



MENNA ELFYN is a poet and playwright who writes with passion of the Welsh language and identity. She has published nine poetry collections and three children's novels in Welsh, and also co-edited *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry* (2003) with John Rowlands. Her two bilingual selections, *Eucalyptus: Detholiad o Gerddi / Selected Poems 1978-1994* from Gomer and *Perfect Blemish: New & Selected Poems / Perffraith Nam: Dau Ddetholiad & Cherddi Newydd 1995-2007* from Bloodaxe were followed by her most recent bilingual collection, *Murmur* (2012), also from Bloodaxe. When not travelling the world for readings and residencies, she lives in Llandysul. She was Wales's National Children's Laureate in 2002.



MENNA ELFYN MURMUR

WELSH-ENGLISH BILINGUAL EDITION

Menna Elfyn is the best-known, most travelled and most translated of all Welsh-language poets. The extraordinary international range of her subjects, breathtaking inventiveness and generosity of vision place her among Europe's leading poets.

Her latest collection in Welsh and English is full of murmurings, such as the need 'to walk the earth as if there's a baby sleeping next door'. *Murmur* is a poetry of meditation, from the reverberations of dead poets to murmurs of the heart which force the poet to dwell on the irregular beat of the poet's lot.

Distant sounds too are heard from captivity in a sequence of poems about the last princess of Wales, Catrin Glyndwr, daughter of Owain Glyndwr, who was incarcerated with her children in the Tower of London for over two years until their mysterious death. Fittingly enough, *mur-mur* in Welsh also means *wall-wall*, so the book's *leitmotif* is one that stresses the distance between words and worlds – and the way poetry is a language beyond language which we can sometimes only grasp through sound.

Murmur is Menna Elfyn's first new book since *Perfect Blemish: New & Selected Poems / Perffraith Nam: Dau Ddetholiad & Cherddi Newydd 1995-2007*, and includes translations of poems by Welsh folk hero and poet of peace Waldo Williams (1901-71) which challenge the notion of the Celtic melancholy and testify to a 'hesitant hope'. Her own poems have facing English translations by leading Welsh poets: Elin ap Hywel, Joseph Clancy, Gillian Clarke, Damian Walford Davies and Paul Henry.

'Menna Elfyn is the firebird of the Welsh language, bright, indomitably modern and as undestructible as the phoenix. She gives hope to all writers in lesser spoken languages that great things can rise from the ashes'

— NUALA NÍ DHOMHNAILL

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