

# Dunkery Beacon

*Winner of the Coleridge Poetry Prize 2024*

*Note: England boasts 176 Marilyn's,  
with Dunkery Beacon  
the highest point on Exmoor*

When the ark ran aground  
the Old Woman said:  
“I think this is the wrong place”.  
Then she muttered,  
“I’ll wring that dove’s neck!”

After some technical glitches,  
the ramp was finally lowered.  
Imagine their shock  
ending up here.  
The old man tried his best,  
and her nagging him  
to fix the boat, re-float  
and find somewhere milder.  
But the sea had receded.  
And there they were  
with nothing to eat but  
gorse and heather.

The cats scattered, the birds flew.  
My ancestors soon struck out  
in a southerly direction. Now, from time  
to time, passing swallows bring us news.  
Every now and then the odd sheep,  
goes missing, or a rambler vanishes,  
but those cunning felines still  
draw the crowds, filling the tills  
from postcard sales and cream teas.

As for us, our memories keep alight  
those long ago happenings,  
those rushed pairings,  
the rapidly rising water,  
that storm-tossed voyage,  
that stinking overcrowded ark,  
those forty days and forty nights.

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