



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0

## Andrew Greig

### Poems

#### Clouds

Clouds slide back  
their raggedy hatches

How human, we think  
easing away from the dock

They look peaceful  
yet their hearts are thunderous

Sometimes I wonder  
how long they can stay up

what can we do with  
such cargo as ours.

#### In a Dry Gorge

We walk each day  
in the shadow of the valley

so occupied in conversation  
our gesturing hands

entirely fail to grasp  
the implication of our situation

The light that pours down behind these crags  
this waterless gorge carved out by water

We block the light like sundial spikes  
make time and tell

how dark the shadow that travels with us  
the radiance it takes to cast it.

**The Landing**

When the children phone in  
to tick us from their To-Do list,  
we say Uh-huh Mmm Love you too  
and when we put the phone down  
see we've stopped winding  
the clocks on Sunday mornings.

Do they know we just don't care?  
Let light and dust fall as they will.  
Our days have simplified  
to getting up the stair.

Our world is one house  
as when we were children.  
All that matters is at hand.  
We meet on the landing,  
pause for breath and then  
regard each other face to face again.

**Registrar**

She looked at the world  
as though it had just died.  
But not for good.

When we gave up on a heart  
she would say  
Pass the paddles Charge Stand back.  
A world twitched and came back to us.

Most of course would die again  
within hours or days.  
Yet a few would go on to live  
long and profitable lives  
striding corridors of light.

In theatre she made everyone else  
look like they were trying.

When she dropped her gloves in the bin  
tried to join in the hi-jinks  
her white coat stayed buttoned.  
Her foot jiggled on the floor.  
She sat on the edge of her chair  
yearning for emergency.

In an unguarded moment she once told me  
Nothing else comes close  
and as always spoke truer than she knew.

**Andrew Greig** studied at the University of Edinburgh and is a former Glasgow University Writing Fellow and Scottish Arts Council Scottish/Canadian Exchange Fellow. He won an Eric Gregory Award in 1972, and his first book of poetry, *White Boats* (with Catherine Lucy Czwerkawska), was published in 1973. It was followed by two collections that reflect his interest in mountaineering: *Men on Ice* (1977) and *The Order of the Day* (1990). A selection of his poetry from 1970-2006, *This Life, This Life*, was published in 2006. In 1985 he published an account of the successful ascent of the Mustagh Tower, *Summit Fever: The Story of an Armchair Climber* on the 1984 Mustagh Tower Expedition, which was shortlisted for the Boardman Tasker Memorial Prize. A second mountaineering book, *Kingdoms of Experience: Everest, the Unclimbed Ridge*, was published in 1986. He published several novels: *Electric Brae: A Modern Romance* (1992), *The Return of John McNab* (1996), *That Summer* (2000), *In Another Light* (2004), *Romanno Bridge* (2008) and *Fair Helen* (2013); two books of memoir, *Preferred Lies* (2006), *At the Loch of the Green Corrie* (2011) and a book arising from a fishing quest for Norman MacCaig. Greig lives in Orkney and Edinburgh with his wife, novelist Lesley Glaister. His latest books are the poetry collections *As Though We Were Flying* (2011) and *Getting Higher: The Complete Mountain Poems* (2011).

[agreigy101@gmail.com](mailto:agreigy101@gmail.com), <http://andrew-greig.weebly.com>