

Sandra Arnold

What sound does a bear make when it's stung by a bee?

You told me that when all this was over you were
going to buy a white horse and train it for jumping
You told your friends you had no intention of carking it because you had
too much stuff to do
But all the will-power in the world
couldn't keep you inside a body that had become uninhabitable
Just before you left it you asked me what sound a bear makes
when it's stung by a bee

You are in the roaring of stags on Autumn nights
In cantering hooves and wind in the trees
In the smell of hay and oiled saddles
In new-born lambs and star-filled skies
In the rowan tree growing strong by the paddocks
You said when you saw the mountains you knew you were home

Sandra Arnold is an award-winning writer who lives in New Zealand. She is the author of five books including her most recent titles *The Ash, the Well and the Bluebell*, Mākaro Press, NZ, and *Soul Etchings*, Retreat West Books, UK. Her short fiction has been widely published and anthologised internationally. She has received nominations for The Best Small Fictions, Best Microfictions and The Pushcart Prize. She has a PhD in Creative Writing from Central Queensland University, Australia.