

Teaching Dylan Thomas's Muse to Speak Welsh



Once she was a mockery,
the crone in the empty park,
old, impotent, hunchbacked—

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but today things are different;
I sit beside her
teaching her words of weight—
drawing her to say them after me:
Trees, oh how mighty they are,
with the might of the Welsh:
and *dwrs*, see how water purrs
in Welsh when it's splashed from a fountain.

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And then I teach them two words—
Adar and *trydar*
the wings and the light;
and now no one will shout harsh words after her
Because the words will be in her mouth.

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I will be the park keeper, going homewards
knowing that she is not homeless;
far away I hear her pronounce:
Coed cadarn,
Cedyrn y Cymry,
Dwr and *adar*,
and her words will be
drops flung from a fountain,
rising like flying wings.

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Now her stick,
spearing dead leaves in the park
turn them, turn herself
into a living green.

Menna Elfyn