

#52weeksofnaturepoetry – a project by Kathryn Rossati

Layers

On the surface, she looked healthy.
But a gentle prod revealed the bruises underneath.
It was time to peel back the layers,
time to aerate the spiralling thoughts within.

Scarf wrapped tight and fingers gloved,
she trekked out into the crisp, late autumn air
leaving breath-ghouls behind her.
Down to the river, taking the quieter fork:

stray buddleias, some woody giants, others only pups,
lined the roadside. Escapees from fenced houses nestled by the bank.
Ivies stretched out to take her hands, while
nettles lifted their serrated leaves
to reveal the delicate white blooms hugging their stems.

Robin, that friendly chap, popped up
once the path diverted to the trees.
He tolerated her pleasantries, then both
went upon their way.

The air was fresh in her lungs now,
its sweetness already working the rot away.
Her strides grew more confident
as the song overhead bloomed;
blue tits and blackbirds adorning bare branches in place of leaves.

Closer to the river, coots eyed her, as did moorhens –
the ducks would have too, had they been awake.

Attempting to walk the same path as before,
she found the tide had all but swallowed it.

Try a new adventure, the water lapped, don't look back.

About turning, chance caught her:

a snow-white egret, ankle deep in a puddle,
pausing for fan photos
before taking to branch, displaying its golden feet.

Delicate green erupted from the seeds of wild
within her heart,

evoking a rare feeling. *Calm.*

Her thoughts had settled.

Yes, that was definitely it. *Calm.*