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Meeting the Pilgrimage Halfway, Martin Hayden, Garlic Press, 2010, 0955331455, 9780955331459,

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Rob Lock's pamphlet The Self-Forgetting Place, (newly published by The Garlic Press, based in Leiston) is being launched at Benson Blakes, in St John's Street, on Tuesday 3rd December. The poems are often poignant but also generous in feeling and outlook, warmly human, with a powerful sense of transience, and of what we can affirm in the face of transience.

Martin Hayden will also be reading from his pamphlet Meeting the Pilgrimage Halfway, which came out in 2010, with a launch in Halesworth, but not locally. His acutely observed poems, tracking the author from childhood to the near present, movingly convey a love of family, the wider community (including that on lona), music and the natural world; even their order in the pamphlet is a source of real satisfaction.

Rob's poems are so diverse in subject matter, there is no pinning him down to topic! From life's serious and most heartfelt moments, to the equally important lighter aspects, his poetry has captured the human condition with a succinct, yet deep sense of understanding. There is often a quite stunning last line bringing home the message of the poem with either a gasp of human empathy or an enduring smile.

Martin writes with a sense of place which is hard to rival. He has a deep love and understanding of lona, which he brings to his poetry by describing people, geography, geology, the sea and the native wildlife. As an amateur ornithologist, I particularly enjoy the way Martin brings birds into his poems, and how these are often woven into the heart of his message.

Jen writes with compassion and a deeply knowledgeable sense of the human condition. Her

poems are honest, personal, beautifully crafted and original. There is never a wasted word in her poetry, only a highly thoughtful choice of words that capture the emotion of her poetry with brilliant precision.

Poetry Aloud this month (March 2013) seemed to bring the renewal expected of Spring, although Spring itself didn't seem to be taking any notice. It was bitterly cold outside but in the warmth inside we had new (to us) poets, one of whom (Hil Jennings) had travelled from across the county. Read his excellent contributions in the archive.

We were honoured to have Ivor Murrell, who is the Suffolk Poetry Society Treasurer apart from being a fine poet, travel the width of the county to be with us for the first time. We hope it won't be the last. Ivor submitted his three poems to the site and we have put a link to his own website on the Links page: it is http://versifier.co.uk/.