

Quemar Press

WW III : New Poems



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Second Preview of *WW III: New Poems* by Jennifer Maiden

Forthcoming from Quemar Press
in 2025

- 1) *WW III*
- 2) *Fumarole*

WW III

Is war a volcano or a dance, in which investment
a ballet slipper skids by accident

and in the stalls we hold the moaning dancer

and maybe still lapfuls of golden lava?

Reviewing *The China Shelf*, a kind critic worried

that my reference to the falling Empire could

lessen the idea that it wasn't just falling

but exploding, and possibly dragging

it allies hellward with it, but he was only

considering one poem and of course the book

and others before it always took

often a stance of sharper warning -

sharp as the subs on the shelf, if you like,

or the sleek subs on the undersea couch

to fight China for America, as America

openly promises, and the war even better

if they can use Ukraine to weaken Russia,

the evaporating Ukraine with its uses

numbering a thousand when near dead
twitching and flashing on a broken grid,
money for a European war chest then
the only way for the European Union
to attract investment to itself at all.

Then there is the reverse reciprocal
as evidenced when the state of Israel
drags the ostensible empire into murder
as adorably the pet eats the master,
each still in a dream of molten manipulation.

'Island-hopping' is the current American exercise
in the Pacific where the live volcanoes rise
in their habit of island-drowning.

In your lap you disentangle the mangled dancer
from tar lava that flamed honeyed milk in forming.

Fumarole

George Jeffreys woke up on a bed next to autumn roses
at a bedroom window in Clare's Mother's House
in Mt Druitt, having had another waking dream
about the 100,000 dead and wounded in Gaza,
over 70 per cent of them women and children,
some of whom he had known. Corbyn and Clare
at the bed end with the flickering computer
were watching live Iceland volcanoes, the colour
of embered autumn roses, a module for Corbyn's
home schooling in which they could measure
the way the lava rose, made brief mountains,
then collapsed from the rim down, the fissures
in the porous sides outpouring smoke and gas
but not molten rock, which above would churn
in white, yellow, gold, russet petals. The tears
were called 'fumaroles', Clare was telling her son,
as he mapped the deep layers the lava came from.
Clare saw George's eyes and remembered each lost
one, too, with their studious gaze, flushed hope-roses

in each helpful face for the family cameras,
then oblivious colourless whiteness in dead skin.
She said, 'Of course lava goes up in a straight line',
helping Corbyn and also helping George,
who had been called 'antisemitic' for daring to suggest
Epstein and Maxwell a similar sexual process
the Kibbutzim also provided at one time,
that leading to power perversions now and murder,
in a line available for observation.

She said, 'It's always disconcerting when an insult
is antique. I didn't think the antisemitic thing
was still viable after the witch-hunt against Corbyn.

Jeremy, of course, I mean, not you, dear.'

Jeffreys sat up next to them, and asked

'Why is the smoke sideways and the lava so straight
when the molten rock is so much heavier?'

The answer seemed to need much pen and paper,
while, wind-churned as live roses in outer autumn,
the summit burst apart in a renewed fountain.

There is no monopoly in molten lava.
