Transcript

Preview of episode:

Jane Griffiths: I still really enjoy disconcerting people because people who know me as a poet will say when they realise that I'm at a university: “Oh, you teach creative writing”, and it won't be a question. It will be a statement and I love saying “no, I'm a medievalist.”

Wadcast intro tagline: “you're listening to Wadcast, a podcast from Wadham College, University of Oxford. Bringing you interviews, seminars and stories from our community.

Producer’s introduction:

Martin: Well, a warm welcome to you dear Wadcast listener. My name is Martin. I work in Wadham’s communications team. In this episode I talk to our fellow in English, Jane Griffiths. She has a new poetry collection out: Little Silver. Jane reads some poems from the collection for us and we discuss their themes, her writing process, being a poet and an academic, and more. Let's not waste any time. Enjoy episode 6.

Martin: Thank you so much for your time, Jane. Thank you for hosting us in your office - what a lovely space it is. It's great to talk to you today about little silver, your new poetry collection. You had a book launch for that recently, how did it go?

Jane: It went very well. It was with Shazea Quraishi and Greta Stoddart who also had new books out from Blood Axe in the same month. And so we each read 2 short sets and we had a discussion afterwards. It was delightful, actually. We'd all read each other books beforehand, and so we were really able to speak to each other, and in a strange way, I think they did have quite a bit in common, although it was pure chance that they were the three books that Neil was publishing that month. But certainly Shazea and I had themes of making in common, the relation between art and life, and Greta too had some elements of that and her habit of holding up phrases for examination is something that I feel I'm doing too when I write, and so we did have really quite a lot to talk about and it was fun.

Martin: That's great to hear. You mentioned that one of the themes of your own collection that is shared with some of the other authors is that of making and... art as life, did you say?

Jane: The relationship between art and life and what art can do with life.

Martin: Could you unpack either one of those themes a little bit more for us?

Jane: Yes, I could try. I think this book little silver is a book that, among other things, is very much concerned with inheritance and what we leave. There are some poems in the book that deal with childlessness, but then think about forms of art as other ways of leaving an inheritance. There's one sequence in particular which is addressed to my grandmother who was a Potter herself. And it thinks through the various forms of making that we both engage in, and it also addresses the fact that I don't have children, which she would have minded. Most of what I do she would have loved, but that she would have not loved and in the end, in a kind of [unclear], the poem moves into questioning. But what does last ultimately? All forms of inheritance, in the end are going to go adrift, become illegible, and there are several poems in the collection that deal with what happens to

artefacts? So there we are living our lives trying to make something out of them, which does seem worthwhile, but then ultimately, even the artefacts go and the children too.

Martin: Is there a particular poem in the collection that you feel really highlights that theme?

Jane: Yes, I'll read new Atlantis. New Atlantis: Unthinkable that what's native to us as air or its shell's scroll, continuous, to the hermit crab could be lost. The familiar contours of town and house submarine: our stairs spiral a habitat for barnacles and impediment to sharks, our night lights nightly lighting the seabed. Today, when Dunwich Bells come tiding over, we share their tongue still who soon ourselves will be deeper and further out than those ladies in pinnacled wimples of pearl who knew London as Troy Novant, than the legions in fish scale armour marching up from the coast, (then) to name it Londinium? So far out we'll be our words will drift, our phrases turn senseless. She sells seashells on the sea. and even this piece of paper in your hand, hush unthinkable. Look, someone will say, do these primitive signs stand for waves on the shore? Or do they outline an aperture? Perhaps even some kind of door?

Martin: Forgive the pedestrian question, but is there a particular line or stanza that that you feel particularly proud of? Or is your favourite?

Jane: I think apart from the sheer audacity of having put part of a tongue twister into a poem that I have to read out, I like our Night Lights, nightly lighting the seabed. I'm extremely fond of that.

Speaker 3

It's nice, yeah, what about that stands out for you?

Jane: It's partly the word play in it, but it's. It's also, I think because I spend a lot of time in Cornwall in a house that's right in the far West of the coast and there are, according to my friend Judith. 7 lighthouses that you can see from the cottage - she's been there longer than I have. I can only see four, but one of them is the Land's End lighthouse and it's also a shipping lane, and so you see the lights of ships going past all the time at night, and you realise that the ships must be looking back and seeing the lights of the town, and if they've got a chart to hand, saying that must be St Juste. And there's something wonderful about the town signalling to the ships, the ships, effectively signalling back to the town and the absolute seriousness of the lighthouses, which are still functioning. I find it very moving that there they are saying land, but danger, danger, danger and I discovered recently that each lighthouse flashes. To a different pattern, so that again, if you have the chart, if you're slightly lost, you can say it's that pattern. That's the one on the end of sille. Or that Land's End, good. Heavens, that's far too close and out you go. The idea of communication that's not verbal but done by lights I find delightful. It's wonderful looking out at it, and of course it's dark there so you have the stars over arching as well and all the different sets of lights shining at night communicating different things is marvellous.

Martin: The title of the collection as a whole is little silver. You have said it's connected to your childhood home and its destruction. Which I think does raise at least to me questions of inheritance and what lasts. Maybe you could tell us a bit more about the themes behind the little silver title.

Jane: This goes back to when I went to look at my childhood home and I did know that it might not be there because about five years ago I think I saw it on right move quite by coincidence and it was clearly being flagged as probably a development opportunity and I alerted my parents and we all gulped slightly. And just before the 1st lock down a few months before I was passing Exeter and thought I will just go and have a look and I did. And because of the way the road goes, I could get to the end of the road and look up. And because of the way the light was through the trees, think it's

not there. And so I had the choice of just turning away. Thinking I know it's not there or actually going to look, and I thought about it for awhile and thought no I am going to look. And I'm glad I did, because. I went up. It had obviously quite recently been demolished. There was rubble there. And I looked at it and I in a strange way could not see the rubble. The house came back. It was a very strange moment, and there's a kind of shiver like a segue in a film and the house and the garden were there again, and I looked at them like to see a faint night of rubble through them, but they were there and I thought, right? That's that I've got you and I walked off down the hill and I walked back through Exeter along the route that I used to take. In fact, to play group and to my primary school and I passed the end of a very small and strange little enclave of houses called Little Silver, which had always fascinated me as a child. I loved the name and the houses. Just on the edge of it, that front the main road has wonderful stained glass fanlights and beautiful bay windows. They're sort of early 18th century, slightly Gothic. And I thought I don't think I ever went down that lane. I'll do it now. So I walked down it. And stopped dead because I realised that I had been down it before, because although I had no memory of it, it was a place that I've been to in dreams. So you know when you're in a nightmare and you need a safe space and you can, sometimes if you're lucky, summon it. It was that I sometimes have nightmares about being lost in East Oxford and charging down lots of red brick terraces, and every so often I will come to this space, which is a sort of grass, birches and some rather lovely 17th 18th century houses around the edge and that's it. And it's not off the Cowley Rd. It's at the top of St Davids Hill in Exeter. And so I wanted to write something that put those two things together. And of course, little silver. The word silver probably comes from silver armed cops, so little silver small cops. And I realised after writing the poem that that means that it links to Dantes Salva oscura in the inferno. That very famous line where he says that at the midpoint of life he was lost in a dark wood and couldn't see the way forward, which felt retrospectively exactly right for the poem Little Silver. So I think it's a poem that is thinking about, you know, the way through life. And as you say, what remains and what doesn't and how it can be saved if it's no longer really there.

Martin: That's great, it's a really rich coalescence of different events and feelings, experiences in that title. Maybe you'd like to read little silver for us?

Jane: I would. Little silver: What would it mean to write a house on a hill, to have that lucidity to start from - one word following another, as feet fall in a drift of leaves, making out a pattern that is real entirely as the path you summon to return and the house in its airiness, it's spring-boarded corridor and view of a sky bright slingback of river. If it weren't for the trees, that is. The path home always comes down to this: little silver, what you were born with.

Little Silver, what you were born with: a clutch of talents, a clearing in the wood. A charm slipped under tree roots, promise - kept in that dream you have of pursuit down red brick terraces to sudden spaciness where the road opens on long grass, silver birches and you pause in near recognition, then escape down a side street you couldn't have made-up. If you could leave off here, you said - Little silver, a true and double passage.

Little silver, a true and double passage. A small gift of tongues to take you out into the world’s roundabout ways and crossed purposes to talk of leaving, to talk of anything but.

The house on the hill always above and beyond the word, impervious: its paper-white walls and indelible ink roofline, drawing the eye through leaves at the turn of the lane, where the sky’s clearing. Little silver, the coin leading home.

Little silver, the coin leading home up the hill past the unhinged garages of Taddiford and through its red stone arch to a road slipper as a stream brimming over or rain going under the stream: over, again. If you could leave off here, you said. Little silver, what you come back to when your own path home leads only to this: A blank space, a little silvering between the trees.

A little silvering between the trees, skylight where no light should be, a level site and rubble that was the house on the hill, its singing slate and blaze white gable, its wood-framed cavernousness. The unselved space impossibly too small for the house that you still see standing above the valley, that you lift and lodge in the 8 rooms, storecupboard, loft and corridor of the heart. That you carry off quietly down the hill to little silver.

What would it mean to write a house on a hill? To write it and see it standing singly, without overspill, to have that lucidity to start from? Not to need the words for it, seeing it stand alone, not to chase the shape of it through the wood to the point there's no unknowing - how it's unbeing's blazed in black and white between the trees.

And not to repeat this. Not to turn from the shocked hole in the hill to the broken charm that is little silver.

Little silver the long way home. Little silver, a kind of hedginess. Little silver, a name for the unknown. Little silver, the house in mind alone. Little Silver, a feint and narrow passage that's means to an end, a paper trail back to the void of what you were born with. The writing that wont put house and hill together, the sleight of heart, safe house that was never your own, and the silver unleaving where you turn and leave off. Gilgarran is the lost house on the hill.

Martin: What can you share about the process of writing that poem, either in terms of the craft or your emotional experience processing the childhood home?

Jane: Yes, that's a really good question. It was at home. I started not at all knowing what I was doing. I simply realised that I wanted to write about the loss of the House, that I probably couldn't write about it directly, and that little silver seemed to be a way into doing that, and silver is a very resonant word for all the reasons I've suggested before reading the poem. Also quite disconnectedly because I work as a jeweller as well and mostly in silver, and I think that feeds into the idea of the paper trail and depth through the woods and that the pieces of silver and trails that you follow and so on. And so I simply started and much more than is usual with me, tried just to see where it would lead. It became quite long. It had at leas two further sections, and then I gradually realised quite late in the day actually that they really weren't adding anything, and so I took them out. And then at certain points thought, what is it I'm trying to say at that point and refined certain lines emotionally.

I find the last line almost impossible to read. There was a point where I couldn't quite read the stanza where I talk about it not being there, and that's fine now. But the last line where I name it. It's really hard to say. And it's an odd one because. Although I think it's not apparent from this book, in a sense, it was a home that was lost twice over because when I was eight and my brother was four, we left this house. So we were quite young and we emigrated to Holland and I think it was unlucky in that we moved from a very leafy house on the edge of Exeter campus. In fact, to a, rather a new town in Holland. Very concrete, no trees, it was awful, and certainly for me, and I've increasingly realised for my brother, Gil Garen became a kind of last great, good place. My brother recently made a boat and emailed me and said I've just named it Gil Garen, is that mad? And I said no, that's brilliant. And so it was, in a sense, already lost. And in my previous work I've written a lot about the experience of moving both in terms of the loss of the House and in terms of acquiring a second language rather fast, and I think. In a strange way. Going back and seeing the house was no longer

there and then writing this poem. Made me think maybe I won't write about it anymore and maybe the one thing that I've always been saying from my very first published poem, which was a Newdigate prize winning poem when I was an undergraduate, yhrough to this book, the one thing I've really been saying is Gil Garen is the last house. On the hill. And now I've said it, so I can stop.

Martin: Yeah wow, thank you for sharing. You mentioned the writing approach you took with the poem was to just kind of start and not necessarily know where you were going with it. Is there another poem in the collection where you had a really strong sense of “This is the plan”?

Jane: I think I very rarely have a strong plan, but I think that with shorter poems it's easier. In that I very often start with a phrase and a kind of sense of pressure over something that I want to write about. And I'm a great believer in words breeding words, so if I start with a particular phrase it's quite likely to generate other phrases, and I quite often start with a page in a notebook that has a lot of linked phrases scribbled down, not in order, but in slightly mad Venn diagrams. And then I start piercing them together and filling in the blanks. And so I almost always end up writing something where I didn't quite know what I was going to write. And I suppose that's true of little silver as well. Actually, in that idea, that's that sort of recursiveness was something that quite early on suggested itself to me as something that was really necessary because it was a poem that actually really didn't know where it was going, and I realised quite early on it wasn't going to be 14 lines or even 20 lines. There was going to be a lot of it. And so I wanted that repetition as a kind of restart and then a pause and a restart as if it were constantly going forward or attempting to go forward. But constantly coming back to the same images, the same immoveable, the same words. Even in that case.

Martin: You had a few poems that you wanted to share. Maybe there's one you could share and maybe you could explain if you remember what line or two started it from which the whole more unravelled?

Jane:

I'll read Snow and Privet. Snow and Privet: Her first snow and they were leaving for good, they said - the two facts discrete as single flakes dissolving on the tongue. Hedges, hunch-backed, lent weight to the word giant. The sky damped down. It was very quiet. And above all, there was the snow, the snow endlessly unwriting itself. The snow laden on privet, its leaves braille-like, coding the snow. The innumerable snow birds slipping through her hands, her clumsy gloves, the privet’s silent morse. The word swansong and that dented blue car wing lodged in the hedge since before she was born: adrift, invisible, some long forgotten accident. The words cause and effect coming out wrong.

Martin:

Can you identify where it started with that poem? Like which line or two?

Jane:

The snow laden on privet, its leaves, braille-like coding the snow.

Martin: That's cool, I almost imagine the whole poem unfolding from that as a kind of code and pattern. It's nice.

Jane: Yes. And snow and Privet is an interesting one in that it's a poem that's actually about the experience of learning for the first time that we were going to move to Holland. And it happened to coincide with the really major snowfall in the winter of 1977. I wanted very much to think about the two things together and of course moving to Holland entailed changing language and the snow on

the hedges looked like a kind of code and so I started with images around coding the snow. The leaves. Looking like Braille. There was also the auditing, which I think in the end got edited out of the poem. Yes it did. It was in the poem once when we knew we were moving. We went to a Dutch language class at Exeter University and all I remember about it was that there was a man who stood on a white bridge and chucked bread to Swans while counting to 10. So it was to teach you to count to 10 in Dutch. And so those white birds crept into the poem as well at one point, even though they crept out again, and the ghost of them remains in the line, the word swansong. And it's a poem that highlights certain words like swan song like giant and in the last line a couple of other words. And that, I think, was similarly something that happened very early on in that because I was thinking about the change of language, I was thinking very much about how that change of language made me start writing because I think it's one thing to be born bilingual. You simply know that there are different languages and it's another thing to learn a language as an adult when it's a fairly painful process. But to be caught between the two when you're fully fledged in English, but you're still a child, so you can still learn quickly, it did a very strange thing to my sense of how language works. You suddenly realise without even realising that you realise that what you thought was stable. If you say table everybody knows what you mean by table. That's not true, and that's quite disconcerting when you're 8 or even when you're 4. Maybe, and I think that sense of oh, so language varies. It is different in different places. This means that a table is not the same thing as a [dutch word]. I think that got very embedded in me, and that uneasiness about language is something that really informs the writing.

Martin: It sounds almost like an unsettling experience or unmooring.

Jane: It was yes, and there's a poem in my first full collection called Bilingual which actually explores the process of acquiring the second language, and apparently, which I don't remember, my mother says I refused to speak Dutch at all for six months and then I just spoke it as if I had always spoken it. I think that's right.

Martin: So this is your 6th collection of poems. You've mentioned that there have been some recurring themes throughout them. You may have already touched upon this, but how do you feel this collection kind of complements or contrast, sits with, your wider works? And maybe as well you could share about how you feel your writing has changed through the years?

Jane: I think in some ways as we were saying earlier, this book with little silver certainly is a kind of rounding off of some of the things that I've written about pretty much since I was in my teens. And I do actually wonder. I've started painting recently and I'm almost wondering whether I'm going into my post verbal phase. I, I don't think that's quite right. I think I will write some more, but I do feel there is a definite pause now and that this book, because of the relative explicitness with which it addresses ideas, inheritance and what could be saved, is a good moment to pause. Perhaps do a few other things, including in fact a prose work which is very new for me and then come back to poetry, perhaps quite a bit later, so it does feel in that sense, slightly different from the others, which I always felt were gradually developing those themes around houses, belonging, multilingualism. And the very. Sort of material. Medium of poetry itself, and actually trying to foreground that in the poems quite deliberately.

As to how my writing's developed. I'd like to think that it has become technically a lot more competent. When you start as a poet you need to apprentice yourself to an existing poet. Quite possibly a dead poet, and for me it was certainly Louis Macneice, whom I read and reread when I was 15,16,17 through to an undergraduate and my first poems sounded very macneice, so the first stage of the development was shedding that and then also, I think shedding a bit of Elizabeth Bishop

who was certainly in there as an influence as well. And the other important development technically I think was working out what line breaks are doing and realising that if you're not working with full rhyme, which I very rarely do, then one of the main ways in which you're controlling what you're doing is playing sentence against line and getting the breaks in the right places so that they serve like a form of punctuation but also a way of creating emphasis where there wouldn't necessarily be an emphasis if it was simply a sentence in prose. That seems absolutely vital and also, although I think I did try to do this from the first, keeping a system of related sounds in play, where even though it's not full end rhyme, there's a lot of assonance and internal rhyme and I'll always sound the poems out to myself always. Often change words for synonyms or even change the sense because the sound has to be, has to be right. They have to hold together as oral objects, and I think I've got better at that. I hope I've got better at that.

Martin: It really struck me when you were reading your poems, how sound was such a crucial part of them, I felt.

Jane: Yeah, I like reading them and I partly like reading them precisely 'cause I have put them together in that way and. I suppose I do write them for my own voice, and I suppose the whole thing of developing a voice in the more metaphorical sense is another thing that you learn as you write more, and that voice in a way is the technical control. It's knowing your subject. It's knowing what you could do with the subject, but it's also knowing the forms through which you can do that.

Martin: You mentioned, obviously, that you are venturing into different mediums. There's, you know, poetry, painting, prose, perhaps, but of course your day job, though it seems like you have maybe more than one job. Is that you are an academic here at Wadham. You are engaged in research. I'd be interested to know how you have found your academic side, which can often be drawing upon very analytic skills, or perhaps just a different set of skills. How that has shaped, formed or worked with your creative poetry. Whether there's been any challenges there.

Jane: Definitely yes. I think for a long time I resisted the idea that there was any connection between them, and I still really enjoy disconcerting people, because people who know me as a poet will say when they realise that I'm at a university. “Oh, you teach creative writing.” And it won't be a question. It will be a statement and I love saying “no. I'm a medievalist” and sometimes when I'm deeply annoyed with universities, I'll just say. “I'm a poet.” I am an academic, but I did try to keep them separate for a long time. But I've gradually realised they're not really separate at all. Just in little silver, there are a couple of poems that actually draw directly, either just in the form of quotation or more elusively, on Middle English works.

So at the end of Life Lines there's a direct quotation from Chaucer. But apart from that the sequence lifelines which we were talking about earlier draws quite heavily on Pearl, which is an elegy for a dead daughter. And it's not there explicitly, but I knew I was thinking about it while I was writing that. So there's that way in which the things that I know and talk about academically do creep into the writing. And then I suppose. Conversely, I wrote my doctorate on the Tudor poet John Skelton, and the reason I was drawn to him, which actually started when I was an undergraduate, was because when I first picked him up, I thought I don't understand this writing. He's very densely elusive, and he writes multilingual EA lot and he's very embedded in the political situations. His own time. So I didn't know what was going on, but I thought the one thing that leaps out at me as a 19 year old is that to him the most important thing in the world is being a poet. And as a 19 year old, I felt that was something we had strongly in common without having anything else in common at all, and across a gap of the best part of five centuries.

That was the reason that I started a doctorate on him, so in a sense I wouldn't have been an academic without Skelton, and I probably wouldn't have picked up Skelton in that way without having wanted to be a poet. And more recently, I think I've actually been wanting to bring the two together more directly. So my current research is on mediaeval lyric and I'm looking in particular at repetition and looking at repetition to see if it's a way into retracing poets' composition practises. The reason I'm doing that is because I can see some people in the 15th century doing things. And I tI think I see how you got to that because I think that I do it too. And so initially, having seen that because of what I do, I was trying to cut that out and simply write about it academically and I'm now thinking I'd quite like to bring an element or. I know this because it's what I know back into the academic writing and it's difficult to do, and I've had more trouble with this work presenting it at conferences than with anything else ever. For the first time, people are saying you can't say that. How do you know? How can you prove? And it's interesting and annoying, but it is also interesting despite being annoying because I am thinking of ways in which I can use this, and I'm currently thinking that I'm mostly going to write an academic monograph which is academic, and it can be done academically and it can use theory. It can. And use existing scholarship about mediaeval composition practises, but alongside that I'm writing the prose work that I referred to earlier, which is called belongings, and it's essentially thinking about things that I've either made or not made in various art forms. Thinking about the creative process. But there's a lot in there. About bilingualism and there's a lot in the monograph about poets who work bilingually and I'm beginning to realise that these things speak to one another, I'm beginning to think I could play up other areas that speak to one another and actually make these two works part of a single project. And although I'm not sure to what extent the monograph can incorporate the work in belongings, certainly belongings can incorporate some of what's going on in the monograph, and some of the irritating encounters I've had at conferences.

Martin: That's really cool. You may or may not wish to comment on this. What do you think the fact that you have had a bit more struggle at conferences presenting this material? What does it say? Say about scholarship in the way it's typically perceived.

Jane: That's really interesting. One thing it makes me think of is a famous saying of Philip Larkin's, which is that a poet's about as welcome at a university as a cow at the headquarters of United Dairies, and I do feel that quite strongly sometimes. But that said, actually just in the English faculty meeting last week, somehow. And I'm not quite sure how it came up that a lot of actually academics in this faculty, let alone elsewhere. Are beginning in different ways to explore modes of writing that aren't purely academic that are related to what they're doing academically, but they're not the straightforward monograph, the straightforward article, the straightforward conference paper, and they're not, I think... One of my colleagues actually said this, that really heavily footnoted perfectly referenced, perfectly justified way of proceeding, which wasn't, isn't saying that any of us are dissing that, simply that we can see other ways of thinking, and there isn't necessarily a complete boundary between practise and academic writing, or indeed between that awful phrase "lived experience" and academic writing.

Martin: "To circle back, you mentioned your research in mediaeval poetry, and you mentioned that some of your poems incorporate lines or plays on lines from mediaeval poetry, and I think you singled out lifelines in particular. I can't remember whether that was one of the ones you wanted to read.

Jane: It wasn't, but I could read Reading Ane Sature of the Thrie Estatis because that of course is a poem that alludes in its title to the play by David Lindsay, which is a mid 16th century play.

Martin: That sounds good.

Jane: Great so this. I mean, this is an odd and and in some ways complex poem. It started as an elegy for a friend who died just before the 1st lockdown, although not of COVID. And because of his funeral, which turned out to be on the morning of the day when we were locked down in the evening, I was locked down in Cornwall and three months to the day after his death, I was upstairs in the cottage and a seagull landed on the bedroom windowsill, which no seagull has ever done. It's a very awkward thing to do. It means the bird flying directly at the window and then kind of tucking itself in at the last minute. And this friend Paul loved seagulls. Now the bird looked at me. I looked at the bird. It tapped three times on the glass with its beak. We then looked at each other again, and then it flew off. I was fairly sure that this was somehow very strongly connected to Paul, so that was the first impulse that made me think of another bird in David Lindsay's Ane Sature of the Thrie Estatis. When one of the characters in the play dies, there's a stage direction that says a bird must be set free to represent the soul of this person. And that made me think of my grandmother's death and I went into the hospital. Into her room very soon after she died and she was there and the nurse was opening the window and she said we always do that when someone dies to let the soul out. And those three things seem to speak to each other very strongly, so this is a poem which starts in Fife in the mid 16th century and ends up in the far West of Cornwall in 2020. And it does that in about 15 lines.

Reading Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estatis on the Day of the Dead: *An craw or ane ke salbe castin up, as it wer his saull* so the playwright wrote, in gall and lamp-black, in Cupar, in 1540, in small broken-backed minims slanting upward from left to right as it were the real seabirds over the Firth. More to the direction than meets the eye, his marks on the page in performance, translating into an open armed gesture against the sky, sleeve flying wide and a startled crow or jackdaw winging it, as it were. The soul implicit. So too the body in the hospital bed, ended mid-word, mid hand, eyes and mouth opening as if to recall. The nurse busy about the curtains and on the lawn *an craw or ane ke* stepping out on italic feet: earthbound, investigative. The window ajar. So too the gulls off Kenidjack, come mackerel tide, how they just stop dead and plunge in long white screamers swifter than sight through the slick back of a wave as needle through silk or thread through invisible needle, their pass and repass between air and water fluent as it were someone saying on the radio 'Not in the world, but out there' or that seabird rapping 3 times at the glass, three months on, our quick eye to eye and its turn of the head on the wing, as it were.

Martin: Thank you, I was going to ask you know whether you have any hopes for what the reader will get out of experiencing the collection.

Jane: I would love it if readers felt that it was a cohesive collection in which the poems really do speak to one another. Are not simply a collection of poems in that they happen to be between the same covers, but that they are a collection in which the same themes of loss, elegy, inheritance, survival, kind of play through one another and playthrough I suppose a set of particular far Western landscapes as well and that they do build to a whole.

Martin: That's great, so little silver is available to purchase now. I will leave a link to a place where you can buy it in the show notes and would encourage our listeners to do so. Is there anything else you'd like to plug or draw people's attention to before we finish?

Jane: I'd very much like to mention the launch that we're going to hold at Wadham, which will be on the 10th of November, 18:00 to 20:00 in the Okanagan Room. And it's going to be jointly with the poet Jane Draycott, whose new book The Kingdom is about to be published. And we'll both be

reading and we will, I think, be taking questions and we will be selling our books and there will be wine and nibbles.

Martin: I love wine and nibbles and poetry, great. I'll include the details of that in the show notes and thank you again for your time, Jane.

Jane: Thank you.

Martin: Thank you for listening. If you have any comments or feedback about Wadcast, we'd love to hear from you and continue improving the show. You can leave your feedback by heading to www.wadham.ox.ac.uk/wadcast. Bye for now.