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ALSO BY CLAIRE TRÉVIEN

POETRY

The Shipwrecked House (Penned in the Margins, 2013)

Low-Tide Lottery (Salt Publishing, 2011)

Astéronymes

Claire Trévien

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To past, present and future friends

Astéronymes

The Evening After

After James Merrill

We spent one evening, tired of games and each other,
watching our reflections on a screen —
four in a two-seater, angling like sardines.
For a dog's hair I'd milked the wine, uttered
words like "that's the cure!", swivelled
the puckering glass like a mock-dandy,
blood slushing at my temples, until the spill,
a fatal expression on the white and navy,
ruined the smoothness past salvation. A cough
of salt, the patting of the fabric, perhaps enough.

The Museum of Water

I never tire of the repetition of bottles:
the evaporation of grief,
a great silty presence,
a shallow song.

Here is a bath bomb tuned to your body.
Elsewhere, backwash, broken water,
a hacked freezer, your favourite river
carried from one country to another.

Light in this postcard is
sieved through a kidney.
There is too much demand
for a street.

I'm naturally still. A pearl
starts with an attack
shattering the shell.

I splinter the pause,
reach for the bowl
and pour out voices
improbably fractured.

Instructions for Making a Standing Stone

Steep a stone into rain, or a bucket of sand.
Fresh-gathered stones should be bruised by
stamping barks into their skin. Understand
that, properly dried, they may last indefinitely.

Strengthen the core with chunks of teeth
and lichen grated through joints. If too
stocky, plant it uphill; the right brand
of wind will slim it down with time, to
stoop over the moors — a cracked wand.

Confirmation Bias

Kervadol Dolmen

Raking in signs of early life: collapsed
arks, kicked in the groin. Sponged soil
swallows the spineless; rain faxes
the dead long after we don't. Shoaled

history, you're slumped waiting for
the grass to dry – ravaged raw slabs
with corridor breath. Eyes uncorked;
a four-legged beast, a table without seats.

Crab-crouched crates, not sure why you wait
as a huddle – the secret to eternal youth
is to be singular. I count the spots where suede
puckers, where your mouth's left unzipped.