

# POETRY WALES

## 3.00 a.m.

The Welsh legislation specifically states that ‘No person living outside Wales may enter or remain in Wales without a reasonable excuse’ ....

—*Manchester Evening News, 6 November 2020.*

The radio fills with closed roads, police checks  
at the border and orders to stay local.

At 3.00 a.m.—and every hour of restless questions—  
the only route is through recall,  
remembering the best of how it was.

Tonight, that cliff path. Not the climb,  
not up the loose slate, shale and polished rock,  
the only hand-grab a blood-red snatch  
of rotting wire, not the rasping breath  
of gradient and watching every step.  
None of that.

Tonight will be  
the high and breezy cliff-top,  
grass rubbed down to nearly-nothing in the wind,  
open to all-round view—from grey roofs, sprawl  
of town and factories, and then inland  
to lonely farms and dots of working lives,  
to north and south and overlap of hills  
holding this coast. And the enormous sea  
alive with hectic light, the waves whipped up  
to spit and spray, their arguments with cliffs  
lost in the rattling air.

Tonight will be  
the far-side path, downward, one-walker-wide,  
channelled by rain’s familiarity,  
between the dizzying drop (our left) and (right)  
a bank with bracken, bramble, violets,  
topped with wool-snaggled wire  
and urgent bleating lambs; with crows, with gulls,  
with salt breathed in at every sunlit stile.  
Down, past the tangled pines, the broken relics  
of winter storms, old branches heaped, unreachable;  
down, towards the scoop of beach, rock-pools,  
a baby river trickling through the sand;  
down to its creaking bridge, the flat of roads  
and caravans’ exotic names and crazy golf  
and carpark grids.

Tonight—again, again—  
re-winding the loose-limbed insouciance  
we took for granted once, how much.