

## THE ENGLISH SUMMER

Holly Hopkins grew up in Berkshire, grew up even more in London and now lives in Manchester. Her debut pamphlet, *Soon Every House Will Have One*, won the Poetry Business Pamphlet Competition and was the Poetry Book Society Pamphlet Choice. Holly has been an assistant editor of *The Rialto*. She has received an Eric Gregory Award and a Hawthornden Fellowship and was shortlisted for the inaugural Women Poets' Prize. Her poems featured in *Carcanet New Poetries VIII* and have been published in *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *TLS*.

ALSO BY HOLLY HOPKINS

*Soon Every House Will Have One* (Smith|Doorstop, 2014)

*The English Summer*

HOLLY HOPKINS

Penned in the Margins

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY PENNED IN THE MARGINS  
Toynbee Studios, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6AB  
[www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk](http://www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk)

All rights reserved  
© Holly Hopkins, 2022

The right of Holly Hopkins to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988.

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Penned in the Margins.

First published 2022

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International

ISBN  
978-1-908058-94-2

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

## CONTENTS

Country Churches	11
The English Summer	12
Drought	13
The Death of a Fridge	15
A Stone Wall Around the Duke of Northumberland's Park	17
Scuts	18
Telephone Girls	19
The Flayings	21
After the Workshops I'm Shown Round by a Member of Staff	23
Green Man in Spring	25
Lady Godiva	27
Zombies	28
Tidal Islands	30
The City Cut from a Mountain	31
The Garden Cemetery Trust	33
Rows of Differently Coloured Houses	35
Stratigraphy	37
Duck	38
Starlings	39
Early Winter	41
Watching a North American Loon from St Thomas' Hospital	43

Hiding from a Mouse	45
Offchurch	47
I Have Chosen to Become a Plasterer	48
Explanation for Those Who Don't Know Love	49
Stay Home	51
On Follies	53
How to Balance Law Books on Your Head	55
Three King Canutes	56
The Alibi	58
When I found some women with bellies	60
Hilda and Cædmon	61
Antonio, Duke of Milan	62
Inheritance	65
The Moon	67
The Castle	69
The King's Manor Cat	70
England, Where Did You Go?	72
NOTES	75
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	77

*for Alex*





*The English  
Summer*



## Country Churches

They slip their moorings in the night  
and glide down tarmac roads  
to a city where evangelicals  
are taking over bingo halls, old cinemas,  
calling, singing, hot in electric light.

## The English Summer

Dun-coloured endangered species of specialist interest;  
best found on grungy paths, behind gabardines,  
near shoes on school radiators, wet socks at work.  
A furred creature, hood-hidden, broolly-blinded, shy.

The invasive species: a fearsome firestorm  
of peeled blue sky. Allelopathic leaf-crisper,  
river-fading grass-bleacher, ice-cream smiling  
skin-killer, furze-burning forest-eater, agricide.

See the burn-blisters on the ridge of this ear.  
See water rationing. See heat oedema. See dizziness.

# Drought

In this version of St George  
the horse is pissed off.

It's a horse with angry eyebrows.  
It's a horse about to brain a dragon  
with a hoof like a bag of nails.

George is pie-faced,  
sword raised and forgotten;  
he might as well be holding a balloon.

Hear the blade score  
the lowest branches of the almond trees,  
each bandaged white to the waist  
with a plastic drip at the root.

The dragon's a Venus flytrap  
with a snake body  
that squeezes electric cars  
until their sunrooves pop off.

This horse is livid.

This horse remembers the story:

a spring where water sobbed  
from the earth,  
fern-garnished and clear.

Enough to water  
the golf courses of northern California.