

**A Starling Sings: The Strong Voice in the Poems of Mary Stanley**

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This year, 2019, is the centenary of Mary Stanley's birth.

Stanley's poetry is not as well known as it should be, perhaps because there is comparatively little of it. This charge is often laid at the feet of twentieth-century gender norms which designated a woman's domestic life as her first duty. In Stanley's case, it can further be attributed to the chronic rheumatoid arthritis with which she was diagnosed following her first pregnancy, and which affected her joints and hands.<sup>1</sup> But regardless of Stanley's relatively small production compared to a well known writer such as Robin Hyde, her poetry shows intelligence and emotion that speaks across the decades. While the woman herself is worthy of commemoration, her poetry is worthy of continued engagement.

Mary Stanley was born in 1919. She studied at Auckland University College and trained to become a teacher. At the age of twenty-three, she married the accountant Brian Dennis Neal (1918-1944), and after his death in the Second World War, the poet Kendrick Smithyman (1922-1995). In this essay I will examine poems written following Stanley's marriage to Smithyman. Her one published volume, *Starveling Year* (1953), manifests the experience of a wife and mother. Its poem 'A Wife Speaks' often appears in anthologies. I argue that the wife figure these poems present is one who speaks strongly. Seeking out female mythology in these works aids in imaging a woman capable of representing herself.

A poem dated to Stanley's first marriage, 'To B –', is a prominent example of this voice. The speaker, Orpheus-like, promises to follow her beloved into the depths of hell. Orpheus is the classical Grecian musician, the poet who enters the underworld to reclaim his beloved Eurydice with his song. However, climbing back to the world above, Orpheus disobeys the gods and looks behind him, causing Eurydice to be cast back to hell. In 'To B –', the wife is Orpheus, but as well as speaking to her beloved across the distance that divides them, her gaze has power: 'I shall still / pursue and hunt you', she promises. Poems written following Stanley's second marriage seem to present a very different wife figure. Her voice is typified in 'The Wife Speaks'.<sup>2</sup> This is the wife for whom 'a house' 'designs' her day. She is the woman grown accustomed to what is expected of her body:

Being a woman, I am  
not more than man nor less  
but answer imperatives  
of shape and growth. The bone  
attests the girl with dolls...

From her position inside the house, the wife sees the young Icarus fall from the sky, 'feathered / for a bloody death'. The young son who has been given the chance to fly is juxtaposed with the woman 'beside' her door. She is the wife and mother who waits inside for her men, the heroes, to come home – 'Eurydice' rather than Orpheus. However, she is 'grown up to know the moon / unwind her tides to chafe / the heart'. Moons and tides are implicitly images of Artemis and Diana, Greek and Roman goddesses of the hunt, as well as being intricately linked to female cycles. Stanley's familiarity with classical myth indicates there is more to this wife than meets the eye.

In Maryann Savage's MA thesis on Stanley's poetry, she notes that many of Stanley's poems appear to be written at night when the rest of the house has gone to sleep.<sup>3</sup> Out of this night-time world and its moon comes the poet's voice. 'Speaks' marks a shift: love, joy, grief, and pain are spoken. Riemke Ensing, editor of the women's poetry anthology *Private Gardens* (1977) in which Stanley's work appeared, notes that Icarus gains deeper significance at this time as a figure who appeared in W.H. Auden's poem 'Musée des Beaux Arts', and was re-appropriated by Kendrick Smithyman in 'Icarus' in his collection *Blind Mountain* (1950).<sup>4</sup> In both poems Icarus falls and life goes on – suffering takes place in a corner. However, Stanley's wife sees this corner – it is the bloody fall that ends her poem. Suffering might be ordinary, forgotten, but in 'The Wife Speaks' it is seen, made important, turned into a work of art.

Likewise, Eurydice is the woman (and a dryad) cast back into the underworld by her husband's (Orpheus's) gaze, but in the modernist poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle)'s revisioning of the myth in her poem 'Eurydice' where the dead woman speaks from within hell, she transforms into a goddess figure, a woman who can gaze as well as be gazed at. 'Eurydice' is the voice of a woman wronged by man and gods who takes 'my own spirit for light' – thus asserting herself as her own god.<sup>5</sup> Helen Sword argues that the anger in Eurydice is a personal address towards H.D.'s unfaithful husband, fellow poet Richard Aldington 'who has drawn her towards happiness only to turn and reject her'.<sup>6</sup> Sword continues that the anger might also come in response to comments made by H.D.'s lover, D.H. Lawrence, on her writing.<sup>7</sup> In Sword's argument, Eurydice becomes a highly personalised symbol for H.D. to express agency in her relationships with men. It is impossible to tell whether Stanley read Modernists like H.D., but it is

plausible. H.D.'s first collection was published in 1916. She continued writing after Stanley's last journal publication in 1959, so they were, in a sense, contemporaries. H.D.'s Eurydice has the 'light' of her own 'thoughts' and 'presence' – so too does the wife in Stanley's poem.<sup>8</sup>

As H.D.'s 'Eurydice' might speak to a poet husband, so is the wife's voice in *Starveling Year* accompanied by the male poet who takes on the voice of Orpheus. Stanley's poems of the late 1940s and early 1950s show a shift not solely into motherhood, but into the world of Stanley's second husband, Kendrick Smithyman, a modernist poet. Stanley and Smithyman met in mid-1946 and were married that August. In Stanley's 'Per Diem et per Noctem', published in 1953, it is the husband who walks unrepressed through the world of trees and seas:

Birds in their oratory of leaves  
clamour at morning over my love.  
All waters praise him [...]

*He* is active: 'O may his lucky hand at noon / pluck down the sun', and the wife admires 'his difficult song.' She asks '[w]here is your moon, / Endymion, trimming her thin / flame to light my love?' The moon goddess is apparently absent, but the loving wife is present. In *Between the Lives: Partners in Art*, Peter Simpson considers Smithyman and Stanley's early marriage poems as a dialogue, a 'Sinfonia Domestica', claiming that their verses increasingly echo each other in imagery and style.<sup>9</sup>

A poem in Smithyman's papers of 'uncertain authorship' expresses the entwining of poetic practice with their relationship and a sublimation of the wife's voice.<sup>10</sup> The poem appears as an untitled manuscript written in Stanley's hand beginning 'the starling sings', and as an untitled typescript (dated 1946) annotated by Smithyman, who changed the first line to 'the blackbird sings', perhaps because he was a keen birdwatcher – he is pictured later in life in Simpson's chapter 'Sinfonia Domestica' carrying binoculars for this purpose.<sup>11</sup> Textual evidence, including the correspondence of the typescript (before annotations) to the manuscript suggest that the copy in Stanley's hand was made first. The changes Smithyman makes, such as the excising of a romantic phrase, 'sweetest clover', further suggest that the poem is Stanley's. If 'the starling sings' is Stanley's, subsumed in her husband's archive, it blends her earlier, more Romantically inclined style with the modern style that emerges in *Starveling Year* (capitals only at the start of sentences, shorter strophes, succinct), and highlights the move she has undertaken. The birds are 'migrant wings' from 'a far tropic', 'migrants' in the sense that they were brought to New Zealand by Europeans in the nineteenth century. The wife is also a migrant, leaving her previous home and life upon marriage and entering her husband's. This is the house from which her song will now issue.

This is in Mary's hand

The starling sings, the plane branch bends.  
Is it weight of song or wind that bends  
birds, branch ~~for~~ and music?

While as birds the tall cloud goes over  
while the lovers dreaming in silence discover  
their sun to its tropic.

The starling flies, the plane branch sings  
still standing and down fall the migrant wings  
from a far tropic.

But skilled in silence then lies the lover  
whose day runs headlong through sweetest clover,  
day long runs his music.

The starling departing goes all unseen  
unheard as though he had never been  
keen in the tree where the plane branch sings  
waiting the coming of migrant wings.

And silent their presence at their meridian stands  
charting their moment of spaces, with savage hands  
they trace living their tropic.

33. 'The starling sings, the plane branch bends,' manuscript in Mary Stanley's hand, n.d. [1946?], MSS & Archives 2009/3, item 197, Kendrick Smithyman Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland

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song-writer

<sup>blackbird</sup>  
The starling sings, the plane branch <sup>to</sup> bends.  
Is it <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>bird's</sup> ~~bird's~~ <sup>song</sup> ~~or~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~bird's~~ <sup>branch</sup> that lends  
bird, branch and music?

white <sup>as</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>fact</sup> ~~fact~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>cloud</sup> ~~cloud~~ goes over  
while <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>lovers</sup> ~~lovers~~ <sup>dreaming</sup> ~~dreaming~~ in silence <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ discover  
their sun to its tropic.

<sup>blackbird</sup>  
The starling flies, the plane branch sings  
still- standing <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>down</sup> ~~down~~ fall <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>migrant</sup> ~~migrant~~ wings  
from a far tropic.

But <sup>skilled</sup> ~~skilled~~ in silence then <sup>lies</sup> ~~lies~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>lover</sup> ~~lover~~  
whose day runs headlong <sup>through</sup> ~~through~~ <sup>sweetest</sup> ~~sweetest~~ <sup>clover</sup> ~~clover~~,  
day long runs his music.

<sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>starling</sup> ~~starling <sup>departing</sup> ~~departing~~ goes <sup>and</sup> ~~and <sup>unseen</sup> ~~unseen~~.  
<sup>unheard</sup> ~~unheard~~, as though he had <sup>xxx</sup> ~~xxx~~ never been  
<sup>keen</sup> ~~keen~~ in the tree, <sup>where</sup> ~~where~~ the plane branch sings,  
waiting <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>coming</sup> ~~coming~~ of migrant wings.~~~~

And silently <sup>their</sup> ~~their <sup>presence</sup> ~~presence~~ at their meridian stands  
charting their moment of spaces, with savage hands  
they trace living their tropic.~~

song-writer made the thought that music  
was one branch & music.

~~Handwritten signature~~  
Poetry Club Books  
May 47

Bellegere S.M.D.

34. 'The blackbird sings, the plane branch bends,' typescript annotated by Kendrick Smithyman, 1946, MSS & Archives 2009/3, item 189, Kendrick Smithyman Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland

The poem's stanzas turn between birds and lovers. Lovers 'dream', but the poem's ending is ambiguous:

And silent their presence at their meridian stands  
charting their moment of spaces, with savage hands  
they trace living their tropic.

According to her friend Nancy Fox, Stanley was ‘a very fine Latin scholar.’<sup>12</sup> ‘[T]ropic’ from Latin *tropicus* means ‘to turn’, referring to the point where the sun appears to turn in the sky. In its obsolete English usage it means a ‘turning point; a limit, a boundary; an extreme’.<sup>13</sup> A literal and metaphorical turning occurs in the poem: ‘White as birds the tall cloud goes over / while the lovers dreaming in silence discover / their sun to its tropic.’ Lovers are turning points of their own world. ‘[M]eridian’ might further indicate a turning point of reassessment – moving out of girlhood, effectively the middle point of life. The poem itself marks a point of turning – that of Orpheus as he fixes Eurydice with his gaze. Here is the gaze of the poet husband turned onto the poet wife’s work. The lover in the clover whose ‘music’ runs ‘day long’ must surely be Smithyman, the Orpheus poet.

The changes that Smithyman makes are substantial, including halving lines, but in these changes the original poem seems to escape his gaze. There is a tricky darkness at work in Stanley’s original, juxtaposing apparently simple subject matter, such as the cloud ‘[w]hite as birds’ with starlings that are (implicitly) black. The lover ‘lies’ apparently romantically amongst the clover, but ‘skilled in silence’ he also ‘lies’ in the sense of not telling the truth. The tropic, the ‘meridian’, the bird leaving, the summer feel of ‘sweetest clover’ position the poem at extremities, points of change. There is a going away, a leaving, a coming back. The final two lines of the poem – ‘with savage hands / they trace living their tropic’ – seem to refer to a lived experience of the lovers’ space of the world. This is a very metaphysical poem, with a connection to John Donne’s ‘The Sun Rising’ in which the world is ‘contracted’ to two lovers on whom the sun shines.<sup>14</sup> The ‘savage hands’ of a lived experience indicate that even in the supposed halcyon days of early marriage the course of love doesn’t always run smooth. The poem positions the difficulties of simply reading Stanley as Eurydice and Smithyman as Orpheus that emerge in this essay. In writing, Stanley claims a part of the poet’s gaze and thus reinscribes the wife with a voice. Rather than casting herself as Orpheus, like H.D., she rewrites the role of Eurydice.

In ‘Threefold Prayer’, the wife turns in the traditional sense to God in her husband and ‘[h]is word’, that which the ‘soul’ of Mary, mother of Christ (also Stanley’s name), magnifies: ‘His word is my magnificat and speaks what thirst / is salt upon the tongue, driving our double tide’.<sup>15</sup> ‘Threefold Prayer’ phrases marriage as a partnership: ‘Lacklove, *we* build / *our* ruin’ (my italics) but one in which the wife reflects the husband. Nevertheless, in ‘Threefold Prayer’ the wife acknowledges the dark voice within her – the woman who does not always love and respect her husband – caught with the knowledge she should cover this up.

Counsel my wayward mouth to cautious utterance  
so that he never know Avernus yawns behind  
my lip to swallow love. [...]

In Virgil's *Georgics*, 'three times / Thunder resounded over the pools of Avernus' as a signal that Orpheus has looked back and that Eurydice is lost.<sup>16</sup> Avernus is the mouth to the underworld. The three thunder peals are reflected in the 'Threefold Prayer'. When Virgil's Eurydice cries out it is to tell of her silence:

I am borne away wrapped in an endless night,  
[...]  
These helpless hands.<sup>17</sup>

'Threefold Prayer' addresses a move to silence. Avernus lurking behind the wife's lips is not only the darkness of the underworld lurking in her voice, but indicates the literal swallowing of Eurydice. Stanley's Mary/Eurydice comments on the wife's helplessness as well as being its expression. The first year Latin paper Stanley took in 1936 had Virgil's *Georgics IV* as a prescribed text.<sup>18</sup> The exam paper for 1936 includes the ten lines or so (in Latin) of Orpheus's turn, ending on the three thunder peals above Avernus.<sup>19</sup> The passage cuts off just before Eurydice's voice appears, much in the way Eurydice's voice disappears as she is reclaimed by hell. The notes to the prescribed edition for the course state that Avernus is here substituted to mean Hades.<sup>20</sup> The voice lurking behind the wife's lips in 'Threefold Prayer' becomes that of a dark god – an image as strong as the godly voice H.D.'s Eurydice claims for herself. The unacceptable impulse is transformed into the prayer of a good wife, and yet the prayer simultaneously illuminates what simmers below the surface. 'Threefold Prayer' highlights a Freudian aspect of the sublimation that goes on in Stanley's poems.

A fugitive goddess, the secret self who lives within the wife, is addressed in 'Sestina'. The husband is explicitly 'Orpheus, leaving my daylight kingdom to learn / Eurydice for whom he enters the dark god's home'. The wife's 'daylight kingdom', her daylight self, harbours a dead woman, wrapped in waxy 'cerecloth':

Hermes, show him this woman, in her cerecloth cloud  
of sleep! She is not prey to the subtle worm which wears  
already at my cheek. No word unlocks her face  
or voice answers him out of that silent country.

The secret self is linked to the speaker's past – she states that beyond he 'whom I love' is 'this one face / shaped for me at my beginning, dispersed like cloud / in death's careless weather.' A possible interpretation is that these lines refer to the face of the dead first husband. The speechless Eurydice who does not grow old resonates with 'The Widow', whose love for her dead beloved is 'tempered by ice' and 'unalterable as law, will neither grow / nor lessen'. The deadened widow has 'cooling flanks' and 'flattened breasts' that give 'nurse to ghosts'. The speechless Eurydice in 'Sestina' is likewise unknown by a new husband's gaze; however, she does not preclude the resurrection of a new self. 'Sestina' holds daily pain, secrets shut up inside and 'a dream I may not learn'. But there is a 'signal joy' that is 'our[s]', a climb is undertaken together. The wife's love, in recognising the new man who seeks her, achieves its own rebirth.

What happens to the girl listening for the moon? It is she who writes 'I am / not more than man or less'. A typescript, 'For K' (published in *Kiwi* and the second edition of *Starveling Year* as 'Heraclitus at Ephesus Preached') and dated to November 19, 1946, mirrors 'To B –' in title, but is premised on knowledge more than emotion – a metaphysical exercise that shows Stanley thinking and evaluating her position by reference to the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus. The husband's love fills the wife with natural abundance: 'all my waste places heaping / my rocks with seed to leap / knee-high in corn fulfill'.<sup>21</sup> The wife is bound by 'blood' to love: this love is 'witness that we breathe and move'. If love is well-considered rather than a 'strong wave' of passion as in 'To B –', it is still an exercise in interdependence, filling the parts of herself that the wife feels are hollowed out. 'For K'/'Heraclitus' demonstrates a similar balancing of the husband and wife's roles to 'Sestina', where Stanley indicates that her husband's (Orpheus's) sight provides a renewal in which she takes part.

'Phoenix', published in 1947 in *Kiwi* and republished in the revised edition of *Starveling Year*, connotes rising from the ashes and shows the wife singing as the speaker of the poem, as if Eurydice has run into the sun:

Out of the cold out of the long cold  
of my due death I run  
brilliant, bird of a morning  
caught under edge of sun.<sup>22</sup>

She asks her husband to look upon her, to 'behold / my beauty which you raise / in ember soil a corn / more green to shout a praise' – there is the implication that her beauty is *hers* as well as that which the poet extols. Here is a remnant of the spirit in the ice bright peaks: in 'Phoenix' she navigates winds, again stands tall as the mountain covered in white. Snow has negative connotations as 'my [...] shroud' but the speaker asserts that she will 'balance' this, 'uphold / this artifice of cloud'. Rebirth, and remarriage become

necessary for revival. As well as the sense of her own rebirth, there is sexuality and perhaps motherhood in woman as bird and land:

This is my harvest of hills my streams I fold  
under wing-tip to nest  
closer than shadow, still  
in hiding on your breast.

Like a phoenix, her husband wakes something in her:

Gently, most tenderly now, your hands mould  
my flesh, summon from sleep  
a joy we cannot touch [...]

The 'joy' is 'quickened turned to weep', but love is not subordination. There is companionship in these lines and a movement on the wife's part, her 'arrow, arc of fury, riding bold'. Considering *Starveling Year* as a whole, contemporary reviewer A.W. Stockwell judges that in opposition to the collection's title: the 'strongest impression left by her verse is [...] of rich personal experience [...] the ultimate pain of romantic love [is] countered by devotion and the joy of what union is possible'.<sup>23</sup> H.D.'s Eurydice in hell claims that '[a]gainst the black / I have more fervour'. The light comes from within: she has '[her] own spirit for light', that which 'no god' can take. The 'Phoenix' is the wife, and she illuminates herself within this poem, recasting her position as wife as a second chance. H.D.'s Eurydice blames her Orpheus for casting her back into the underworld, but while there is great anger, Stanley's focus is consistently on double ability, double responsibility, and double sight.

In 'Put off Constricting Day' the wife asks her husband:

Look now, before you sleep, am I not still  
the one you sought on winter-walking streets  
adding your breath, lonely, to fog and rain?  
Then the incendiary blood burned up to spill  
its brilliant meteors, crystals of fire  
ardent to strike, in doubly shared assault,  
from the expectant flesh an answering heat.<sup>24</sup>

The wife asks for fire, magic, love, all the things that are lost. The wife addresses her sexuality, a shared power of supreme passion that she struggles to find a place for within the deadened confines of her marriage. Yet, this poem speaks forthrightly about her passion and sexual drive, her desire for physical closeness. In a draft for 'Night Piece', Stanley shows how passion is shared and sex might overcome the distance between lovers – '[t]he nerves spell out our need and eyes unclose / to plead their comfort in our deep distress'.<sup>25</sup> Simpson suggests that following the birth of the Smithymans' second child, 'illness, isolation, the demands of mothering, philosophic pessimism, religious guilt and Mary's still unresolved grief', strained the marriage.<sup>26</sup> In 'Put Off Constricting Day', the wife notes her marriage's deficit, she asks for her husband's sight. Two parts are needed: the 'incendiary blood' and 'an answering heat'. A reading of the ending of H.D.'s 'Eurydice' is presented by literary academic Margaret Bruzelius. 'Eurydice' states that:

hell must break before I am lost;

before I am lost,

hell must open like a red rose

for the dead to pass.

Bruzelius argues that the poem does not express Eurydice's triumphant exit. She reads the line 'hell must open' to mean that Eurydice will not be the one to force this opening, that is 'dependent for its eventual freedom on a movement from outside'.<sup>27</sup> H.D.'s Eurydice must wait for the world to change. Meanwhile, she has the light of herself, and her thoughts. Sword acknowledges that in H.D.'s poem 'Eurydice's determination to reign in hell if she cannot write poetry in heaven is not, perhaps, the most satisfying solution possible [...] But it is a courageous one'.<sup>28</sup> This trapped, and yet thinking, speaking woman resonates with Stanley, whose act of writing rephrases the wife as active despite the conventions of the mid-twentieth-century New Zealand in which she lives. Stanley's wife is both the female generative mother nurturing her children, the Madonna who speaks of her 'Christ in diapers', lover, *and* a darker goddess speaking out of hell, who knows about pain.<sup>29</sup> Like the Māori goddess of death, Hine-nui-te-pō, the comfort she offers to her children is confined to a night-time world; she watches over her husband and her children while they sleep. Stanley's poems indicate that the wife does have power, as long as they stay within her realm.

The second poem in the original edition of *Starveling Year* is 'Death of Procris'.<sup>30</sup> 'Death of Procris' addresses a mythical, Grecian scene that like 'Orpheus and Eurydice', appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The wife, the woman, is shot down. '[L]oving too much' she is hit with the fatal javelin: 'she to love', he to kill, 'so both fulfill / the antique pattern laid on man / and woman since the world began.' Stanley gives

no sign that she will attempt to raise her fallen avatar. Rather, the poem serves to highlight her tragedy, to focus on the moment-stopping images of her ‘grief’ (her lifeblood) wept away ‘drop by red drop’ into the ‘flowers’ and ‘that still landscape delicate / as glass’.

The wording ‘satyr-huntsman’ in an original typescript becomes in the published poem ‘satyr-husband’, drawing ‘huntsman’ and ‘husband’ together.<sup>31</sup> Procris lies dead, a nymph and a woman bleeding herself into the glassy stillness of the landscape. Her death, already sealed, is the first line of this poem, and its title. Even as the husband’s reaction is unseen, we understand that regardless of intention, love causes pain – Brian Neal’s death, for example, causes excruciating pain. Cephalus in *Metamorphoses* laments his wife’s death, ‘plucking from the wound / The gift (heaven help me) she had given me’.<sup>32</sup> Procris is slain by her own weapon: love, that with which Orpheus also seals the death of his bride. A handwritten draft adds:

Now she is still. Her wounded throat  
will ache no more with tears, nor thought  
torment again her fallen head.<sup>33</sup>

In an afterword to *Private Gardens*, in which nine of Stanley’s poems appear, Vincent O’Sullivan states that Stanley in particular ‘claims respect with her hard truth-telling about love or maternity or that uneasy pattern “Death of Procris” sets down as the one we must move in.’<sup>34</sup> Procris is another dead woman, but the voice who tells the tale is a strong woman speaking.

H.D.’s Eurydice will rise out of hell – decrying the man who has cast her down. Like ‘Eurydice’, the wife in Stanley’s poems responds to personal marital dynamics as well as that condition of being a woman, the ‘antique pattern’ laid on both sexes. Stanley’s poems take a realistic view of her position, but she does not meekly accept the quiet role of the mythical Eurydice. Her Eurydice is an aware, thinking figure. Stanley’s voice speaks more strongly because of where she wrote from. Unlike H.D., she was conventionally a wife and mother. Despite this, Simpson notes that it was the years during which Stanley’s three boys were born and her illness appeared which were Stanley’s ‘most active years as a writer’.<sup>35</sup> She records female experience with vitality despite the conventions and practicalities which might silence her. H.D.’s ‘Eurydice’ takes place in a mythical world. The nymph becomes goddess. Stanley’s wife takes on this powerful voice of the poet. At the same time, she operates within the present world of daily toil. When Stanley uses myth, it is to illuminate human experiences. Mary Stanley’s poetry is of earthly presence, and it echoes.

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- <sup>1</sup> Maryann Savage, 'Wound Logic: The Invincible Necessity of Mary Stanley' (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1998): 135-153.
- <sup>2</sup> Mary Stanley, *Starveling Year, and Other Poems* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994): 23.
- <sup>3</sup> Savage, 'Wound Logic,' 67.
- <sup>4</sup> Lecture notes in Riemke Ensing, Research Papers on Mary Stanley, Collection of Riemke Ensing.
- <sup>5</sup> Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), *Collected Poems, 1912-1944*, edited by Louis L. Martz (New York: New Directions, 1983): 51-55.
- <sup>6</sup> Helen Sword, 'Orpheus and Eurydice in the Twentieth Century: Lawrence, H.D., and the Poetics of the Turn.' *Twentieth Century Literature* 35, no. 4 (1989): 413.
- <sup>7</sup> Sword, 'Orpheus and Eurydice,' 407-428.
- <sup>8</sup> Doolittle, *Collected Poems*, 51-55.
- <sup>9</sup> Peter Simpson, 'Sinfonia Domestica: Mary Stanley & Kendrick Smithyman,' in *Between the Lives: Partners in Art*, edited by Deborah Shepard (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2005): 64-67.
- <sup>10</sup> Finding aid, MSS & Archives 2009/3, Kendrick Smithyman Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland.
- <sup>11</sup> 'The blackbird sings, the plane branch bends' typescript annotated by Kendrick Smithyman, 1946, MSS & Archives 2009/3, item 189, Kendrick Smithyman Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland; 'The starling sings, the plane branch bends' manuscript in Mary Stanley's hand, n.d. [1946?], MSS & Archives 2009/3, item 197, Kendrick Smithyman Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland; For the photo of Kendrick with binoculars, see: Simpson, 'Sinfonia Domestica,' 54.
- <sup>12</sup> Nancy Fox to Riemke Ensing, April 17, 1980 in Ensing, Research Papers; Bob and Noeline Chapman, Riemke Ensing and Peter Simpson, 'When Herald was an Island – Mary Stanley rediscovered,' February 17th 2000, Going West Books & Writers Festival, 2000, Sound recording, Auckland Libraries Heritage Collection.
- <sup>13</sup> 'tropic, n. and adj.1,' OED Online, Oxford University Press, accessed January 16, 2019, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/206700?rskey=22pMOA&result=1&isAdvanced=false>
- <sup>14</sup> John Donne, *John Donne: Selected Poetry and Prose*, edited by T.W. Craik and R.J. Craik (London; New York: Methuen, 1986): 61-62.
- <sup>15</sup> Stanley, *Starveling Year*, 15; Luke 1:46-55, 'King James Bible,' *King James Bible Online*, accessed January 16, 2019. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>
- <sup>16</sup> Virgil, *Georgics*, translated by L.P. Wilkinson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1982): Book 4, lines 493-494.
- <sup>17</sup> Virgil, *Georgics*, Book 4, lines 496-498.
- <sup>18</sup> Enrolment card, Mary Isobel Stanley, Student records, Pre-1970, University of Auckland, Administrative Archives; Auckland University College, *Calendar for the Year 1936* (Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Limited, 1936): 65.
- <sup>19</sup> Latin I, Paper B: Prescribed Books, Part II, option c., Auckland University College Examination Papers, 1910-1957 (1936).
- <sup>20</sup> Virgil, *The Georgics of Virgil, Book IV*, edited by S.E. Winbolt (London: Blackie, n.d.): 80.
- <sup>21</sup> 'For K,' typescript, 19 November 1946, MSS & Archives 2002/1, A: Poetry Manuscripts, folder 1, Mary Stanley Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland; Stanley, *Starveling Year*, 4.
- <sup>22</sup> Stanley, *Starveling Year*, 5.
- <sup>23</sup> A. W. Stockwell, 'Review of *Starveling Year*,' *Landfall* 26 (June 1953): 139-140.
- <sup>24</sup> Stanley, *Starveling Year*, 32.
- <sup>25</sup> 'Night Piece,' typescript, annotation '8' at top, n.d., MSS & Archives 2002/1, A: Poetry Manuscripts, folder 1, Mary Stanley Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland.
- <sup>26</sup> Simpson, 'Sinfonia Domestica,' 75.
- <sup>27</sup> Margaret Bruzelius, 'H.D. and Eurydice,' *Twentieth Century Literature* 44, no. 4 (1998): 458.
- <sup>28</sup> Sword, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 415.
- <sup>29</sup> Stanley, *Starveling Year*, 31.
- <sup>30</sup> Stanley, *Starveling Year*, 10.
- <sup>31</sup> 'Death of Procris,' manuscript, n.d., MSS & Archives 2002/1, A: Poetry Manuscripts, folder 1, Mary Stanley Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland.
- <sup>32</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, edited by AD Melville (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 170.
- <sup>33</sup> 'Death of Procris,' annotation '3' at top, typescript, n.d., MSS & Archives 2002/1, A: Poetry Manuscripts, folder 1, Mary Stanley Papers, Special Collections, University of Auckland Libraries and Learning Services, Auckland.

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<sup>34</sup> Vincent O’Sullivan, ‘Afterword,’ in *Private Gardens: An Anthology of New Zealand Women Poets*, edited by Riemke Ensing (Dunedin: Caveman Press, 1977): 144.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Simpson, ‘One Slim Volume: Mary Stanley,’ *NZ Listener* (16 September 2000), 46-47 (republished as ‘Mary Stanley: “we here are islanded,”’ Mary Stanley, New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre, updated November 26, 2002, accessed January 16, 2019, <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/stanley/simpson.asp>).