



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Edinburgh Research Explorer

### Kitsune

**Citation for published version:**

McKie, J 2015, *Kitsune*. Cinnamon Press, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

Pages 58-63

**General rights**

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Take down policy**

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact [openaccess@ed.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@ed.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



## Gift from Queenie, May She Rest in Peace

She gave me a box of bath salts like uncut emeralds  
pulverised to powder – greyish-blue and gritty.  
I put them, with the clementine from my stocking,  
at the bottom of my list of favourite gifts,  
and forgot them. Only now, years later, do I run  
them under water, worry they are so ancient  
they will stain my skin. Worse – lace the heat  
with arsenic green, leak an Aztec hex into the suds,  
turning me as mean as their giver. I soak for hours  
until I look as old as her, like wrinkled fruit;  
until I see her face in mine and feel my heart contract.

## Mesmerism

Not rich rich. Rich as a pensioner  
who owns her own flat, rich as the  
rare chance to enjoy a laugh.

Her true wealth, the wealth she values,  
is a glass vase of a blue so spellbinding  
it deserves a better name than *blue*.

“Indigo,” she says, drawing it out – “In-di-go.”  
Plain glass, but in delicious thrall  
to buried ice, to imperial Persia.

A streak of midnight on the mantel,  
it warps her face into a fairground pitchman’s –  
acquisitive, all deep lines and nose –

until she *is* the pitchman,  
a blackguard rolling bills between his palms,  
never far from his reflection.

## The Boy Who Found Fear

Boy made of sand  
carries a black swan underarm  
to jimmy windows, lift  
all those little rubies  
that wink in the small hours like digital clocks.  
And as he crosses thresholds, lintels,  
the grains of him unpick steadily  
through the night,  
ticking minutes, seconds  
till he's caught.

The man and his wife  
get home. There he is –  
black feathers on the floor,  
pile of sand so powder-white  
it makes them recall their Gold  
Coast honeymoon and weep.  
The thieving boy! They sweep him up  
into a pan, chuck him out.  
He can't speak to tell them: *Stop,*  
*I'm sorry.* A real boy at last.

## Sunrise over Lunan Bay

The audible clink inside a bulb  
as it ceases to fire.

Glass egg. It's always a performance,  
a morning like this, opals in the east  
and then a swarm of rain.

I eat a wet baguette on the beach.  
Last night's wine dies in me,  
last night's watered-down talk.  
The sun struggles to get up. I applaud  
the effort. My knuckles are raw

from forgetting to pack gloves.  
When I have ideas they always stall like this –  
with an apology, an audible clink  
above the waves, something small  
ceasing to fire.

# The Specious Present

*The short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible.*

*William James*

He'll never get to Myrtle Farm today,  
he thinks. He woke up with the bloody shakes.

Not today, he thinks. The duvet's calling  
as prickly and cloying as a thicket,  
clock hands tremble on the same damn minute,  
while trees overhanging the stable roof  
dangle burly limbs to drop in a storm  
and he can't begin to lift the chainsaw.

Tomorrow, he thinks. He'll drive Long Furlong  
willing the milometer to whizz round  
those miles to where the A27  
nuzzles the Downs and white slip roads lead to  
Myrtle Farm and Myrtle Farm lies in state  
like a lovely embalmed Eva Perón.

# Empire of Sundaes

Swallow your coke-float:  
drowned swans of cream, subsiding

bergs, long-handled spoon  
to herd lumps into nullity.

The tall glass is planed,  
glacial, sweating beads.

Sweet, corrosively sweet,  
this urge to live in the past,

to guzzle a fizz of days  
spent in a shallow pool

that lingers on the palate  
more potent than the days themselves.

Eat me. Drink me.  
I am delicious ice.