

1st prize, Poetry

Mike Richards

50 something ski instructor, photographer and poet based in Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, Wales, spending my winters skiing the Brecon Beacons National Park and the deep powder of Hokkaido, Japan.

Franz Klammer Taught Me To Ski

Franz Klammer taught me to ski.
Wild with flair and invention, rewriting the book,
I watched and rewatched, mesmerised, and memorised each left, right, and recovery.

On that Thursday afternoon in early February,
The Kaiser trailing, almost failing with the chances he took.
Franz Klammer taught me to ski.

A golden comet thundering to victory,
Russi felt the mountain shake, unable to look.
I watched and rewatched, mesmerised, and memorised each left, right, and recovery.

In fur fringed parka I zigged and zagged the Giant's Steps' trees
On half-frozen mud and snow, slipping and sliding with each step I took.
Franz Klammer taught me to ski.

Before the final plunge on scree,
Coal tip below my feet, to the cattle grid finish beside the brook.
I watched and rewatched, mesmerised, and memorised each left, right, and recovery.

On the days when snow stuck to my grey, green valley
The mountain over Aberdare became my Patscherkofel, Foundry Town my Innsbruck.
Franz Klammer taught me to ski,
I watched and rewatched, mesmerised, and memorised each left, right, and recovery.