

# *Eleanor Rees*

## *Poet*

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Eleanor's first collection ***Andraste's Hair***, (Salt, 2007) was shortlisted for the ***Forward Prize for Best First Collection 2007*** and the ***Glen Dimplex New Writers Awards 2008***. ***Feeding Fire*** (Spout, 2001) received an **Eric Gregory Award** in 2002.

***Eliza and the Bear***, her second collection is forthcoming from Salt Publishing, November 2009.

Recent solo readings by Eleanor Rees include **Ledbury Festival, The Poetry Society, The Verb BBC Radio 3 and Chester Zoo** where she was poet-in-residence. Eleanor is a part-time lecturer in Creative Writing at **LJMU** and works as a community poet for **The Windows Project**. Eleanor regularly works in collaboration with other writers, artist, and musicians.

### *About Eliza and the Bear*

*I did not know my lover was a bear.*

What is desired? Eliza needs the woods and her lover, the bear, but also yearns for the hearth in a tumble-down cottage with a hole in the roof. Eliza doesn't want to choose. Is she human? Is she animal? She is both it seems and only poetry will let this be said, in vivid and energetic rhythm, as body and mind fuse in the moment of expression and find a synergy that is truly wild.

These dualities find embodiment in the poems that accompany *Eliza and the Bear* - a man who gives birth, trees that sing, a dissolving house, a woman trapped in walls, a peasant farmer in his barren fields, the wife of a Victorian botanist who longs for a child while her husband 'discovers' the new world: winter songs and red hot hearths all boiled into a wintry broth, rich and necessary.

The poems cross boundaries and collapse distinctions, exploring what is outer and what is inner, finding correspondences and fusing false dichotomies. Definition and fixed meaning are evaded in favour of exploration and exposure. Poetic language here is the closest articulation of the truth, making connections which are organisms, ready to uncoil and grow into new patterns and sensations if tended to with care.

## About *Andraste's Hair*

...a heartfelt hymn to her native Liverpool. Her dense, textured renderings of its landscapes are eloquent, but it is her importunate, ambiguous relationship with the city that provides these poems with their drive. She is at once possessor and possessed: bestriding the rooftops like a descendent of Whitman one moment, breaking "the top from the cathedral . . . oozing steam/ cream"; diminished and vulnerable the next...

- Sarah Crown, *The Guardian*.

..incantatory, spell-like, trance-inducing - poetry as magical utterance to which you have to submit, make a willing suspension of disbelief...

- Matt Simpson.



I love the meaty, muscularity of the poems in this collection. It's not often you read something engaged with urban life that is intense and personal, rather than sociological and fashionable

- Frank Cotterall Boyce.

...an ambitious, experimental voice vibrantly charged with the energy of city life.

- Carol Ann Duffy

...from a lyric country where they do things differently. Instinctive, elemental and ready for anything...always beguiling or unsettling the reader...- Paul Farley