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Trinity: collecting October Twilight, New England Country Farmhouse, In The Grip of Sirens and more

R. W. Watkins

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Trinity collects the extended/electronic versions of *October Twilight*, *New England Country Farmhouse* and *In The Grip of Sirens*. Originally published in paper format, these titles are the first three installments in Poetical Perspectives--a series of short volumes of verse from Nocturnal Iris. Also collected is a controversial essay defending the seventeen-syllable haiku, and a selection of relevant images.

With *October Twilight* (2004), Watkins harnesses the classic Japanese poetry styles of tanka and haiku/senryu in a bid to illustrate the frequent underlying links between contemporary culture and the primitive, archaic--often prehistoric--arrangements of belief, manner, and ritual that were its ancestors. The verse forms and modus operandi in place, Watkins utilises modern customs, pop culture, and Western frivolity as a springboard for diving (albeit subtly) into a dark, murky pool of ancient Celtic (particularly Welsh) myth and folklore, early ceremonial sacrifice, historical malevolence, and humankind's basic 'animal' instincts and primordial fears. Eerie, often esoteric, and sometimes darkly humourous, these short verses were written from Watkins's Gen-X perspective, and introduced 'goth' and 'grunge' concepts to the haiku and tanka world in the mid 1990s.

Snug in our bedrolls,
we contemplate ancestors;
outside our pup tent:
the spectral blink of blue light
hovering above a bog

In *New England Country Farmhouse* (2005), Watkins pays tribute to Laird Koenig's 1970s suspense masterpiece *The Little Girl Who Lives Down The Lane*. Utilising (mostly) traditional 17-syllable haiku, Watkins draws on the plot of Koenig's novel and screenplay in varying degrees over three sections. The result is a subtly haunting collection in the spirit and mood of the original tale--a cult favourite which continues to echo the dark underbelly of the much-missed 1970s, and which was recently examined at length by Watkins in his book *View From The Cellar* (2012).

dying to be heard:
Chopin on the turntable
in a vacant house

This volume also features a brief introduction by alternative rock musician and visual artist G.B. Jones.

In The Grip of Sirens (2006) features Watkins collaborating with long-time friend and fellow poet Robin Tilley on a short series of renga--the style of Japanese poetry written complementarily or dialectically by two or more authors. Conceptually and stylistically, the two authors draw on a mixed bag of their most deep-rooted influences--incorporating ancient European myth, Felliniesque imagery, classic art rock, avant-garde minimalism, and cut-up surrealism. The end result of these often disparate influences within a co-authored context is a sequence of (mostly) lighthearted poems that seem to weave in and out of eras and states of

consciousness in a bid to defy the traditional boundaries of time-space. Its 'recreational' construction spanning nearly seven years, this volume also contains three experimental tanka and four envelope-pushing haiku courtesy of Watkins; e.g.:

stoned on acid,
the boy welcomes a naked spectre's advances
in his sister's bedroom

October Twilight, *New England Country Farmhouse* and *In The Grip of Sirens* remain available as individual electronic titles from Amazon.com.

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