falls  
through branches, brightens our days, illuminates.

## Some Native Irish Trees

Along the river willows overhang  
*saileach*, sallies, pliant wands for osiers  
nearby, alders keep their feet in water

shaking aspens, *cran creathac*, give  
their name to Glencree, Glan Critheac  
quaking valley where my friend lives

in a wooden house nestled among trees -  
oaks, silver birch and her fairy tree, hawthorn,  
whose early blossom we may not bring indoors.

Druids know oak groves are sacred  
places of wisdom, rituals, sacrifice  
rowans have powers of enchantment

hazel wands divine where water lies  
hazel scrub with holly is understorey  
for taller forest trees.

On my way back I hug an old Scots pine  
recall a walk under an arch of yews  
towards the altar, a giant tree, two  
thousand years of age, still standing there.

Lives of trees and people intertwine  
rooted in cycles of the natural world.

## Mislaid

She says she is bewildered, loses words  
we try to discern gestures and pauses,  
‘Where are we? How will I get home?’

‘You are home, look, your soft sofa,  
your round table, your family photos  
here is your bedroom, pyjamas, pillows

do you remember now,’ ‘if you say so,’  
she readies for bed, we smile, hug,  
kiss each other good night.

In our eighties I have become  
my older sister’s comfort blanket.

First Anniversary

for Patrick Morreau

Last day of June, my nurse friend and I  
stroll down a gritty path to the sea wall  
here at Carraig na Gréine, Rock of the Sun,  
listen to waves lap seaweed-covered stone.

As we walk, breathe sea air, watch a family  
of grey seals who swim along this coast,  
the grey heron, *corr eisc*, I haven't seen  
in the last six months, stretches large wings

flies with us, this bird, at home on land, air  
and water, was believed by our ancestors  
to be a messenger between our world and  
the spirits' otherworld and I remember

it was today, only one year ago  
my dear brother passed away.

Midsummer Day, 2021

for Mamo MacDonald

Your funeral Mass, Mamo, streams  
into our homes, your eulogy celebrates  
a special woman of many parts:

mother of eleven, grandkids galore  
passion for social justice everywhere, you work  
with women here, in Africa, India, your world.

At Annaghmakerrig we share a cottage  
mind each other, prepare your poems for  
your book collection, Circling.

Poet, lace-maker, Bealtaine founding member,  
you invite our writers to Clones lace exhibition  
show us Bully's Acre famine burial ground.

After Mass I wander through the meadow,  
tickled by shaking grasses, wild flowers, butterflies,  
to the sea front where summer solstice throws

huge waves at granite rocks, *corr eisc*  
grey heron, messenger on land, air, water,  
bears your spirit to the otherworld on

steady, outstretched wings; for you  
I sing hymns to our Goddess poet Bríd,  
watch, wonder, pray for our world.

## Bernie Speaks

for Bernie Kenny, 1925-2020

‘Now, there is nothing I want to possess  
no-one I envy,’ ninety-five years are  
enough in this world we inhabit, share  
with badgers, birds, bees, sheltering trees.

It is autumn, leaves are falling, yellow  
umber, russet, the colours of long frocks  
I always wear. I’m ready to wave good-bye  
to six children, their families, my diaspora.

Life is good, I was loved by my father,  
headmaster at Ennis, husband who’s waiting,  
little children I taught and fellow-poets  
writing together in my garden shed.

I sleep with moon lanes on calm waves  
wake with sun-rise, red-gold on the horizon.



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