



A spell of Words

Books Reviewed:

[A spell of Words](#) [1]

Issue:

[104](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Annabel Gibb](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The 'Spell of Words' of the title of this volume of over 90 poems by Jennings describes the poet's experience of language as 'a password and a key', opening a door to understanding: '*... and the light is shed,/ The gold of language tongued and minted fresh.*' Many of the poems, written over a long time-span, return to this image of a spell. Others deal with the power language gives us to name and order our universe, and how this may diminish rather than enhance our wonder at it. A long series of poems describe individual animals, often by trying to state what the animal might think we think of it, and concluding by reminding us of our responsibility for the animal kingdom. A further theme of the collection is that of the child's world, seen from the distance of adulthood, a distance which lends an evocative, almost wistful, but somehow resigned, air to the work. Some of the animal poems could, with care, be read with children of perhaps nine-plus, but on the whole the complexity of the ideas expressed (often in deceptively simple language) and their contemplative quality suggest an adolescent or adult audience - I hope the collection does not suffer from being described as 'selected poems for children' as there is much to provoke thought. This is a beautifully produced volume, its cover carrying an evocative picture by Louise Brierley, and the generously printed poems tone to each crisp cream page - a delight to behold.

Running Order:

22

Source URL (retrieved on Dec '19): <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/104/childrens-books/reviews/a-spell-of-words>

Links:

[1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/a-spell-of-words>

[2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/104>

[3] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/annabel-gibb>