



## on Grytviken Cemetery

inside the cage of our graves  
we're ash and bone  
cross and cairn  
nine points of a star  
huge clouds hang  
over us like doors  
the summit just out of reach  
our perfect custodians  
fur seals / sea elephants  
watch tourists sprinkle  
Scotch whiskey on our headstones  
they think we're still thirsty  
let's drink to that!  
down at the derelict  
whaling station the wind  
spins the teeth of rotary saws  
turns massive propellers  
mourns the whale

**Elephant Island**  
**Frank Worsley**  
*skipper The James Caird 1916*  
*Shackleton 2013*  
once ice drew The James Caird  
so low in the water  
my navigation tables swam  
the huge swell hid  
our view of the skyline  
South Georgia an albatross  
in the wind's feathers  
a floating tin eye  
when the bow plates opened  
I saw the jittery sun

to

**South Georgia**  
**Tim Jarvis**  
*skipper The Alexandra*  
aboard The Alexandra Shackleton  
we needed to sleep  
below deck in a space  
the size of a pantry  
all hips and backbone  
with wooden wings  
we feared a container ship  
would surely drown us  
I already had trench foot  
the compass magnetic dry

**what the dogs wrote**

*I can't lift even my eyes  
to the sky*

**Samson**

*breath icicles hang from my lips  
like cigarettes*

**Nell**

*slipping on tongues of ice  
a strange new dance*

**Fluffy**

*how soon my voice  
becomes soft snow*

**Lupoid**

*from Ocean Camp only a glimpse –  
the ship's funnel*

**Sailor**

*we grow hoods of eye fur  
so we can't see  
the g – n*

**Unknown**

**from the Ross Sea**

a Weddell seal  
man hauling the waves  
the stars he steers by  
pushing him forward

the seal a pilot  
in an ice house  
minutes shrink like islands  
hours like tides

the Ross Sea his fire-break  
the ring that melts  
his beloved ice

## **pale pink flames**

under the muslin  
of Antarctic ice  
krill ride the anchor  
glinting like mirrors

their pale pink flames  
dazing algae  
snagging floating plants  
lighting the ice

chains of krill high  
on the marine menu  
spilling into night  
swimming for their lives

the sea warmer  
the whoosh of krill smaller

## **on watch: Frank Worsley's memorial Akaroa New Zealand**

I don't need to measure  
the sun to know I'm home  
the leaning wooden cottages  
the yellow footed cormorant  
its hooked bill

stormy nights I'm back on watch  
navigating valleys of water  
brutal winds icebergs  
snatching hoosh off the primus

any thought of sleeping  
a kind of drowning  
the sound of boots  
on a sodden deck

**Kerrin Sharpe** has published four collections of poetry (all with Victoria University Press). Kerrin has also had her poems published in a wide range of journals both in New Zealand and overseas including *Oxford Poets 13* (Carcanet Press UK), *Pedestal* (USA) and *Poetry* (USA). *sorrows of ice* was written while Kerrin held the 2021 New Year's residency at the Michael King Writers Centre, Auckland.

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