

The Hugh Miller Writing Competition 2019-2020

Poetry Winner

Highland Boundary Fault, Balmaha: Alison Cohen

The Hugh Miller Writing Competition carries the name of one of Scotland's most endearing geologists, Hugh Miller (1802-1856), and aims to honour his legacy by inspiring new, original prose and poetry on the theme of Scotland's geoheritage. The competition is organised by the Scottish Geodiversity Forum and The Friends of Hugh Miller.

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

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Highland Boundary Fault, Balmaha

Our marriage, named a fault, has held,
is marked with serpentinite for our engagement
and a wedding band inlaid with islands —
Inchmurrin, Creinch, Torrinch and Inchcailloch:
Avalonia loves Laurentia, graffitied in the rocks.

It was ruggedness I fell for and the shimmerings
of schist, transported to the lowlands of my lap,
crashing from the closing of lapetus.
Our children have been labelled refugees, outsiders —
cobbles hauled in torrents, reddened in the sand —
welcomed though by holly and by beech, roots entwined
together with conglomerate, bedrock of their home.

Now we're resting here a bit — observing a collapse
of all that for this instant has tickled us on our surface.

By Alison Cohen