

Encompass O

I know a signwriter
who works across town.
I recognise his voice everywhere
through his style.
It is as if a friend reads out
every menu, every signpost just for
me.
But he doesn't read so well.
To remember each letter
he thinks about the shapes they make.
T is a scarecrow
S is a snake
M is a valley between two hills
O is the moon, an eye a ring.
Every letter makes another picture.

There's no K or Q or V or X
in Welsh.
We have seven vowels
an alphabet of twenty-nine letters
More letters and more pictures.

A B C Ch D Dd

Some letters change
Depending on how words are paired
P becomes B but can be Mh and Ph
B to F to M

T becomes D and Nh and Th
C can be G or Ngh or Ch
D slips to Dd or N
G disappears or moves to Ng

Ll to L
M to F
Rh to R
The pictures keep changing shape.

E F Ff G Ng H I J L Ll M N O P

One form of poetry in Wales
Is Cynganedd.
It is always in two halves
built out of specific letters.
The sounds that the letters
make across the halves
- like an echo, or a mirror -
work together as one thing
in harmony.
There are lots of rules,
but following the rules
doesn't make you a poet.

Ph R Rh S T Th U W Y

Back and forth
and back and forth.
Pictures are symbols,
symbols become letters,
that make sounds
that become words,
that tell stories
that make more pictures.