

ROUTE 66 OPEN ROAD FOR PROMISELAND

John Powls - Poems and Carol Ballenger - Images

"A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike... We find that after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us."

Steinbeck, the ultimate writer on travel across America's vastness, gets nearest to answering the question that many ask those of us afflicted with wanderlust - Why?

We journey to fulfil a longing that our imagination alone cannot satisfy. It is essential to have seen the shimmering heat rising from the endless blacktop, to have smelt the sage as evening draws shadows across distant peaks, to have heard the ticking motor as it cools.

This is the stuff of John Powls' poems, glimpses from the corner of the poet's eye woven into an odyssey as ancient as Homer's, yet as immediate as Carol Ballenger's photographs grabbed from Google's eye. Together these contain the essence of *Route 66*, a journey fulfilled not through reaching its end but through memories of what was, what might have been.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



John Powls is a long-established writer with a broad ambit encompassing journalism, drama and contributions to other artists' books. Above all, he is a landscape poet influenced by the Romantic tradition with a considerable body of published work.

His poetry has been inspired by Dartmoor and his native North East of England with interesting diversions to London, Japanese gardens in England, the art world and, now, Route 66.

A storytrader developing his particular heritage of language, John aims to achieve innovative realisation of his themes on the page and is fascinated by the interplay of anticipation, memory and experience in doing so.

He is a frequent performer of his work, including with artists and musicians in multimedia projects, and has collaborated regularly with Carol Ballenger over more than twenty years.

"John is a real poet with the real poet's inborn sensibilities"

Aeronwy Thomas-Ellis – poet, daughter and biographer of Dylan Thomas



Carol Ballenger's photographs are in collections in the UK and abroad and have been exhibited widely, including for the National Trust, The Dartmoor National Park Authority, The Royal Photographic Society and the Edinburgh Festival. London exhibitions include St. Martin-In-The-Fields, The Barbican Galleries and the Embassy of Japan. She has exhibited at

The New York Hall of Science and her "Tree of Life" image was used as the cover for a report presented at the UN summit on climate change in Paris.

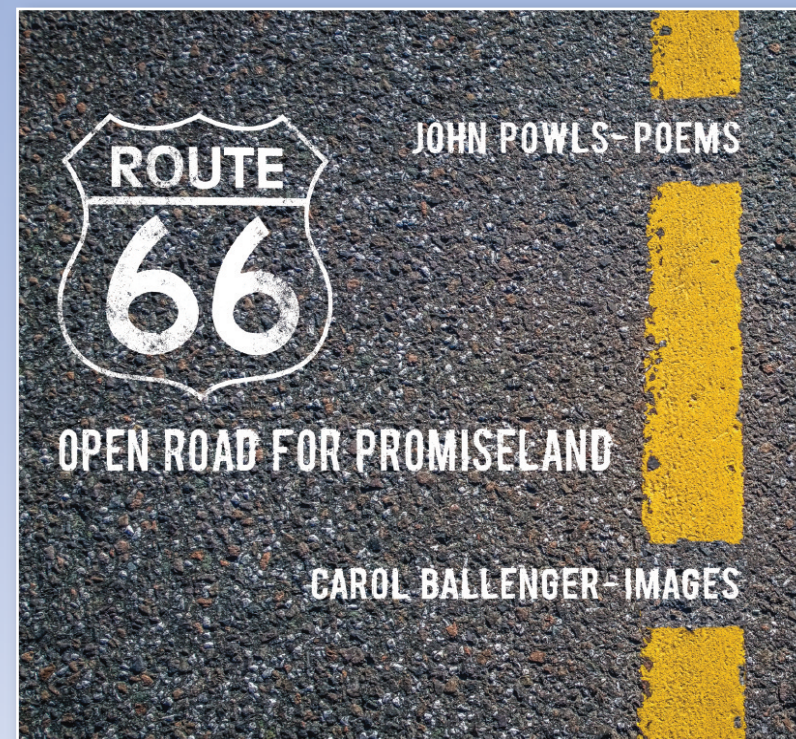
Carol is a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, a member of the Devon Guild of Craftsmen and a founder member of Arts Live who promote exhibitions, performances and workshops, often combining photography, music and poetry. She and John have collaborated on various projects and three books, *Dartmoor Dreams*, *Stone Universe* and *Dartington Hall* have been published by Halsgrove.

For more information about Carol, John or Arts Live go to: www.artslive.org.uk

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ROUTE 66 - OPEN ROAD FOR PROMISELAND



Above: Ann's Chicken Fry House,
Oklahoma City
35° 30' 40.03" N 97° 35' 35.08" W

Right: Texaco Station, Tucumari
35° 10' 18.98" N 103° 42' 42.89" W



Above: Cadillac Ranch
35° 11' 16.68" N 101° 59' 14.87" W

Right: Whipple Point, Painted Desert
35° 4' 2.58" N 109° 47' 51.70" W



Below: East Cabrillo Boulevard,
Santa Barbara
34° 25' 10.00" N 119° 39' 43.80" W



Example of a double-page spread.

Robert Johnson Blues
Chicago, Illinois

America
Beats on it
From all sides
Along the roads
American
Chicago beats
Right back
Midwest and Michigan
Moulded
Wind whipped
Inevitable reality
And energy
The hub
The heart
The destination
The wild ones
The big shoulders

Exciting
City of cycles
Clean compact
Constant renewal
Blocks of steel
And concrete
Towering achievements

Sand the
Prairie fields
Turned and shackled
And woods
Long piled
Buildings
And blocks
Jefocrowded
Savanna descended
To pipe and
Sewers vein
The skin
Of tarmacadam
Drawn and destined
For this town
You found
Your voice, your best
At that crossroads
Set the soundtrack
For a century
Your songs
Sung by city birds
At dead of night
And concrete
Under electric stars

Inspired
In the dawn
Down from
The Drive above
The Gold Coast
I fingerwrite
A heart
In the wet sand
Making an impression
In the way
I want
The word
South of Navy Pier
In from Lakeshore
Grass Park green
Across Michigan
Turn right
On red
Adams runs due west
Prairie
Wind measures
Its length
Morning sun
At my back

Rising rays slice
Story-line
Straight start
Skyrappers
Set like standing stones
Adams/Walsh
L station
Limits
The route
open road for promistland
This is where
It all began
Ideas have fences
Great journeys
Ending over horizons
Now imagined
I beat a path

House of Blues, Chicago
41° 53' 12.36" N
87° 37' 45.72" W

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