The Rising of the Kelpies
(public opening, Easter 2014)

Alastair McIntosh

Now do you see the great Each-uisge
water horse – twin kelpies towering vaster
even than their kin on Loch Ness
from banks betwixt the Forth and Clyde?
And rising likewise spirited
upon page one of Chapter One
– the book of Scotland’s Future

Each-uisge – harbinger of ‘doom’
and that as ‘law’ as dharma
of our destiny unfurling;
a kairos time, our turning point
of transformation that wells up
from lochs and rivers – even now
canals it seems – that stir and flow
and carry ships on currents deep discerned
by artists, bards and other prophets who
perceive the signs that speak unto
the shifting humours of these times

I tell you: Scotland’s name
will not go down in history
for the title of our currency or
scrapping of the Bedroom Tax or
wealth of oil or even Europe
(whether in or out or round about)
Scotland’s name will be a light
a healing of the nations –
the day we set off Trident
the day we press red button of dispatch
each one of us within the polling booth
no cruel explosion but a soft implosion
within the very politics
they thought this evil would protect

Sent back again, sent back by us
to think again –
Repent! Repent! Repent!

A! Fredome is a noble thing!
(we’ll hae nae thermonuclear warheads here)
Away! Away! Away! Away!
thus speaks the great Each-uisge on
its Easter rising day
Freeing the Unicorn
(in memory of Colin Macleod of Govan)

Alastair McIntosh

Have you ever wondered
why the Lion of Empire’s might
stands rampant roaring proud
and not a little – loud –
while Unicorn of quiet understated way
(and therefore dangerous –
I’ve heard the anxious voices say)
is held in chains, tamed and restrained
from being magic, holy, wild and free
one-pointed spiral of awareness
that reaches from within this land
and on through you and me?

Macleod asked that portentous question
back in Devolution protest days
United Kindred camping out on Calton Hill ...
and girding up his loins to leap
as if a mythic beast on pounding wings
(with angle-grinder hitched onto his back)
he scaled the gates of Holyrood
with dreadlocks flying
eye of eagle, scrying
And though seen off by Palace guards amidst the clamour of alarms, the yelp of dogs ... and though turned back hotfooting it across the gold-trimmed iron-cast gate before the spinning diamond wheel could bite ... 

Too late! The manacles that weighed upon old Scotia’s shoulder clattered crumpling down onto the deadening cobbles ... cut right through by searing blade in realm of Spirit from within (for such is where their deepest bondage always lay)

That night beneath the stars high out on Arthur’s Seat sweet Finlay’s People skirled their pipes and reeled and stirred the Rhymer’s slumbering clans awake – one-pointed – gathered – to demanding common task While shepherds watching o’er the White Stag’s herd perceived the Holy Rood, ablaze! – the compass fire of Scotland’s love (put off thy shoes tread gently, child, upon this ground) great opening of our people’s way for native, poor and also refugee

Receive this flame, this life that is the Unicorn’s God-sent decree that reaches to the hearts of you, and even that of me ... Magic, Holy Wild – and Free