

The Rising of the Kelpies

(public opening, Easter 2014)

Alastair McIntosh

Now do you see the great *Each-uisge*
water horse – twin kelpies towering vaster
even than their kindred on Loch Ness
from banks betwixt the Forth and Clyde?
And rising likewise spirited
upon page one of Chapter One
– the book of *Scotland's Future*

Each-uisge – harbinger of 'doom'
and that as 'law' as *dharma*
of our destiny unfurling;
a *kairos* time, our turning point
of transformation that wells up
from lochs and rivers – even now
canals it seems – that stir and flow
and carry ships on currents deep discerned
by artists, bards and other prophets who
perceive the signs that speak unto
the shifting humours of these times

I tell you: Scotland's name
will not go down in history
for the title of our currency or
scrapping of the Bedroom Tax or
wealth of oil or even Europe
(whether in or out or round about)

Scotland's name will be a light
a healing of the nations –
the day *we set off Trident*
the day we press red button of dispatch
each one of us within the polling booth
no cruel *explosion* but a soft *implosion*
within the very politics
they thought this evil would protect

Sent back again, sent back by us
to think again –
Repent! Repent! Repent!

A! Fredome is a noble thing!
(we'll hae nae thermonuclear warheads here)
Away! Away! Away! Away!
thus speaks the great *Each-uisge* on
its Easter rising day

Freeing the Unicorn

(in memory of Colin Macleod of Govan)

Alastair McIntosh

Have you ever wondered
why the Lion of Empire's might
stands rampant roaring proud
and not a little – loud –
while Unicorn of quiet understated way
(and therefore dangerous –
I've heard the anxious voices say)
is held in chains, tamed and restrained
from being magic, holy, wild and free
one-pointed spiral of awareness
that reaches from within this land
and on through you and me?

Macleod asked that portentous question
back in Devolution protest days
United Kindred camping out on Calton Hill ...
and girding up his loins to leap
as if a mythic beast on pounding wings
(with angle-grinder hitched onto his back)
he scaled the gates of Holyrood
with dreadlocks flying
eye of eagle, scrying

And though seen off by Palace guards
amidst the clamour of alarms, the yelp of dogs ...
and though turned back hotfooting it
across the gold-trimmed iron-cast gate
before the spinning diamond wheel could bite ...
Too late! The manacles that weighed upon
old Scotia's shoulder clattered crumpling
down onto the deadening cobbles ...
cut right through by searing blade
in realm of Spirit from within (for such is where
their deepest bondage
always lay)

That night beneath the stars high out on Arthur's Seat
sweet Finlay's People skirled their pipes and reeled
and stirred the Rhymer's slumbering clans awake –
one-pointed – gathered – to demanding common task
While shepherds watching o'er the White Stag's herd
perceived the Holy Rood, ablaze! – the compass
fire of Scotland's love (*put off thy shoes
tread gently, child, upon this ground*)
great opening of our people's way
for native, poor and also refugee

Receive this flame, this life that is
the Unicorn's God-sent decree
that reaches to the hearts of
you, and even that of me
... Magic, Holy
Wild – and
Free