

## Review of Wyuen Pyne: a reckoning of women's voices

WYUEN PYNE: *a reckoning of women's voices* by Jean G-Owen, takes its title (pronounced *wivven pine*) from a medieval phrase meaning *women's pain* or *women's punishment*. As well as supposed witches being burned at the stake, we are reminded of punishments such as brandings, the scold's bridle, the ducking stool and the shrew's fiddle, all designed to be cruel and painful, but most importantly, deliberately public humiliations to keep all the other women in line. And this aspect of women's punishment is found not only in the past, but:

*Something timeless: the public spectacle of women's shame... We have traded stocks and scaffolds for social media harassment and rumour, for laws and judgments passed in rooms where we aren't present.*

Compelling and thought-provoking, the book is more than a study of how women were made to suffer for speaking out, being different or daring to say no, with acceptable femininity synonymised with obedience; better, this is a positive and triumphant celebration of those who dared and those who still dare, to resist society's expectations and defy, rather than comply

*Wyuen Pyne* consists of a collection of short and engaging pieces of non-fiction, storytelling and poetry, based on historical events, folklore and classic literature, re-imagining the voices of women they tried to silence. Lilith, Anne Askew, Beatrice Cenci, Hypatia of Alexandria, Jenny Pipes and many more.

*An erudite and enjoyable read.*

*Emily Gillatt-Ball.*