

Sr Laurentia Johns  
Pointers to Advent

They advanced secretly,  
stealthily as their namesakes,  
sowing the land with hope,  
one seed at a time:  
God's green fingers setting the world aright.

Then they waited silently,  
deep below the denuded forest floor  
strewn with shrapnel of wood:  
a hidden Incarnation  
where sentinel larches once stood.

And now, lo, a vast battalion  
of foxglove forerunners,  
clothing the land in purple:  
splendid, upright, regal;  
summer heralds of the One  
who is to come.

Sr Laurentia Johns  
Pentecost

The Spirit's Epiphany  
making us kings,  
stabling us to bear gifts,  
to journey through nights,  
to pay  
homage even to small things:  
to trust stars.

**Laurentia Johns OSB** was born in Swansea not far from where Dylan Thomas had lived. She and her siblings used to play in Cwmdonkin Park which features in Thomas' writings and where lines from 'Fernhill' are found on a memorial stone: *Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means/Time held me green and dying/Though I sang in my chains like the sea.*

So poetry was familiar, local, not intimidating or high-brow, but something which added shine to life. It was the experience of re-meeting the sea after months away which prompted her first poem in 1989: only poetry seemed up to catching the emotional charge of that event.

Since entering Stanbrook Abbey in 1990, Sr Laurentia's life has been shaped by daily exposure to God's Word in scripture, especially the psalms, by the seasons and by life's wonders, traumas and rhythms, all of which find expression in her poems, many of which have appeared in journals and on the internet over the years. 'Pentecost' is from her first full collection, *Seeking Byland: Poems through the Seasons from Stanbrook Abbey*, published by Gracewing in 2020, and included here with kind permission of the publisher.