



Anna Lewis
The Wash-house
Poems from the *Mabinogion*

Note

This sequence is drawn from the story of Blodeuedd, found in the *Mabinogion*, the major collection of Medieval Welsh tales. Blodeuedd is often thought to represent the natural world in human form; connections and tensions between humans and the natural environment run throughout the story. The sequence is told from the imagined perspective of Blodeuedd's maid.

Blodeuedd is created from wild flowers by magic, to be the bride for a young nobleman, but begins an affair with another man, who encourages her to kill her husband and appropriate his land. Their attempt at murder fails when her husband transforms into an eagle, and flies out of sight. Blodeuedd's husband is later reinstated by his uncle, a magician, who then pursues Blodeuedd, and turns her into an owl as punishment for her disloyalty.