



Bold, Valentina (1994) *The Queen of Sheba by Kathleen Jamie; Kicking Back by Maggie Gibson*. Lines Review, 131 . pp. 62-64. ISSN 1952-1998

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Sometimes, this deadpan style is appropriate; there is a clinical quality, for instance, to "Anno Wreck Sick," with her "dying bone" and "shrinking skull." "Deadheading the Rose," probably the finest item, is a sequence following treatment for breast cancer; this has some of the survivalist qualities of Angela McSeveney's tragi-comic "The Lump." Gibson's heroine eventually feels herself "surfacing like a swimmer / who has almost drowned." The inverted allusion to "Not Waving but Drowning" is refreshingly positive in this context. There are occasional, tantalising, glimpses of an animated Gibson. "Yellowhammer" is, joyously, "born sunny-side up, jaunty as a jockey." "Heron," drawing connections between prehistory and the present, "slopes across the strath / on pterodactyl wings."

Gibson and Jamie seem to invite the label of "young women poets"; it is a dangerous action which restricts their potential for individualistic expression.

VALENTINA BOLD

. . . it is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet — no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who though he pleaded in armour should be an advocate and no soldier. But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by, although indeed the senate of poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning, as in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to go beyond them; not speaking (table talk fashion or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peizing each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject.

—SIR PHILIP SYDNEY: *An Apology for Poetry*