

POETRY
NATIONAL
DAY

dreams

Dr King Blues

Gearoid MacLochlainn

I dreamed a dream, a veteran's song,
While marching home to war.

I dreamed I heard a blackbird sing -
'Oh hardtimes come no more'.

I dreamed of chimes of broken bells
And dreamsongs still to sing

I dreamed a negro spiritual song
that sang- 'Let freedom ring'.



dreams

The Digital Library, St Andrews

Robert Crawford

For Alice

Here in Scotland's oldest bookhoard,
Used since the Middle Ages,

From secret seams of inked enlightenment –
Wanlockhead Miners' Library,

Or that jewel inlaid in the fields of Perthshire,
The reading-room at Innerpeffray –

How many hops, skips, and jumps
To the right conclusions it took to slip

Into this tip-tap Aladdin's-Cave-
Cum-stormed-Bastille, this free-for-all

Where laptops open like thick-leaved books
The flatpack wealth of nations.

From Vicious Circle

Patience Agbabi

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A basement bar. Black-and-white.
I'm at the bar on a barstool. The soundtrack,
my psychopath husband stuttering in the dark.
A ring-studded hand offers me a light.
I politely decline. This is my married lot,
dying to inhale, look back,
smile. But petrified. I'm half sick
of shadows and the stutter of gunshot.

Some dream they're being chased by death,
the action-adventure, double shot of adrenaline.
I'm freeze-framed, double whiskey on ice.
'Cause I married a madman with bad breath
and I'm manacled like Lana Turner in
The Postman Always Rings Twice.

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Sea Virus

Gwyneth Lewis

I knew I should never have gone below
but I did, and the fug of bilges and wood
caught me aback. The sheets of my heart
snapped taut to breaking, as a gale
stronger than longing filled the sail
inside me. To be shot of land
and its wood smoke! To feel the keel
cold in a current! To see the mast
inscribing water like a restless pen
writing a fading wake! It's true,
I'm ruined. Not even peace will do
to keep me ashore now. Not even you.