

Kemp manages to fill almost his whole volume with nocturnes, poems written in or about night-time and its experiences – the cosmic, the domestic, the ontological, the musical. The senses adjust to the dark and experience the world differently; memories cluster round. This is a collection of successful evocations and quiet illuminations, and the shorter, sparser poems (including those put together in a sequence on the power and associations of classical compositions) are the more effective:

Above the night-charred branches
of bare ash trees

a flurry of orange clouds
as if the sky had been switched on

or somewhere far away
a city was burning to the ground

(“Beckwithshaw”)

Alasdair Paterson, *Stride Magazine*