



the arch

photographs
by Geart Tigchelaar

and excerpts from poems
by William Soutar

contents

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Poems by William Soutar (1898 – 1943), selected by
Geart Tigchelaar

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The Shoreless Sea

Above the darkness and earth's wandering hull
A frail moon hovers like a lonely gull.

from Beyond the Garden

Beyond the garden is the town;
Beyond the town the furrow'd shire;
And still beyond — what world unknown
Is waiting for the traveller.





from Scotland

Whan ye come hameless here
And ken ye are at hame.

The Wind

A blind and hameless body
Round-by the mirklin hour
Cam chappin on the winnock
And fummlin at the door.

Back and fore he fitter'd
Sae wander'd and alane;
But ilka lock was sneckit,
And nane wud lat him in.

Syne wi' a breengin belloch
His rousin rage brak lowse,
And the dingin o' his dirdrums
Rattl'd a' the house





Beyond Loveliness

High on the hillside,
Where the rough track enters the wood,
I sat in the sun;
The noonday silence, like an earthy mood
Over and about me,
Wove through the sense with the warm smell of grass.
I was content; and had forgot to brood
Forgetting my own mind:
“Earth’s beauty is enough,” I said:
“And I at one, within this solitude,
Sharing a sunny stillness
Which lingers as a wind
Between the branches of the blood.”
And it was then that an old man trudged by
Bearing his pack of sticks:
He had no eye for nature; and his track
Was downward to the town:
With him my thought went down
As I was minded of man’s misery,
And that the way he journeyed was my own.

King Worm

What care I for kirk or state?
What care I for war's alarm?
A' are beggars at my yett:
I am King Worm.

Aye a getherin girst I get;
A lippen hairst at time o' hairm:
Want and wastrey mak me fat:
I am King Worm.

The hale world is my heapit plate,
And death the flunkey at my airm:
Wha sae merry owre his meat?
I am King Worm.





A Scowtherie Day

The weet stanes glint frae the stibbly fields
And the windle-straes blaw by:
The wee beasts hunker into their bields
And nae birds cry.

Frae raggity rungs the fluffers flap;
The flungin burn fraiths doun:
And a drucken cock on the steeple-tap
Gangs yankin roun'.

The Arch

The days of our life are a bridge
Between night and night:

And we look not on eternity
But upon its light

Broken into beauty, by the day
And the life of men,

As the day is broken on the world's edge
By the falling rain.





He Who Weeps for Beauty Gone

He who weeps for beauty gone
Hangs about his neck a stone.

He who mourns for this lost youth
Daily digs a grave for truth.

He who prays for happy hours
Tramples upon earthly flowers.

He who asks an oath from love
Doth thereby his folly prove.

Mourn not overmuch, nor stress
After love or happiness.

He who weeps for beauty gone
Stoops to pluck a flower of stone.

A Summer Morning

Earth is so lovely at this hour
That every dull stone
Seems, in the generous light, to have grown
Alert; a sentient thing
Which joys, even as every flower
Seems joyous and would loosen from its stem
To float with butterflies on fragrant wing:
And no less happy is the man who stares
On stone and flower; and unawares,
Like to a god, is blessed and blesses them.





Sang

Hairst the licht o' the müne
To mak a siller gown;
And the gowdan licht o' the sün
To mak a pair o' shoon:

Gether the draps o' dew
To hing about your throat;
And the wab o' the watergaw
To wark yoursel' a coat:

And you will ride oniewhaur
Upon the back o' the wind;
And gang through the open door
In the wa' at the worlds' end.

The Room

Into the quiet of this room
Words from the clamorous world come:
The shadows of the gesturing year
Quicken upon the stillness here.

The wandering waters do not mock
The pool within its wall of rock
But turn their healing tides and come
Even as the day into this room.



Geart Tigchelaar (1987) is a Frisian poet, writer and translator living in Ljouwert in the Netherlands. For his work he has won the Tamminga Prize for his poetry debut *leech hert yn nij jek* (“empty heart in new jacket”) in 2017, and the Obe Postma Prize for his translation of *Erik of it Lyts Ynsekteboek* (“Erik or the Little Book of Insects”) in 2016. He is currently working on his second novel and is eager to start on a new poetry collection. He also edits the literary journal *Ensafh*, travels by bike, and drums in the doom-metal band *Doomwâld*.

Geart cycles to raise money for CooP-Africa (Cycling out of Poverty), a Dutch-registered charity with partners in Kenya and Uganda working at a grassroot level with the community to improve access to education, healthcare, work and income with bicycles.

www.gearttigchelaar.wordpress.com
CooP-Africa (Cycling out of Poverty)

David Eyre was born in North Lanarkshire in 1972. He studied literature and Gaelic at Edinburgh University. His first novella *Glainne* was published in 2015 and his first novel *Cailèideascop* appeared in 2017, both with support from the Gaelic Books Council. He also writes poems in English and Gaelic, and is currently working on his first collection *Observation of Forms*.
www.davideyre.co.uk

William Soutar (1898 – 1943) was a Scottish poet and diarist who wrote in English and Scots, and left a substantial legacy to Scottish literature. Apart from a period of service in the navy during the First World War, and some years in Edinburgh, he lived most of his life in Perth. An invalid for much of his adult life, he was bedridden from 1930 but continued to write, including verses for children. He said: “My life’s purpose is to write poetry—but behind the poetry must be the vision of a fresh revelation for men.”

The poets Geart Tigchelaar and David Eyre met in St. Andrews when both took part in StAnza 2018. During the festival they began their own project, the translation of Geart's poems from Frisian into Scots. When invited to recommend poets for the inaugural Soutar Festival of Words, StAnza were happy to suggest that Geart and David might be invited to meet again to discuss their project. This event took place in Perth in April 2019.

Geart cycled from the Netherlands to Scotland for the Soutar Festival of Words, and afterwards he and David travelled together across Scotland. As well as his bike and tent, Geart brought with him a newly discovered enthusiasm for Soutar's poems. Geart kept a Facebook travel journal of his 2019 visit to Scotland in the form of photographs, one posted each day on his journey, along with a suitable Soutar poem or excerpt. These beautifully matched poems and images are now gathered together in this e-book.

The inaugural Soutar Festival of Words, organized by Culture Perth and Kinross in April 2019, celebrated contemporary Scottish culture and the beauty of the Scots language with the spirit of William Soutar holding the festival together. The festival took place at numerous venues and outdoor locations across Perth, providing opportunities to access new and unusual literary platforms and events. The next Soutar Festival of Words will be held in April 2021.

StAnza wishes to thank the National Library of Scotland, the Friends of William Soutar, the A. K. Bell Library in Perth and the Soutar Festival of Words for helpful responses to our queries about the poems of William Soutar.

