

**Wigtown Poetry Competition 2018**

**Dumfries & Galloway Fresh Voice Award: Katy Ewing, *The***

*Minister's Pool*

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The Minister's Pool

It wasn't just the downhill run,  
flung flying along the wooded path,  
that pulled us to the river every summer  
as soon as the trees wore soft green,  
wild garlic flowered, the sky as blue as mattered.  
The water shocking, but survivable with many tries,  
or one brave plunge.

It wasn't just the life-thick cold current that tugged us,  
kept trying to drag us to the pool  
across the shallows  
from our chest-deep swimming place.  
The safe place, where soft weed and slippery algae  
cushioned stones for our timid feet  
that curious minnows nibbled, tickled.  
The edge was never far.

It wasn't just the lurking corner whirlpool of local lore  
that scared the swimming power right out of me,  
the pool's depth renowned, greater with every telling.  
The cold like a spell to pull me fish-deep,  
as I gasped and fought to keep the surface,  
the dark concealing primal fears, unspeakable  
but with a stronger lure than adults' warnings  
could hold me from.

It wasn't just its safety  
that drew you to the sandstone ledge you'd reach  
if you dared to cross and push and pull  
yourself right out the sucking water  
into the shadow of the massive, ancient,  
overhanging oak tree, to seek a warm spot.  
Exhausted, weed-specked,  
heavy as a new-born.