



Swire Ridgeway Arts Prize 2021 Written entries 2021

Ridgeway

Barrows keep their secrets, as sheep wander by
So it is the path begins
(or ends, if you have come from Ivinghoe)
North towards Barbury Castle we go
Crossing the Herepath between Avebury and Fyfield
With every step, people from ages past
Walk alongside, to silently share their stories
Of polishing stones and ploughing fields
Carrying the sarsens to the great henge
Witnessing the dying and rising sun
Marching to fight the battles of their time
Or droving flocks along the track, with songs and tales
A Queen remembered in a white horse
Ramparts come into view
Who saw the age of Iron, Rome and anti aircraft guns come and go
Across the plain, Liddington Hill marks the way
With legends to tell of Arthur's army
A red kite soars, skylarks give voice to summer sun
Yellowhammers ask for bread and cheese and corn buntings call
Wayland sits quietly in a grove, not to be seen, even if you leave a coin
More ramparts in the distance. A steeper climb to Uffington Castle
And where Saint George slew the dragon
Proud the oldest horse sits to be admired from afar
Memories of scouring fairs echo in the wind
On we go past the Devil's bowl and under the A34
Joining the Thames, then up to the Chilterns
Ancient woods bring cooling shade
Churches and towns offer rest and refreshment
Almost there now. The beacon beckons
Sinews stretch for the last climb
Then there it is. The end (or beginning)
Now, rest a while. Enjoy the sight
Look back towards home
And know it for the first time

Russell Holland
