

Marie Marshall bio for P'kaboo

*One drop of blood in the pool
and all the little fishes sing.*

(*Carmina Piranha* by Marie Marshall)

Marie Marshall, *Mairi bheag*, little Mary, little voice, would prefer to be introduced by a paraphrase of Balthus' famous telegram: NO BIOGRAPHY. BEGIN: MARIE MARSHALL IS A WRITER OF WHOM NOTHING IS KNOWN. NOW LET US READ WHAT SHE HAS WRITTEN. However, life isn't that simple. Marie was born in the 1950s in England and now lives in her ancestral Scotland. Her academic career was unremarkable and her professional career has been uneventful. In her late forties she began to write short stories and novellas. In 2005 she discovered a gift for poetry and it is in that field that she is now best known, having attracted praise from fellow poets such as Bruce Dawe and Mary Ann Sullivan, and having had upwards of one hundred and seventy poems published, including one on the wall of a café in Wales and one etched into an African drum in the New Orleans Museum of Art. *Naked in the Sea*, a collection of poems written in 2009 and 2010, was published in 2010. She writes in English, Scots, and sometimes French.

Marie was invited to become Associate Editor of the poetry magazines *Sonnetto Poesia* and *Canadian Zen Haiku*, and of the forthcoming anthology of modern sonnets *The Phoenix Rising From Its Ashes*. She is editor of *the zen space*, an online showcase for haiku and related writing. Her more macabre short stories have been a regular feature of the *Winter Words* literary festival in Scotland, where they have been read to an audience by professional actors.

According to Marie, her most satisfying literary experience was the brief time she worked with the late Vera Rich, the world's foremost translator of poetry from Slavic languages into English, proof-reading her latest translations.

Marie in her own words:

“**A clock is ticking...** Earliest memories must be of being three, because I can clearly remember my mother coming into my bedroom to wake me up on my *fourth* birthday. At school there was a dark girl and her older brother – their father had a round face and an Italian barber’s moustache. They had a Welsh name, were Jewish, and played Scottish bagpipes at school ‘open day’. The girl marched out into the playground, laid a couple of swords crosswise on the ground, and danced round them. At the end I looked up into the father’s face. He pulled out a white handkerchief and mopped up a cascade of perspiration. Their tartan was bright yellow and someone brought me back a Tam o’ Shanter bonnet from Edinburgh in the same tartan, and another in deep blues and greens with white and yellow chalk-stripes. **In between times** I can recall the warmth and smell of a new school sweater worn by someone else, the scent of someone else’s hair, the first time someone wanted to kiss me, the way everything seemed to change with a rush. **Early teens** seem to have consisted in trying to get into the Savoy Rooms in Catford, in a borrowed Trevira suit which was slightly too big for my bust, and trying to look cool in the process. Elizabethan Reggae, Pressure Drop, Long Shot Kick De Bucket. **Later**, all you really need to know is that I was born and educated in England, and then came to live in Scotland, where my family came from and which I love. I put all my confidence into my writing. I started by writing erotica because I found that nobody did it well. It was when I co-wrote a short story with Joanne Harris about a woman who falls in love with a tree that I realized that the clock had been ticking away the precious seconds of poetry and fiction that I hadn’t written yet. There is no time to lose...”