

The Month of the Asparagus

Keith Armstrong

The Month of the Asparagus spans some thirty years of writing and heartfelt commitment to the craft of poetry. It is a colourful journey from Armstrong's roots to the far corners of the world. He has a strong feeling for ordinary folk in all their complexity and demonstrates this in his lyrical grasp and desire to sing wherever he may be in his incessant poetic touring. This is the work of a rampant internationalist who never loses that local touch, combined with a sensual flair.

'His poems are rooted in the Tyneside music hall tradition, closely behind which is the august balladry of the Borders. His is an unashamed bardic stance, actor rather than commentator. Throughout the collection, the authentic lyrical note of this northern poet is struck.'

Michael Standen

'A traveller with an open mind and without any fear of contact; strange lives, countries and people succumb to his poetic and real incorporation.'

Uwe Kolbe, Berlin

'Keith Armstrong is one of the north's longstanding finest poets.'

Liz Forster, North East History

'There are those who tell the terrible truth in all its loveliness. Keith Armstrong is one of them, a fine poet who refuses to turn his back on the wretched of the Earth. He is one of the best and I hope his voice will be heard more and more widely.'

Adrian Mitchell

About the Author

Born in Newcastle upon Tyne, where he has worked as a community development worker, poet, librarian and publisher, Keith Armstrong now resides in Whitley Bay. He is coordinator of the *Northern Voices* creative writing and community publishing project and has organised several community arts festivals in the region and many literary events. He was also founder of *Ostrich* poetry magazine, *Poetry North East*, *Tyneside Poets* and the *Strong Words and Durham Voices* community publishing series. In his youth, he travelled extensively throughout Europe.

He recently compiled and edited books on the former mining communities of County Durham, the market town of Hexham and the heritage of North Tyneside. He has been a self-employed writer since 1986 and he was awarded a doctorate in 2007 for his work on Newcastle writer Jack Common at the University of Durham where he received a BA Honours Degree in Sociology in 1995 and Masters Degree in 1998 for his studies on regional culture in the North East of England. His academic study of Jack Common was published by the University of Sunderland Press in 2009.

His poetry has been extensively published in magazines such as *New Statesman*, *Poetry Review*, *Dream Catcher*, and *Other Poetry*, as well as in the collections *The Jingling Geordie*, *Dreaming North*, *Pains of Class* and *Imagined Corners*, on cassette, LP & CD, and on radio & TV. He has performed his poetry on several occasions at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and at Festivals in Aberdeen, Bradford, Cardiff, Cheltenham (twice at the Festival of Literature - with Liz Lochhead and with 'Sounds North'), Durham, Newcastle upon Tyne, Greenwich, Lancaster, and throughout the land.

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