

Gallery of poems: Steve Barker

Educated at the University of Wales, Steve Barker is a freelance writer.

He has published a number of poems in various magazines and a selection of his work appears in 'Reactions 3' (UEA Press).

Margaret Laton's Jacket

Beyond the mullioned windows -
while you sat stock-still -

dogs chased boars
through intricate thickets,

sails of Spanish galleons
weighed the wind.

Now your ruff,
your feathered hat, have fled,

as has your flesh,
for all its porcelain.

Here, though, is your jacket -
its spangled braille

asking to be touched,
its birds and bay leaves

perched and poised
in the present air.

When it was sewn a second time
with an artist's brush,

your breasts filled
the embroidered circles

I could now so easily
circle with my hand.

You wore it last
four hundred years ago,

and yet I feel
your jacket is still warm.



Early 17th century woman's jacket shown being worn in the portrait of Margaret Laton, attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger and displayed alongside it

Jacket, embroidered linen, 1610-15
Museum no. T.228-1994
Portrait, oil on panel, about 1620
Museum no. E.214-1994