

3 Selected Poems from

100 Sonnets of Galactic Love

by Keith Hackwood

XXII

How many ways to offer up the swan feathers
Around my heart, clipped and quilled for dipping
In my blood? I scratch and trace the tails
Of words, rattling the emptiness like skeletons -

Reddening the page is the pelican's duty, and
No one knows the flashing prism's dance
But the peacock perched to whisper in your ear
Of fire and light and the journeying of the raven.

Sometimes I dream of the unicorn,
Gallopng free through forests and valleys,
Sipping honey from streams

Which run down the centuries
Of your hair, spread down
To soothe the wounded earth.

5th April 2002

- *Keith Hackwood*

XXIII

You call to me along the canal, 'Come quickly'
In a voice as green as flowing life.
Compelled, I run to meet you, up the dusty towpath
Beside the turbid waters,

Not noticing the stones as they peek from
The mossy earth, or the still grey sluice
Where once the water overran to fill
The lost basin of time.

I see you under the giant oak, smiling,
As the ancient wizard turns his fingers
Into snakes and exploding buds,

And following the revolution of your
Gaze I see the sparkling dance of light
Across the holy water.

5th April 2002

- *Keith Hackwood*

XXXV

I catch no fish with this ruined net, nor set
Traps for molluscs in the glutinous mud;
I am a mapmaker with no *terra incognita*,
An octopus gambling his hunger on redemption.

Wherever the wind goes I go the other way,
The dust storms hurt my wretched eyes and cause
Me nothing but mischief. This sand is the worst kind
Of machine, impotent and blindly unrelenting.

You stood there, arms outstretched
Like a crucified angel, puffing your cheeks
And whistling away my suspicious gut

With the fire of your melody, chanting
New unbelievably beautiful koans
To the dancing company of crabs.

15th April 2002

- *Keith Hackwood*