

## CHANGING PLACES WITH WHAT GOES BEFORE: THE POETRY OF KATHLEEN JAMIE

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### ABSTRACT

Jon Coreli's essay "From Scotland to Suburbia: A Landscape of Current British Poetry," published in Chapman (1997) concluded that "today's best British Poetry [...] is associated with Scotland [...] The work of these Scottish poets exemplifies many of the qualities which I personally find most appealing in poetry: a diction which is both naturally colloquial and deliberately poetic, the ability to express intense emotion with unapologetic directness [...]" is well justified by the work of Kathleen Jamie, who will be the centre of attention of this article. My starting point will be her evocative poem "Mr and Mrs Scotland are Dead," an obituary-cum-requiem for a real but simultaneously representative couple, identifiable as working-class Scots, with a clear sense of values as concerns their class, gender role and national identity. Because modernity has erased or partially obscured these parameters, much contemporary poetry either looks backward to when Mr and Mrs Scotland were alive, or tries to come to terms with a new set of defining concepts. I will also lean heavily on Kathleen Jamie's travel writing, and in particular *The Golden Peak: Travels in Northern Pakistan* (1992).

This volume is dedicated to examining contemporary Scottish literature, which has recently been attracting so much attention in journals and newspapers both north and south of the border. James Kelman's Booker Prize for *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994), whatever the controversy about the award may indicate about the award itself and the author in question, highlighted in a most emphatic fashion that the relationship between what had seemed to be the margin, Scottish literature, and the cultural centre, London, had substantially altered. At the same time, it goes without saying

that many Scottish writers had been successful both before and after this event; nevertheless, it would be fair to say that Kelman's success enhanced an awareness that rather than there simply being individual authors, there was a distinct, vibrant culture at the vanguard of cultural expression, elsewhere.

My rather obtuse title is Shakespearean in origin, coming from sonnet 60: "Like as waves make towards the pebbled shore / So do our minutes hasten to their end, / Each changing place with that which goes before, / In sequent toil all forwards do contend." This bleak, melancholic pronouncement contrasts our belief that we are progressing with the suspicion that rather than advancing, the pebbles simply change place with each other. The Shakespearean metaphysical conundrum underlies the paradox inherent in every generation: the desire to believe that we are going forward is eroded by the nagging doubt that we are perhaps simply replacing what was there before. In other words, forward movement in time is not necessarily progress.

In this essay, I will analyse the work of Kathleen Jamie, born in Johnston, Renfrewshire in 1962.<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Jamie has won several awards, most notably a Somerset Maugham Award (1995) for her collection of poems, *The Queen of Sheba*, which is probably her best volume. New generations or new waves of poets are often associated with their concerns for everyday life, but although many of Kathleen Jamie's poems are contemporary, we should not discard her moving volume of elegiac love poems, *A Flame in Your Heart*, set in the Second World War, nor her volume of travel writing, *The Golden Peak: Travels in North Pakistan*. All-in-all, Kathleen Jamie has produced a considerable quantity of fine writing which has received recognition within the limited circle of people who read poetry. Laconically, she admits that she is "what they call an 'established poet'."<sup>2</sup> If this term indicates respectability, perhaps it also means the kind of poet who is anthologised; she shares the ninth volume of the Penguin Modern Poets along with two other fine poets, John Burnside and Robert Crawford.<sup>3</sup> In this essay, I will begin by analysing her travel writing, then, I will proceed to her poetry, and finally, I will address the major issues which her prose and poetry have themselves debated.

As the book's title, *The Golden Peak: Travels in North Pakistan*, informs us, this is a description of a traveller's experience in the mountainous region of northern Pakistan, but the emphasis lies not on a fixed geographical location but on proximity to China, India and the USSR. In fact, the volume's opening pages describe events taking place at a border crossing, where a bus load of Pakistani workers are returning home; they queue to have their luggage searched for illegal alcohol, whereas the traveller gets preferential treatment: "I was allowed to enter Pakistan on condition that I sent the Immigration Officer a postcard from Scotland" (5). The fact that the customs-house is the site where the action begins indicates that in addition to accounts of personal experience in a foreign land, the author will highlight differences in religion, political systems and gender through the eyes and experience of a traveller who is European, female and brought up in the Christian tradition, therefore an outsider on all fronts. At the same time, the border crossing and customs-house take on an additional meaning, in that not only are they places through which the traveller has to pass, but that the whole travel narrative describes the transition from one form of consciousness to another. She might send a postcard from Scotland, but the writer's perception of what Scotland is and means will have been modified by her jour-

ney: she will have become a different person, and Scotland will have become, for her at least, a different country.

This might smack of over-reading, but the writer gives us some clear indications in the opening pages. Take, for example, the following:

Northern Areas. It seems hardly the most imaginative of names for an area redolent with romantic sounding kingdoms: Baltistan, Dardistan, Kashmir. At first I avoided using the term because I imagined it to be as offensive to the people here as the term 'North British' to the Scots: a denial of their cultural identity and difference. I was right on one thing —it is politically loaded, but not in the way I'd supposed. (15)

Depictions of Scotland as a rugged, inhospitable, mountainous northern country were common currency amongst travellers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The metamorphosis of Scotland from barbarous to romantic kingdom is fundamentally a change in cultural landscape initiated by the publication of the Ossian poems and consolidated by the enormous success of the Waverley Novels. The drawing of parallels continues when Kathleen Jamie details one man's account of the problems facing Kashmir: problems of parliamentary representation, the crisis following partition, political stalemate and the promise of a better future under Benazir Bhutto might seem thousands of miles from the Kingdom of Fife, but the emphasis on certain parallels in the book's opening pages is surely a strategy designed to inform the reader that as much as an account of a lost, exotic land this is also a Scottish woman's journey of self-discovery.

Questions of political identity pop up throughout the rest of the book. When, at the book's beginning, asked by a gentleman for her nationality, she answers "Scots," to which comes the reaction "'Switzerland'? He lowered the paper and showed himself: a broad, bearded man in his fifties, handsome and dark. He looked puzzled" (11). Later on, Abdul, who works for the District Commissioner, inquires "Scotland is colony of Britain, no? Like Hong Kong?" I tried to explain the Act of Union, humbled by his knowledge" (86). Such remarks have clear-cut implications for Scotland in the early nineties: a Scotland which, through its increasing opposition of the Conservative government, saw itself immersed in a political battle about political representation which would lead to demands for devolution and its own national parliament. The most peculiar or possibly logical outcome of this political situation would be the complete disappearance of Conservative MPs from Scotland in the 1997 general election.

I have underlined the political parallels that the book brings to the surface, but I believe it would be wrong to read *The Golden Peak* as a highly politicised travelogue. Indeed, it becomes clear as the book progresses that the narrator becomes conscious of the fact that one's identity is determined by other factors, namely religion and gender. Initially, the closed world of the Shi'ite is intriguing, to say the least; she wonders whether she "wouldn't find in Shi'ite people the Calvinists of Islam" (17). The traveller's time with a purdah-observing family gives her food for thought and awareness of her own position. What can be of greater contrast to her own position as a free, female traveller going where she pleases than Rashida's account of life re-

stricted by a burqa: “Hands may show. Feet may show... Hair may Not Show” (22). She asks the father whether it is right that his daughters “look like tents?” (22). The father’s reply that the girls, as they have no problems, are happy, is not commented on. The clearest instance of difference is the traveller’s freedom to travel: in common with other Muslim women, Rashida would need her father or husband’s permission to travel abroad.<sup>4</sup> However, the distance between the two cultures is often reduced: “Mohammed came bounding out of a tea-shop calling my name. There was no hugging, no exclaiming. This is a Shia town. I’d done my restraint training in Scotland” (56). The influence of Calvinism in Scotland as a repressive force has a long pedigree since its inception in the form of the gendered myth of John Knox vanquishing Mary, Queen of Scots, and therefore requires no additional remark. But we should be aware that the suggestion made here is not that both cultures are equally oppressive — I would add that one of the strengths of the book is that it leaves so much uncommented — but that life is organised along much simpler, if not more universal guidelines. One touching parallel follows:

To understand their culture I found myself making analogies with my own, and it wasn’t difficult. Was Mrs Shah so different to my own grandmother, who speaks a fine Scots, and left school young for a life of menial tasks; for whom Pakistan is as remote and unimaginable as is Scotland for Mrs Shah? My grandmother can’t drive or speak a foreign language, has never crossed the threshold of a college; does not smoke, drink, swear or wear short skirts. She rarely goes out without a scarf. She’d get on well with Mrs Shah. They’d talk about their gardens. Some of the wealthiest Gilgiti families have the most glorious gardens, which they tend with expert and passionate care. They could no doubt exchange views about changing fashions: rising hemlines and shrinking veils. (37)

The immediate reaction to this proposal is that both women have been held back by their respective societies, and whereas modern Scots have moved on, confirmed by Kathleen Jamie’s own freedom to travel, for Rashida, the thought of travelling on her own is preposterous. Such a simple definition of progress and reaction is comforting from an exclusively western background, but, as the book goes on, through its use of estrangement, such a conclusion looks shaky at key moments.

One of these occurs when the book moves from the plane of the conceptual to the purely physical.

Gulfam got herself to her feet and waddled about in front of us, pretending a huge belly. This is what you want! The women rocked with laughter. Sajinn frisked me. My already ineffectual bust had shrunk to nothing, I weighed about seven stone. I wanted to explain that I wasn’t usually a stick insect, but this is what diet of rice and dhal does for me. That and wondering about glaciers... She pulled up her huge blue breasts, the reward of childbearing, as proud of these grand trophies as anyone would be of silver cups on the dresser. She pulled one by the scruff like a cat its kitten, and shook it at me. The other women nodded in approval. This is what you want! (163)

Her skinny, bony body compared to the physique of these mighty matrons is one of graphic contrast, as is their seclusion in the light of her freedom to wonder about glaciers. Yet, what makes this incident so disruptive? On one level, however well-intentioned these proud bearers of children may be of their trophies, the narrator has gone through a process of physical humiliation at the hands —literally— of other women, and has been found wanting. This marks out physical and cultural differences, while at the same time the victim is profoundly affected by her trial. In addition, this episode, occurring close to the book's conclusion becomes the experience that triggers the narrator's return. She feels, if not empathy for, a certain affinity with the matrons, as motherhood is one experience she has no desire to forego. Thus the ultimate freedom the traveller has is the freedom to decide whether or not to return home.

Although we could make a thematic distinction between her prose and poetry, the former about travel, the latter on contemporary Scotland, this is misleading. First of all, *A Flame in Your Heart*, as I have mentioned, is set in the Second World War. Although a sequence of poems which narrates the love affair between a pilot and a nurse and his subsequent death is simultaneously moving and restrained, it remains, unfortunately, a little-known volume. Second, Kathleen Jamie certainly does write poetry about travel, *The Autonomous Region: Poems and Photographs from Tibet* being the most obvious example. Again, I do not think these poems have received the attention they deserve. It might simply be that the label of New Generation weighs so heavily that attention is focused on contemporary and potentially politically committed poetry at the expense of everything else. What I intend to do, in order to make sense of a considerable body of poetry is to concentrate on three subjects which recur in her poetry, namely, gender, and particularly motherhood, second, the cultural landscape and thirdly, the language of Scots poetry.

Kathleen Jamie has written many poems on the subject of restraint training in Scotland, in other words her childhood. One of the most striking of these is “Song of Sunday,”<sup>5</sup> whose opening words — “A driech day, and nothing to do” indicate what is to follow: a day marked by the preparation of Scotch broth, watching Songs of Praise, and finalised by the call of “Bedtime!,” presumably as much a relief from tedium as anything else. Complementary to driech days is the freedom of small town life, where, on other days, children can roam, “loose limbed & laughing,” as the closing lines of “Bairns of Suzie” emphasises through its alliteration and replacement of the word “and” by the symbol “&,” which runs the words together in order to reinforce the alliteration. In addition, other poems, by their title alone, “School Reunion,” for example, might indicate that recalling childhood experience is a process leading to nostalgia. Nevertheless, the poem itself makes clear that the two are separate things. For example, take this vignette:

Linda		willowy acrobat
divorce		cartwheels, skirts
Expecting	(again)	cover her face

It has a strong visual impact in which the present is separated by the past by a space which is both short and long: short in the sense that not many years have passed from

playground games to divorce, but long in the sense that lifestyles are radically different. The most suggestive of these is “Hand Relief,” a humorous poem describing a grotesque incident. Liz explains, how, when “giving some bloke / hand relief, she’d looked up at the ceiling, / for the hundredth time that lunch-hour, / and screaming, slammed the other hand down hard / on the panic button... *I’m sorry it was just a spider.*” What disconcerts the narrator is that Liz herself, involved in esoteric divisions of the leisure industry, still uses the language of the past when “[s]he says, *you’re a real pal.*”

More introspective poems, such as “Wee Wifey,” reveal that the traveller to Pakistan is also houseproud, as the overtly colloquial title indicates. The wee wifey in question is a demon who sometimes torments the writer. “So I made great gestures like Jehovah: dividing / land from sea, sea from sky” but the division is inevitably impossible “because we love each other dearly. / It’s sad to note / that without / WEE WIFEY / I shall live long and lonely as a tossing cork.” This poem is frank, humorous, an admission that tidiness and order are part of her psychology. Another poem, “Royal Family Doulton,” itself a title suggesting the gaudiest of expensive household kitsch, concludes “One day, I said / I’ll have a calm house, a home / suitable for idols; but it hasn’t happened yet.” At this juncture it might appear that the return home has been accompanied by a narrowing down in scope. This is, in my opinion a mistaken conclusion. First, because it ignores the fact that the journeys are themselves journeys of self-discovery; second, because it ignores the fact that if few people travel to Pakistan, nearly everyone has a home, thus arguments about scope are unreliable; and third, because, the idea of change can never be exclusively assigned to politics.

The political nature of what is dubiously called domesticity is illustrated by the moving poem “Child with Pillar-box and Bin-Bags.” The evocative title sounds very much like a portrait by a Dutch master on display in a major national gallery, and, to a certain extent this is the case, as the poem describes the attempt made by a young mother to take a photograph of her baby. The background for the picture is a bleak, post-industrial landscape: a garden or an ornate interior is replaced by “blank hoarding.” The poem catches a moment of intense anxiety when the mother “took four steps back, but / the baby in his buggy rolled toward the kerb. / She crossed the ground in no time / it was fearful as Niagara.” Happiness suggested by “the baby breathed / and maybe gurgled,” words which communicate tenderness between mother and child, but the major reason for this poem being a portrait is that the photographer with “her cheap camera” is being closely observed by the poet. The mother’s struggle to frame the portrait correctly describes a basic human desire to retain memories, but the poet’s sympathy is tempered by the realisation that the photograph will not turn out to be all that the mother desired, taken, as it is, “in the shadowed corner, / beside the post-box,” a process which turns the poem into the portrait. The mother focuses on the child in the buggy, but the reader sees from a more distant viewpoint, observing how the portrait is framed by a modern urban environment, “blank hoarding,” which makes the moment of tenderness even more valuable as an attempt to cope with modernity.

The juxtaposition of person and landscape is the subject of one of the most dramatic of Kathleen Jamie’s poems, “Mr and Mrs Scotland are Dead,” again an arresting title, whether or not we take the dead couple as primarily real or representative or both. The landscape is bleaker and more detailed than in the previous poem, and

instead of a moment of tenderness between mother and child, we are presented with a requiem for the death of a couple. The melancholic opening lines, “[o]n the civic amenity landfill site, / the coup, the dump beyond the cemetery” gain their emphasis through the fact that the dump is beyond the cemetery; that its geographic location *beyond* implies a state beyond death for everything that is in the coup (a Scots word for tip). What is beyond recovery is the collection of discarded objects which belonged to this working class couple. These include

postcards sent from small Scots towns,  
 in 1960: Peebles, Largs, the rock-gardens  
 of Carnoustie, tinted in the dirt.  
 Mr and Mrs Scotland, here is the hand you were dealt:  
*fair but cool, showery but nevertheless,*  
*Jean asks kindly; the lovely scenery,*  
 in careful school-room script —  
*The Beltane Queen was crowned today.*  
 But Mr and Mrs Scotland are dead.

The obvious fact that the year in question might bear some relationship to Kathleen Jamie’s own childhood is less important than the fact that the thematic link throws us back to a more general remembrance of a Scottish past; the difference being that here the parameters are much more exactly defined. Mr and Mrs Scotland are working-class Scots: she with her “*Dictionary for Mother*,” he with “his last few joiners’ tools, / SCOTLAND, SCOTLAND, stamped on their tired handles.” Holidays to Kos or the Costas have largely replaced holidays to the west coast or Peebles, and the concept of a skilled worker with his tools has, in an increasingly technological society, virtually disappeared. But the narrator knows that something else has also been buried, for “he knew intimately / the thin roads of his country, hedgerows / hanged with small black brambles hearts.” Thus, it is inevitable that the final stanza of the poem, which I will quote in full, with its echoes of Prufrock disturbing the universe, is interrogative in form

Do we take them [their possessions]? Before the bulldozer comes  
 to make more room, to shove aside  
 his shaving brush, her button tin.  
 Do we save this toolbox, these old-fashioned views  
 addressed, after all, to Mr and Mrs Scotland?  
 Should we reach and take them? And then?  
 Forget them, till that person enters  
 our silent house, begins to open  
 to the light our kitchen drawers,  
 and performs for us this perfunctory rite:  
 the sweeping up, the turning out.

The process of discarding is expressed in the most brutal of terms, “shove aside,” and there is something incongruous between the size of the bulldozer and the minute-

ness of the shaving brush and button tin. What gives the poem even greater force is its last, long image of removing objects. In a highly economic fashion, the language of theft mingles with the language of death. Is the house silent because its occupants are sleeping or dead? If we see the act as an invasion of personal privacy, then we cannot escape the conclusion that looking through Mr and Mrs Scotland's possessions must be judged by the same criteria. Likewise, if foraging is condoned in one case, because we get a glimpse of the past and our inadequacies, for we do not know the thin roads of the country, this would also happen on the occasion of our deaths; this is why the whole process is a perfunctory rite.

A purposefully enigmatic poem asks but doesn't necessarily answer questions. However, it is undeniable that one of the questions faced by any Scots poet is how to cope with one of those possessions which Mr and Mrs Scotland owned but which current generations had discarded, and that is the Scots language. All the poems I have analysed up to now have been written in more or less standard English with occasional Scots words like 'coup' or 'wee', or features of Scots, like the use of diminutives, such as 'wifey'. In the poem "Graduates,"<sup>6</sup> the narrator suspects that Scots has a limited shelf life, thus she talks of her "bright, monoglot bairns" and her contemporaries, "we emigrants of no farewell who keep our bit language / in jokes and quotes." They are "emigrants of no farewell" as they have moved class rather than country, but the process of discarding has had the same results. Kathleen Jamie does write fine poetry in Scots, "Skeins of Geese" and "Arraheids" are two examples. The latter gives an alternative account of the origins of "arraheids." If they were weapons, they were female ones, as "[t]hey urnae arraheids / but a show of grannies' tongues." A witty explanation this may be, but also a serious point. It is undeniable that the question of language has marked Scottish literature since the heated debates of Scottish Renaissance: the irreconcilable viewpoints of Edwin Muir, Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid are well known. The impossibility of finding a literary language brings Archie Hind's *Dear Green Place* (1966) to a depressing conclusion; the question of a linguistic authenticity marks Tom Leonard's poetry and James Kelman's prose. Could we place Kathleen Jamie's poetry in this ongoing debate? I think not. As outlined above, it is obvious that the lineage I have traced is exclusively male, and it would make more sense to place Kathleen Jamie in another line, starting, possibly with Willa rather than Edwin Muir, accompanied by Nan Shepherd and passing on via Jessie Kesson to our contemporaries. Beyond the question of gender, this approach requires further clarification. The question of a literary language marks the fiction of Nan Shepherd as much as Lewis Grassie Gibbon; if Archie Hind describes the crudeness of life so does Jessie Kesson. Am I then suggesting an alternative canon, where arraheids take over? Yes, and no. Yes, in the sense that home and children are subjects which are not given that much treatment in Scottish literature, which had often seen itself as a predominantly male—Calvinist—culture. At the same time, when it does, it is often seen as a place to escape from, whether we are dealing with male or female; *Sunset Song* and the novels which complete the trilogy being the most obvious examples. No, in the sense that one of the features of Kathleen Jamie's poetry is its ability to switch over and across different areas: the home, politics, class. Arraheids must speak different tongues.

Whatever one thinks of the Booker Prize, Scots poetry had always been a minority taste in terms of sales, as is the case of all poetry, sustained by journals such as

*FifeLines*, *Chapman* or *Northern Words*, and small publishers like Bloodaxe. In a recent number of *Chapman*, the American poet Jon Corelis published a review of contemporary British poetry which provoked much commentary. He argued that British poetry was alive and kicking, and that Scotland produced much good poetry.<sup>7</sup> He then devised a taxonomy, dividing contemporary poetry into five tendencies: the Scottish School, the Suburban School, the Urbanites, the Academics and the Starters Over. His preference for Scottish poetry is a result of its directness, its use of “dialect for good ends” and its belief in “poetry as utterance.” The phrase “dialect for good ends” presumably means poetry whose use of dialect is socially real rather than purist, as would presumably be the label for followers of Hugh MacDiarmid or Douglas Young. Jon Corelis makes no bones about his preference for modernism, and the three qualities he approves of, namely directness, dialect, utterance, share a common lack of an overt political stance, whether along lines of gender, nation or class, itself presumably a political statement.

Throughout this essay, I have tried to show that what makes Kathleen Jamie an outstanding poet is precisely that she can combine both those distinctive features which Jon Corelis admires with those he is silent about. To conclude this essay, I would therefore like to turn to Kathleen Jamie’s own comments on the relationship between contemporary politics and contemporary poetry, as expressed in an article written for *Poetry Review* written shortly after the referendum in which Scotland voted overwhelmingly for a parliament with tax-raising powers. The article’s second sentence is provocative: “I woke up one morning and discovered that half my poems were obsolete” (35). This parody of Byron’s comment on fame leads to an equally dramatic but rather different fate: half of her subject matter, the overtly political, has been superseded. It is noticeable that she distances herself from MacDiarmid, “whom one day I will read properly. (To a young woman like myself [...] MacDiarmid seemed a ridiculous cockerel[.]” (35). She then outlines her conception of what contemporary poets have achieved. “One of the myths we have challenged and disposed of is that Scotland is a place of failures” (35). Although it would be a fruitless exercise to try and quantify the exact contribution of poets to this process, it is certainly true that the paradigms of anguish, which so marked the poetry of the Scottish Renaissance, have given way to “confidence and optimism” (36). She also insists, extending Corelis’s arguments about dialect and correctness, that “[w]e have discovered and explored polyphony —the multifold voices and languages and attitudes which are ‘Scottish’” (36). The article concludes when Kathleen Jamie and Joy Hendry ask each other whether they would consider standing for the new parliament. Joy Hendry gives her reply, which is unreported, and then the article concludes:

But there we are, we who had been so long outsiders, for good or ill, so long marginalised both within our country and outside of it, as Scots, as women, as poets, deliberating whether we would stand as MPs in our country’s own parliament. Indeed, we’d come a long way these past 20, these 300 years. (37)

The two markers, twenty years since the failed referendum of 1979 and three hundred years more or less, since the Act of Union, highlight the link between poetry and activism. But to proceed along these lines is to continue where the poet has de-

cided to stop, while at the same time ignoring the obvious fact that if half the poems are indeed obsolete, itself a debatable point, there is still the other half to consider. In other words, it is precisely at the moment when political dreams become reality, hence the article's catchy title, "Dream State," that the consideration that politics is too restrictive a word if applied only to public, political activities, in this particular case parliament and nation, becomes crucial. Marginalisation, as the quotation makes clear, is a phenomenon which crosses over several boundaries, hence the triple identification, "as Scots, as women, as poets." If cultural landscapes, a phrase Kathleen Jamie herself employs, can be changed by poetry, if resignation has been replaced by optimism, there is certainly a lot more for direct, colloquial poetry to do.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Kathleen Jamie's major publications are, *Black Spiders* (Edinburgh: Salamander, 1982), with Andrew Greig, *A Flame in Your Heart* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1986), *The Way We Live* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1987), *The Autonomous Region: Poems and Photographs from Tibet* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1993), *The Queen of Sheba* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1994). Apart from these volumes of poetry, she has also published a volume of travel writing, *The Golden Peak: Travels in Northern Pakistan* (London: Virago, 1992).
- <sup>2</sup> Kathleen Jamie, "Dream State: Kathleen Jamie on the New Scottish Parliament," *Poetry Review* 87.4 (1998): 36.
- <sup>3</sup> John Burnside, Robert Crawford & Kathleen Jamie, *Penguin Modern Poets: Volume Nine* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1996).
- <sup>4</sup> A law abolishing this requirement was passed, against strong opposition, in Egypt in January, 2000.
- <sup>5</sup> All the poems cited hereon are from *The Queen of Sheba*, unless otherwise stated.
- <sup>6</sup> To be found in the Penguin anthology, see note 3.
- <sup>7</sup> Jon Corelis, "From Scotland to Suburbia: A Landscape of Current British Poetry," *Chapman* 87 (1997): 4-16.