



Balloon Lagoon and the Magic Islands of Poetry

Books Reviewed:

[Balloon Lagoon and the Magic Islands of Poetry](#) [1]

Issue:

[109](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Balloon Lagoon includes not only much of Mitchell's earlier work for children, previously available only in anthologies or out of print collections, but many new poems. It is also the best of his collections to look at, with spiky line drawings by Tony Ross, and an arrangement in sections like the map of a forgotten poetic explorer: Elephantasia, The Rampages, The Woofmiaou Isles. For those, like me, who have been struck in the past by the poet's dark or angry side (represented here by 'Dumb Insolence' and the brilliant 'Back in the Playground Blues'), there is a new mellow Mitchell, grandparent and golden retriever lover, to enjoy and admire. You will not find a better elegy for a dead pup than 'For Number Ten': 'There are some insects and some flowers/Whose life is spent in twenty-four hours.' As always, there is his mischievous and provocative imagination, which delights and disturbs with strange connections, wild word coining, stomping playground rhythms, denunciations of cruelty and injustice and affirmations of commitment and compassion. 'Tinkling the Ivories' tells us 'There was an elephant/called Art Tautm/He played a piano/whose keys were human teeth,' and 'Turn Turn Turn' warns us 'There is a time for considering elephants/There is no time for not considering elephants.' The collection's presentation favours infant and junior school age children, but there are poems here for secondary children (and adults too).

Running Order:

63

Source URL (retrieved on Nov '19): <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/109/childrens-books/reviews/balloon-lagoon-and-the-magic-islands-of-poetry>

Links:

[1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/balloon-lagoon-and-the-magic-islands-of-poetry>

[2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/109>

[3] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>