

Testimonies of the Rocks: the Hugh Miller Writing Competition 2015-16

Under 16 Winner in poetry

Annabelle Fuller: of rocks in inundated darkness

The Hugh Miller Writing Competition 2015-2016 invited entries inspired by the geological and landscape writings of Hugh Miller, Scotland's celebrated self-taught geologist. The competition was organised by the Scottish Geodiversity Forum, the Friends of Hugh Miller and many other partners.

Further details of the competition, and all the winning entries, are available at www.scottishgeology.com/hughmiller/

We hope that this writing competition has encouraged a renewed interest in Miller's work, a catalogue of superb new writings inspired by one of Scotland's greatest nature writers and greater awareness and appreciation of Scotland's geodiversity.

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of rocks in inundated darkness

each burnished flagstone sits steady,
unperturbed by shuffling scrapes of my old boots.

yellow sandstone cliffs glare down,
abrupt and harsh, ruffians cloistered in imposing grandeur,
casting gloom over the plucky flags.

no house can sleep beneath this twilight murk,
no chimney-breaths below the airless umbra.

morasses lie low,
deep, and black...
thick and viscous;
peaty lamentations.
sorrow bubbling.

above - precarious spots,
the hopeful grass that dares to grow,
take root in treacle misery.
red sandstone tries to raise its burning head.

looking on: the master stone,
unhewable,
unknowable,
a solid mass, colossus,
gatepost to the gods.

shrinking away, timid,
the baby caves of man.
dug up, two tiny squares,
plunging deep into the lonely earth.
mosses grow, cling to flinty sides,
stony pillow, boulder bed, divan of feather pebbles.

then thunder growls a warning, summoning clouds.
grey with misery, they collect as one, a seething mass of expectation.
wind gales drop and rise,
crowding sequestered valley caverns.
air warm brooding heavy maternal.

blackness encumbers,
water dashing stones turned dark and cold.
buffeting the wild heather,
endlessly stampeding green grasses.

it batters down upon my lonely cell.
blanket sky-drenched,
stones whispering their secrets.