

Peregrine

**A cool spring day in Exeter
with air that's stretched and clear.
a falcon flies her territory;
the hunter all must fear.**

**This church upon Mount Dinham
is particularly blessed,
for how our spirits are lifted when
the bird rebuilds her nest.**

**When almost at the globe's bright rim,
with unsurpassed skill
she flips, and folds and plummets down
to make a bloody kill.**

**Later, in St Michael's church
The faithful kneel to pray,
while up above, the peregrine
decapitates her prey.**

**By whatever means it takes
give us our daily bread
and the peregrine her meat
to keep the youngsters fed.**

**She sits amidst her crown of thorns
tearing wing from wing.
'All creatures of our God and King'
the congregation sing.**

Cathie Hartigan

Cathie Hartigan writes:- 'Back in 2006, I was involved in a project entitled "Singing their Praises: A Celebration of Birds." At concerts in Exmouth, at Paignton Zoo and RAMM, supported by the RSPB, our programme consisted of a selection of songs about birds from the 16th to the 20th centuries. It also included four poems that I had written, set to music by contemporary local composers, Gillian Webster, Diana and John Draisey.'

'The cry of the peregrines, once described to me as sounding like a rusty bicycle wheel, was very familiar and it was thrilling to see them on the wing above St Michael's. I was also aware, however, of the impact the birds' feeding habits had on the surrounding area. Pigeon heads frequently littered the playground of St David's School. My poem set out to reflect the mixed feelings we often have about wildlife, especially when it impacts on our daily lives.'

