
POETRY | FALL 2020

Monument

By Joan Michelson

Days after George Floyd was kned to death
and demos spread at speed like a contagion,

in Bristol, England, a statue of a slave trader
was wrested from its plinth and rolled into the river.

A black woman leaped up to take the slave trader's place.
She was a commanding presence in black power dress

and stance: short skirt, short jacket, cocked black beret,
her right arm raised and fisted, hair worn Afro.

The image went viral. In no time she was immortalized
by the artist Marc Quinn with a resin likeness

that, unlicensed, his team erected on the adorned
Victorian stone. The statue stood a day before

the Council sent a cherry picker to carry it away.
With care, she was roped, hoisted and lowered into

the centre of the truck. A black woman,
in a moment carved in time, she'd risked herself.

Recreated, she stood bolt upright, her fist
tight beneath the blaze of orange steel.

Joan Michelson is a poet whose poetry book publications include *The Family Kitchen* (2018), The Finishing Line Press, KY, USA, *Landing Stage* (2017), SPM Publishers, UK, and Bloomvale Home (2016), an Original Plus Chapbook, UK. She initiated and for many years was in charge of the Creative Writing Programme at the University of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands, England. She currently teaches creative writing to medical students at Kings College, University of London. Originally from Boston, MA, she lives in London. Two of her poems, 'The Psychotherapist' and 'Tandem' have been published in previous issues of *Intima*. Her poem "Monument" appears in the Fall 2020 *Intima*.

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