

Live Encounters celebrates 7 years 2010-2016

Live encounters

POETRY

FEAST

Free online magazine from village earth
Volume Three December 2016

GUEST EDITORIAL
DANIEL LAWLESS
POET & WRITER

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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Civil and human rights activists, animal rights activists, poets, writers, journalists, social workers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of the magazine.

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Guest Editorial and poems, Natural Selection Daniel Lawless

Daniel Lawless's book *The Gun My Sister Killed Herself With and Other Poems* is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry Press, February 2018. He has published or has poems forthcoming in *Cortland Review*, *Louisville Review*, *The Common*, *FIELD*, *Manhattan Review*, *Numero Cinq*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *B O D Y*, *Fulcrum*, *Asheville Review*, etc. He is the founder and editor of *Plume: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry*.



Erasure & Other Poems Lynne Thompson

Lynne Thompson is the author of two full-length poetry collections, *Beg No Pardon*, winner of the Perugia Press Prize and the Great Lakes Colleges Association's New Writers Award, and *Start With A Small Guitar* (What Books Press). Thompson's poems have recently appeared in the literary journals, *Ecotone*, *North American Review*, and *Solstice Literary Magazine* which selected one of her poems as winner of its Stephen Dunn Poetry Prize. Thompson is Reviews and Essays Editor of the literary journal, *Spillway*.



Auguries Anton Floyd

Anton Floyd was born in Egypt of Irish, Maltese, English and French Lebanese parentage. He studied English at Trinity College Dublin and University College Cork. He has lived and worked in the Eastern Mediterranean. He is now teaching in Cork city and lives in West Cork. Poems published in *The Stony Thursday Book* and haiku in *Shamrock*. He won the IHS International Competition (2014), honourable mention (2015) and was runner up in the Snapshot Press (UK) Haiku Calendar 2016 Competition. He is a member of Irish Haiku Society.



The Blue Bikini Jim Burke

Jim Burke lives in Limerick, Ireland. Co-founder with John Liddy of *The Stony Thursday Book*. Poems have appeared in *The Shamrock Haiku Journal*, *The Shot Glass Journal*, *The Literary Bohemian*, *The Crannog Poetry Journal*, *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Revival Poetry Journal* and 'Between the Leaves' New Haiku Writing From Ireland, edited by Anatoly Kudryavitsky. He is a member of the Irish Haiku Society and is on the committee of the Limerick Writers Centre.



Holding the Road Michael J. Whelan

Michael J. Whelan lives in South Dublin. He served as a UN Peacekeeper in Lebanon and Kosovo with the Irish Army and is a historian and keeper of the Air Corps Military Museum. He was 2nd Place in the Patrick Kavanagh & 3rd in the Jonathan Swift Awards. He is widely published and read for the Poetry Ireland Introductions series and his debut collection 'Peacekeeper' was published in 2016 by Doire Press.



Colours of Life Amy Barry

Amy Barry writes poems and short stories. She has worked in the media, hotel and Oil & Gas industries. Her poems have been published in anthologies, journals, and e-zines, in Ireland and abroad. Her poems have been featured in the radio and television in Italy, Australia, Canada and Ireland. Some of her poems have been translated into Italian. She loves traveling. Trips to India, Nepal, China, Bali, Paris, Berlin, Budapest, Fakenburg have all inspired her work. When not writing she plays Table Tennis. She loves sushi.

Celebrating 7 years 2010-2016

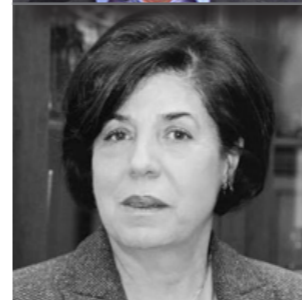
Live
encounters

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VOLUME THREE
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Janus at Killaloe Michael Durack

Durack grew up on a farm near Birdhill in County Tipperary. He was a founder member of *Killaloe Writers Group* and his poetry has been published in a wide range of literary journals in Ireland and abroad, as well as airing on local and national radio. He is the author of a chapbook, *Nothing To Write Home About* (Derg House), a comic narrative in verse, *A Hairy Tale Of Clare* (East Clare Telecottages) and a memoir in prose and poems, *Saved To Memory: Lost To View* (Limerick Writers Centre.) He has collaborated with his brother, Austin on a programme of poetry and music, and together they have produced two albums, *The Secret Chord* (2013) and *Going Gone* (2015.)



Darkness and Light Maria Miraglia

Maria Miraglia, graduated in Foreign Languages and Literatures, and has Master's degree in Evaluation and Assessment and in Teaching of Modern Languages. She has collaborated with the Italian Department of Education. Author of *Le Grandi Opere di Yayati Madan Gandhi*; author and editor of *Antologia Poetica*. She is the Literary Director of Pablo Neruda Italian Cultural Association, secretary general of Writers Capital International Foundation; contributor of many poetry pages both in Italian and English. Founder and chair-woman of World Foundation for peace. Some of her poems have been translated into Turkish, Spanish, Macedonian, Azerbaijani and Albanian.



Debut Breda Wall Ryan

Breda Wall Ryan's poetry is widely published in Irish and international journals and has won the iYeats Poetry Competition, Poets Meet Painters, Dromineer Poetry Competition, Over the Edge New Writer of the Year and The Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Prize. She has an M. Phil in Creative Writing from Trinity College, Dublin. She was selected for Poetry Ireland Introductions Series 2014. *In a Hare's Eye* (Doire Press 2015) won the Shine/Strong Award for a first collection.



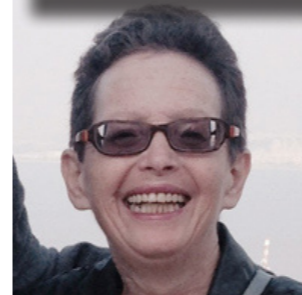
Glimpses of Hope and Fear David Morgan

David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles from the Socialist History Society (SHS) of which he is the Secretary. He writes regularly for the SHS Newsletter, occasionally for the Morning Star newspaper and for a range of other online and printed publications.



International relations Nasrin Parvaz

Nasrin Parvaz became a civil rights activist when the Islamic regime took power in 1979. She was arrested in 1982, tortured and spent eight years in prison. Shortly after her release she fled to England where she claimed asylum in 1993. Her prison memoir was published in Farsi in 2003 and in Italian in 2006. A novel, *Temptation*, based on the true stories of some male prisoners who survived the 1988 massacre of Iranian prisoners was published in Farsi in 2008. www.nparvaz.wix.com



A Living Will Natalie Wood

Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month before the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and lives in Karmiel, Galilee from where she writes several blogs, micro-fiction and free-verse. She features in *Smith Magazine's Six Word Memoirs On Jewish Life* and has contributed to *Technorati* and *Blogcritics* along with *Jewish Renaissance* and *Live Encounters* magazines.

Daniel Lawless's book *The Gun My Sister Killed Herself With and Other Poems* is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry Press, February 2018. He has published or has poems forthcoming in *Cortland Review*, *Louisville Review*, *The Common*, *FIELD*, *Manhattan Review*, *Numero Cinq*, *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *B O D Y*, *Fulcrum*, *Asheville Review*, etc. He is the founder and editor of *Plume: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry*. www.plumepoetry.com



DANIEL LAWLESS

Poet, Editor of *Plume: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry*

WHAT IS NOT

As I think this evening of what I might say in the space Mark Ulyseas has so kindly offered me, and perusing those efforts that have occupied it before mine, it occurs to me that the subject of one's own poetics, but more generally one's writing's "origin myth" – where one stands in relationship to "where poetry comes from" -- and the nature of poetry's effect on the writer, have comprised a running theme. And, truthfully, I admire many elements of these fine poets' epistles: Geraldine Mill's moving reflections on her transitive sinisterism – her left-handedness, that set her apart literally and metaphorically, "marked her as awkward and a little different" but which proved no match for the pellucid conformities of school life that valued its opposite – right-handedness, right-thinking-ness, one can infer, and thus setting the stage for both her participatory withdrawal from that world and her literary engagement with it in the form of careful observation and budding craft. Likewise there is much to appreciate in Ian Watson's more practical assessment on, not where poetry comes from but "where it goes"; as an editor for five years myself, I can only marvel at his eighteen year editorial stint at the literary journal *newleaf*, and appreciate his apparently indefatigable and various generousities – but which, too, fell afoul of other commercial/*societal forces majeures*.

And there is the lovely thought of Randhir Khare in that Rabelaisian idyll set in a Bulgarian cherry orchard, where we learn that poetry does not reside alone in the hagiographies of the departed, but is for the sentient and thus the wounded,

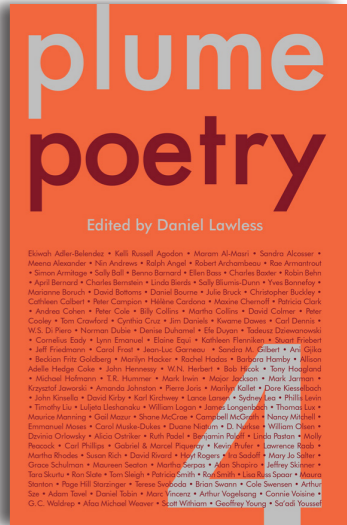


that thing which "heals" ... but more than that is "... our exultation, our praise our expression of love, our expression of anger, grief, it helps us excavate ourselves, gives us wings, scales and tails like fish, fangs like snakes, makes us children, takes us into a hall of mirrors where we lose ourselves in otherness." Yes, as well, there is Terry McDonagh's omnibus-ical response to the question of poetry: incorporeal celebrator of "everyday miracles" and commemorative plaque inscribed with the plights of refugees and childhood memories.

And yet. I want more. More about the *Das Ding an sich*, the-thing-itself, to use the Kantian phrase, or rather its phenomenology. Vast and varied are the archives of those ready with a definition of the art – Plutarch, Cocteau, Cage ("I have nothing to say, I am saying it, and that is poetry."), Marianne Moore and her imaginary garden and its real toads, Ginsberg, Frost, Basho, Meister Eckhart, Shelley, Paz, Milosz, Parra, Larkin, Mallarme...to cite several of the more famous exemplars.

But, I see my suggested word count is all but expired. And so, I'd like to offer, as is my nature, a way of looking at poetry through a negative lens – *apophatically*, to employ the theological term: a form of the sculptural – discovering the desired form by removing all that it is not – per Michelangelo's beautiful if now somewhat hackneyed "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."

For this I turn to a poem from **Tom Sleigh***, published in the print anthology **Plume Poetry 4** – a riff on Carlos Drummond’s work, in which the latter-day poet advises the reader (or erstwhile writer) in the manner of Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet*, but, for my money, happily less gentle, far more useful – and wicked-er, in the Bostonian sense.



Cruising for Poetry
after Carlos Drummond De Andrade

If poetry comes up to you to stare you down,
you’ll freeze like the winter sun
unmoving in the sky, neither bright or warm.
So don’t write poetry about what people tell you
are life’s greatest events.
Nothing gets born, nothing dies in poems.

Forget your affinities, birthdays, your life’s little occasions—
none of that counts. And don’t write poetry
with your body, that too complete, comfortable,
self-sufficient body so hostile
to the poem overflowing its bright banks.
Your drop of bile, your smile or frown
of pleasure or grief in someone’s darkened room—who gives a shit?
So don’t blather on and on about your feelings—
all they’ll do is mislead you with ambiguous understandings,
they’ll con you and take you for a ride.
And whatever your brain, distracted, tells itself it thinks,
forget it—that’s still not poetry.

Don’t celebrate the city, leave all that concrete in peace.
Song shrugs off the cars moving in the streets,
it turns its back on the paltry secrets inside houses.
No matter what you think, it’s not music overheard
flowing down from an open window,
and it sure as hell isn’t the surf beating its forehead on the sand.
Song isn’t natural or anything to do with nature,
and as for people getting along and calling themselves citizens,
song doesn’t give a damn.
For it, rain and darkness, exhaustion and hope,
don’t mean a thing. And don’t think that poetry
wants anything to do with objects
though it’s been known to make subjects and objects one.

Don’t waste time lying. Don’t give in to exasperation.
Your yacht of ivory, your diamond-studded shoes,
your peasant dances and superstitions, your family skeletons
will only disappear into the way time curves,
they’re worse than useless.

Don’t shove at us your buried and oh-so-pathetic childhood.
Don’t confuse what you’ve seen in the mirror
with what you think you can recall.
Look, if it’s faded, it wasn’t poetry.
And if it broke, it wasn’t crystal.

Enter as quietly as you can into the realm of words.
That’s where poems are waiting to be written.
They may lie there paralyzed, but they aren’t in despair,
they’re refreshed in the calm of unbroken surfaces.
Look at them, isolate and silent, pure beings of the dictionary.

Live inside your poems before you write them.
Don’t get annoyed if they’re obscure.
If they poke and prod you, don’t lose your cool.
In the silence inside words, each word
waits to show itself before it disappears.

Don’t force the poem to tear itself from limbo.
Don’t go picking up lost poems off the floor.
Don’t flatter the poem with high-flown bullshit.
Accept it in the same way that it will have to accept its form
defining and concentrating the space around it.

Get down on all fours and take a good look at the words.
Each one has a thousand faces hidden under that blank expression,
and each one is asking you—and could care less what you reply—
something humble, something terrible: Did you bring the key?

Look, look: barren of melody or conception, these words
burrowed deep into the night.
Still damp and pregnant with sleep, they roll like rocks
down the harsh river and turn to scorn.

The following poems, written over the course of perhaps six months, represent something of a break for me: or a return, rather, to the sort of writing I used to do in my youth: short, spare in imagery, a discreet call to the white space around them. Readers of a certain age and predilection will no doubt spot their immediate ancestors -- Simic, especially, Merwin, Follain. The poems will appear in my book, *The Gun My Sister Killed Herself With and Other Poems*, out from Salmon in February 2018.

Sign Above a Discount Mattress Store

Strip Mall, Forktown, Alabama

"The Rest of Your Life" —
And the sudden thought as we roll through the STOP sign
Starred with bullet holes,
Necessita c'induce, e non diletto.
Yes, says the dog gnawing it tail outside,
The lone clerk wearing some sort of paper crown.
Too late. Too late.
You have lived your life the wrong way around.

Flense

from Definitions

A pleasant numbness settles in my bones.
It dances inside my head.
You bring the same dedication
to your seduction
as you do to your music.
Eyes shut,
I smell the leather of your coat,
the cigarettes on your lips.
Almost fearful,
I kiss you.
Risking my life
with that kiss.
Like a fool.
Like an animal-
desperately in love,
shaken by a current
of untamed ecstasy-
Dangerous,
but strangely-
Pure.



Natural Selection

In the frozen food aisle
Each section lights up as I pass.
Blueberry mini-muffins, stout pierogis, little
Pouches of mauve fondant –
Like hearing one birdcall at a time.
All the vanished species
Of the earth rising up out of the fog
Again to sing into the clear untouchable air.
Darkness ahead, darkness behind

Shquiver

A word I made up for the thing I did
After I did what I did to the squirrel
Half in light half in darkness
In the ditch with its dry rivulets of gravel
Where I crouched & looking up
Read the flared letters of my own name
Ensnared in spiked graffiti
On the Reverend Sherman J. Minton Bridge.



© Daniel Lawless

This morning, a Facebook diorama

Consisting entirely of a rough water-colored cardboard box loggia
With sketched in tiles and columns where

A bored-looking blue-robed Calico curls up beneath
A Christmas tree's white angel, poised on fishing line just above her head:

Gabriel, of course, translucent, flared-winged, announcing you-know-what
To his red-eyed feline Mary. The shadow of the Maker's hand.

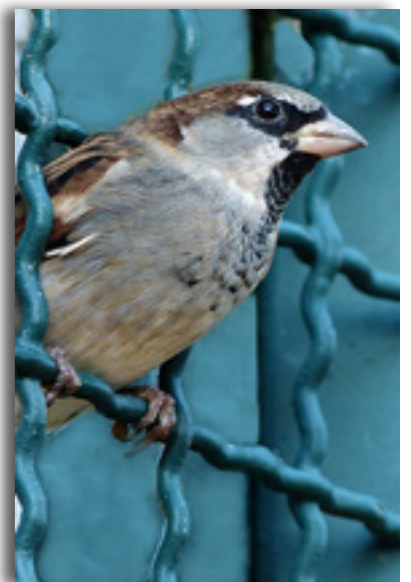
Note from a Sparrow

"...not one of them falls to the ground apart
from your Father's will" (Matt. 10:29)

"This was I, a sparrow. I did my best; farewell."
—William Carlos Williams

Dear William,

Since you presume to speak for me,
Let me just say *farewell* is not a word
I would have chosen if I chose with words.
Nor did I do my best unless you mean I tried
To get some food in me, avoid the cats,
And make another sparrow.
This was you. All you, William. And He consented.



Lynne Thompson is the author of two full-length poetry collections, *Beg No Pardon*, winner of the Perugia Press Prize and the Great Lakes Colleges Association's New Writers Award, and *Start With A Small Guitar* (What Books Press). Thompson's poems have recently appeared in the literary journals, *Ecotone*, *North American Review*, and *Solstice Literary Magazine* which selected one of her poems as winner of its Stephen Dunn Poetry Prize. Thompson is Reviews and Essays Editor of the literary journal, *Spillway*. www.spillway.org



Erasure

The woman who gave me breath
erased my father, his whistle, his pain.
She never said if his eyes were brown.

She didn't remember how he moved
the night they made me. She omitted
details of geography and religion was

excised. Music never played or she
would have played it. She revealed my
father's name. I cannot pronounce it.

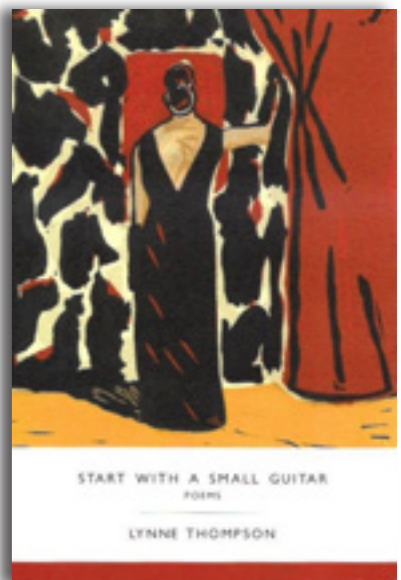
My Life According to Susan Howe

either late or soon what I am I must remain
silk moth fly mulberry tree

World resting on nothing
gilding nothing
coming back fugitive

I see you and you see I see you

Now show me anything
sound and stillness astir
quiet in your corner.



Blue Mussel

*Allow yourself
to be spelled differently.
It will feel like falling
It has waiting attached.*

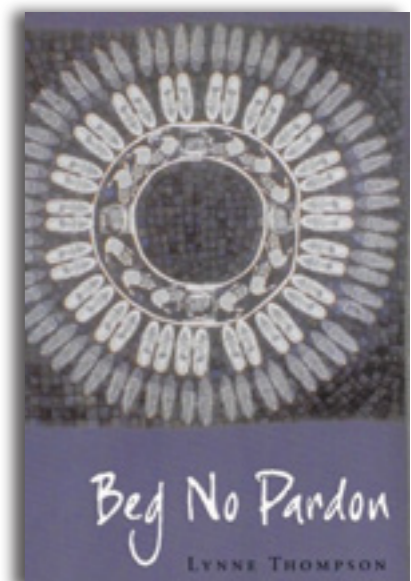
Emma Melton
"Waking Instructions"

Allow yourself
everything, especially those things
you have stored on a shelf,
saying *that's not for me* or *I am not
able*. Flesh out your serpent
and your waterlily. They are similar;
they're the floor and steeple of that self
you never imagined existed.
Take a chance to stand in the shower
of your personalities. It's ok for your name

to be spelled differently
so that when you're called, you're called
agate, or by those who know, *tapestry*,
or by those who are unsure *blue
mussel* because they hope you are
something more than you've seemed,
something more than just *indubitably*.
Clairvoyant, perhaps. Or something
like unfettered gladness or a body
of such pure and utter release

it will feel like falling.
As though the mere assignment
of a new name is a drawstring
pulling you through the playdough buried
deep inside you, could be the planetary
shift that turns one woman into hardware
while turning you into a cello's bowstring.
It's as simple as child's play—
so *recherché*!—
with a design so singular that

it has waiting attached—
an intermission that frustrates, then propels
us to scratch to blood the itch
(that irrefutable hanker) to be
named and re-named, that desire
to be known as *seed* or *tower* or *winter
weather*; cool but hardly detached
or unwilling. The impulse that gives us
permission to swim with a seahorse,
to admit the joy in life is *labyrinth*.



© Lynne Thompson

Life

For some, a short road.

*

For a child, a fascination with
moths, excrement, mother-tit.

*

For the earbud-wearing, green-
haired, some tatted pimple-face.

*

For the woman—see the Ketel
One, *up*, in her hand (every day)

or see her lover who she suspects
she has driven to transgendering.

*

Later, it becomes tedious:

the route home to the dry
cleaners, then back—

the stand up-sit down-kneel
down-pray for ?—

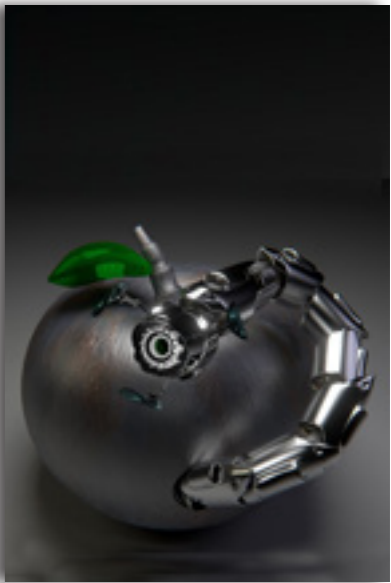
the constant pluck of the last
hairs straying across the body—

*

How long the long way round—

Whether or Not Planned Parenthood

Who is the Robot with a bomb in one hand and a text
of religious goo in the other? She stands on a cookbook
thinking of the child nestled in her belly these past months,
kicking every piece of *I promise to betray you* into her side—
and yet? Angry she has to share, Robot has devised a bomb
of language to detonate at the greatest moment of dispassion
for her offspring. But when, where? And will anyone who
survives (the deaf, perhaps) even care. The deaf are too few of
the lucky ones who know everything is echo, disappointment.



© Lynne Thompson

Anton Floyd was born in Egypt of Irish, Maltese, English and French Lebanese parentage. Raised in Cyprus he lived through the Cypriot struggle for independence. With the outbreak of intercommunal hostilities in 1963, the family was evicted at gunpoint from their Nicosia home by Turkish Cypriot militiamen, making them refugees in a divided capital. He studied English at Trinity College Dublin and University College Cork. He has lived and worked in the Eastern Mediterranean. He is now teaching in Cork city and lives in West Cork. Poems published in *The Stony Thursday Book*, *The Ghent Review* and haiku in *Shamrock*. He won the IHS International Competition (2014), honourable mention (2015) and was runner up in the Snapshot Press (UK) Haiku Calendar 2016 Competition. He is a member of Irish Haiku Society. A selection of his haiku is included in 'Between the Leaves', an anthology of new haiku writing from Ireland (Arlen House). His longer poems are looking for a home.

Photograph of Anton by Carole Anne Floyd



this is the country

for William and Liz Wall

the first time we really talked
was on the early train to dublin
time offered us the chance
the free seats at your table
was a welcomed play
of happenstance
before then only a genial glance
in the playground of the project school
suggested common cause

we leave kent station right on time
its frosted skylights and latticed girders
the parallel sweep of railway lines

the carriage clatters as it passes
the painted walls of northside houses
the wind bends the bankside grasses

in the slant of driven rain
looping phone lines glide and glisten
match the pace of our racing train

the window is a rolling screen
a moving framework of country scenes

a worn boreen and the five barred gate
a bright red tractor and skies of slate

quilted fields hemmed in by hedges
rivers spanned by old stone bridges

sloping hills and farmhouse gables
cobble yards and barns and stables

valley streams and tree-fringed ditches
frame by frame the picture switches

and so the train drives on and on
the perfect rhythm for a children's song

in the foreground cattle grazing
one horse gallops another's lazing

here's a church and here's steeple
there's a glimpse of country people

the scenes unfurl a green republic
a nostalgic colour tinted image
this is the country
your fabled place
where alice
with a freckled face
and her ribboned tresses
fell from grace
into the poisoned innocence
of a ghost estate



© Anton Floyd

haiku

the window
frost melts
departing ghosts

daybreak
the river slips
under the mist

the exile's hand
on the rusted gate
the keening hinge

passing
the roadside wall
travellers' shadows

picking once
hailstones
the coldest grains

a single tree
on the coastal cliff
weather vane

departing
ferry lights
melt into the sea

seabirds
on the horizon
an audible blur

departures

for Chris Weaver

the airport monitors
listed destinations
sun holidays mostly
after a week with us
in the rare sunshine
west cork he said
could happily vie
with all those places

we became for a while
part of the buzz and throb
a throng of revellers
full of midsummer fun
all sun hats and shades
queuing to check-in
packed into a square corral
like goodies in a hamper

later at the departure doors
parting with a see you anon
I saw a mother and her son
they stood face to face gazing
as if they had run out of words
when the automatic doors closed
she looked at me and said *australia*
I nodded and she knew I understood

we turned together to the exit
we were like a defeated tribe
mindful of our loss of pride
withdrawing into our private exiles



harcourt street

*singeðsumeres weard
sorge beodeð
bitter in breosthord*

*(the guardian of summer sings
bodes a sorrow
grievous in the soul)
from The Seafarer an Anglo-Saxon poem Exeter Book 10th century*

my life has changed since
then that attic bedsit
up five flights of creaky stairs
my room in harcourt street
next to the plush hotel
georgian home once to shaw

a short walk to grafton street
bewleys café and trinity
a student budget overruled
all other considerations
the halitosis of the shared toilet
that gargled like a sore throat

it was a building of ghosts
the sound of doors closing
the wash of constant traffic
like restless waves
the faint blue of the gas fire
its heat faint as a distant star

I never met the man next door
but imagined him sad faced
who had lost the urge to speak
who coughed all night
fixing the sound in my mind
of endured loneliness

loss

last winter's storms
brought down the laurel
as if some warlike god
madened by man's hubris
lost patience with the world
exhaled his febrile breath
and lifted it out of the ground
roots once sinewy
moist with fertility
have shriveled
stiffened with shock
blackened with loss

picking over leathery leaves
blackbirds scavenge for worms



© Anton Floyd

Jim Burke lives in Limerick, Ireland. Co-founder with John Liddy of *The Stony Thursday Book*. Poems have appeared in The Shamrock Haiku Journal, The Shot Glass Journal, The Literary Bohemian, The Crannog Poetry Journal, The Stony Thursday Book, The Revival Poetry Journal and ‘Between the Leaves’ New Haiku Writing From Ireland, edited by Anatoly Kudryavitsky. He is a member of the Irish Haiku Society and is on the committee of the Limerick Writers Centre.

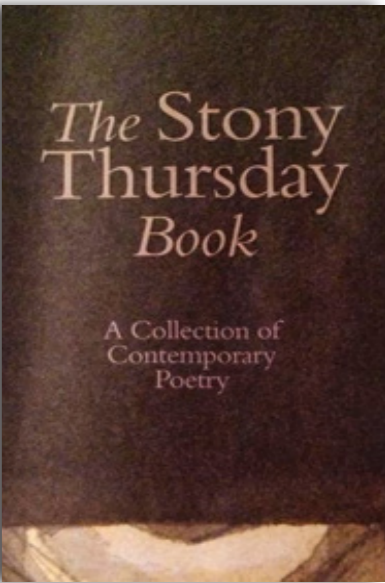


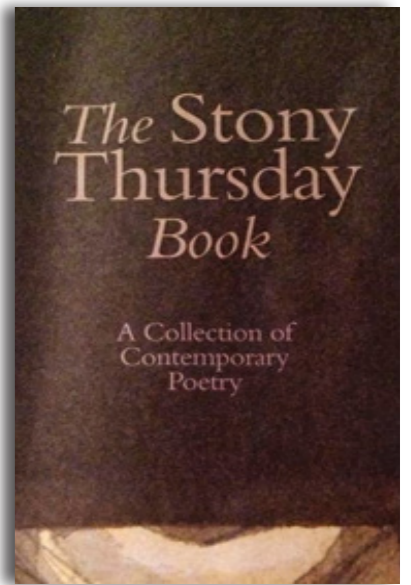
The Blue Bikini

When they settled down
He disliked the front room carpet
She did too,
A rocky grey and phosphorescent green
They spent little of their time with.
But before that
He loved her blue bikini
With white flowers across the waist,
Flowers that crept up top, too.
When she stepped from it
The first time:
He ran his fingers against the sand,
Those blowy grains;
That glistened everywhere.

Haiku

*
gloomy morning
damp irises spark
in the garden
*
weeding
some sort of order
in the winding path
*
out from the ditch
and into the ditch
a fox’s tail





The Meadow

The winding weight of
Sprawl
Paved its way
To invade you;
In my boyhood memory
You are clear to me;
Great green ghost-land!
When I close my eyes
Your crickets
Sing inside me.

Home Sunday

Quietly at first he chose
the strings

for *'May you never,'*
on the guitar

and raised it, 'til everyone joined in
with him, singing.

In the evening,
after we'd scattered

she hugged him on the bed,
sobbing, pushing the way

through those early chemo days
of spring.

Funeral

'On Christmas Eve, we drank Wicked from a blue bottle'
'He was such a talented footballer'
'The club sent fresh flowers today'
'I'm not bad, thanks, and you?'
'They have tracked the priest he'll be five more minutes'
'I'll go up and say something to his mother'
'This awful business, what a start to the new year'
'In those days we were going places'
'If it rained, you could throw yourself into a ditch'
'Mike's in America, Pat has gone to Switzerland'
'If he did or didn't, well, we don't know'
'Teresa, I love your umbrella'
'A very keen gardener, was a surprise to me'
'I drove up there and I bought a pair of knee high boots'
'His passport was in his jacket at the flat'
'He wasn't always easy but he was hardly ever wrong'
'They had a three for two'
'Life is disappointing'
'It was there for everyone to see'
'Newspapers print it and you drown'
'We must spend an evening together, soon'
'John came from Australia and Tim came from Cork'
'Alice, it's a bastard!'
'I need a drink'
'Goodbye'
'Hold on a minute, wait for me'

Michael J. Whelan lives in South Dublin. He served as a UN Peacekeeper in Lebanon and Kosovo with the Irish Army and is a historian and keeper of the Air Corps Military Museum. He was 2nd Place in the Patrick Kavanagh & 3rd in the Jonathan Swift Awards. He is widely published and read for the Poetry Ireland Introductions series and his debut collection 'Peacekeeper' was published in 2016 by Doire Press.



Marhaba

For peacekeepers
in South Lebanon
the friendly stage
sometimes came
after confrontation
and before conflict.
"Marhaba my friend"
was the first thing said
to a resistance fighter
pointing a gun at you.

From a Dead Peacekeeper

If a target is what you seek, a mere body
to your greatness, in token meek,
or warm blood and flesh made sudden still,
gestured through the venom of your gun,
then here is a good heart, stout in breasted honour,
held by soul and courage.

If vengeance is what you want, for wrongs
done to your homeland, take me,
for I come in peace to stifle the hatred
of lost generations. I promise there will be
no purchase. Take this body, for I am
the peacekeeper and here is where
the world is saved every time.



© Michael J Whelan

Reconnaissance by Fire

(Observations in Irish UN Operations area S. Lebanon - 1990s)

Just before the night
white plumes on hillsides
mark the end of journeys
as artillery bombs sweep the ground
and machinegun bullets
rip through wadis
in a reconnaissance by fire
along known approaches,
tearing up usual routes
just in case
they're already there
preparing,
priming themselves
and then,
through darkness-spilled
shadows,
the silence is torn again
by the shrieks of screaming metal
cursing with hate.

Sometimes the best defence
is to attack
even when
there are no targets.

Wadi = Dried up riverbed/valley

Battlefield

(Observations in Irish UN Operations area S. Lebanon - 1990s)

Early morning.
A steely mist waited
through the night
to storm the hilltop hiding
the warriors approach
in resistance and stealthy guile.
They paused at pre-ranged paces,
unleashed hate from guns,
then retreated
to whence they came
before the mist released
a battlefield, and enemies
were seen.



© Michael J Whelan

Holding the Road

The peacekeeper,
flak-jacket buttoned to the neck,
blue helmet fastened tight
under the chin,
rifle slung across the chest,
muzzle pointing at the distant ground,
trigger finger tensed
along the trigger guard
switched to automatic.

Alone he stands there,
holding the road
in front of wire entanglements
and tank-stops
in the narrow chicane
of a sun trapped checkpoint,
left arm raised high,
the palm of his hand
facing the threat.

Spectre

There are nights when you have had enough.
Disappearing into the shadow corners of your room,
watching the fabric of grey days unfold again,
move about in strange colours on the walls,
the window open to the world,
white curtain hanging half in
half out like a trapped ghost
fighting hard to escape,
to find its former self,
go home,
sink into its own bones and flesh
and the smiles of a lover.
Then, somehow, you shut the window on those dreams
and wait for a moment while the spectre hangs by its neck
till stilled, goes silent, limp.
You switch on the light and the shadows disappear,
courage fills you up for one more day.

There are nights still when I remember the grey days
but in my house the windows have blinds.



Amy Barry writes poems and short stories. She has worked in the media, hotel and Oil & Gas industries. Her poems have been published in anthologies, journals, and e-zines, in Ireland and abroad. Her poems have been featured in the radio and television in Italy, Australia, Canada and Ireland. Some of her poems have been translated into Italian. She loves traveling. Trips to India, Nepal, China, Bali, Paris, Berlin, Budapest, Fakenburg have all inspired her work. When not writing she plays Table Tennis. She loves sushi.



Hope

I smell the sourness of mother's sweat,
the fear in her blood.
Occasionally, sorrow pours
from every heaving breath,
from every lacerating tear.

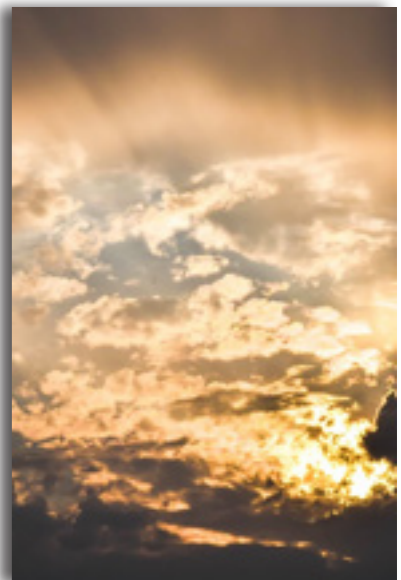
We walk haphazard,
blisters on our feet-
in the cold, in the sun.
We sail in crippled boats
and aging rust-buckets.

At the border,
voices blare from speakers.
Crowds surge around us.

On the bus,
mother sticks her head out the window,
her shawl flung over her face.
For the first time in a long time,
I see her smile.

Beautiful Chaos

A pleasant numbness settles in my bones.
It dances inside my head.
You bring the same dedication
to your seduction
as you do to your music.
Eyes shut,
I smell the leather of your coat,
the cigarettes on your lips.
Almost fearful,
I kiss you.
Risking my life
with that kiss.
Like a fool.
Like an animal-
desperately in love,
shaken by a current
of untamed ecstasy-
Dangerous,
but strangely-
Pure.



Unspoken

Feral hearts speak
without words encumbrance,
the same tenderness,
the same yearnings.

A mystifying power fills, huge,
engulfing,
a male presence,
spine-tremors, vibrate her nerves,
senses swell,
senses explode.

Clouds condense as stormy showers,
frenzy dance, overlapping waves,
echoes of joyous rainbow
linger in her blood.

Dust dreams

She walks under summer foliage.
White hair,
soft as the clouds.
Her features caught
in time's net of wrinkles.
Memories roam:
Love as a lover.
And loved still.
His features,
finely traced.

A blue tit logs all it sees,
and knows all.

Her search,
real or unreal is not known.
In the passing breeze:
the strains of a melody,
fills her head.
Perhaps, it is here –
in the thick softness
of greens, flowers and soil,
like the end of a warm dream-
in the garden that breathes –
She wishes to enter and disappear.



Michael Durack grew up on a farm near Birdhill in County Tipperary. He was a founder member of Killaloe Writers Group and his poetry has been published in a wide range of literary journals in Ireland and abroad, as well as airing on local and national radio. He is the author of a chapbook, *Nothing To Write Home About* (Derg House), a comic narrative in verse, *A Hairy Tale Of Clare* (East Clare Telecottage) and a memoir in prose and poems, *Saved To Memory: Lost To View* (Limerick Writers Centre.) He has collaborated with his brother, Austin on a programme of poetry and music, and together they have produced two albums, *The Secret Chord* (2013) and *Going Gone* (2015.)

<https://www.facebook.com/michael.durack>



Janus at Killaloe

1

A Ryanair plummets
towards Tountinna and the standing stones
that mark the ancient Leinstermen's bones,
booms above the peaty summits
of Moylussa, Feenlea, Gortmagy,
over galláns, fulachta fia
where Fir Bolg yielded to Déis
Tuaiscirt, and Dál gCais
bossed the ring fort at Béal Ború,
drew water from Tobermurragh
and reigned from proud Kincora
in far-famed Cill Dá Lua.

2

A dodgy chess move, a scrape;
the proud Maelmórdha off in a huff,
Cuggeran slain, and sure enough
repercussions bound to shape
our history: the Norse at Clontarf,
Brian without helmet or headscarf
triumphant, all hunky-dory,
then cut down in his hour of glory,
his fate divined by Craglea's Aoibheal,
whose legend hangs somewhere between
wailing banshee and fairy queen,
her cries presaging decades of upheaval.



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3

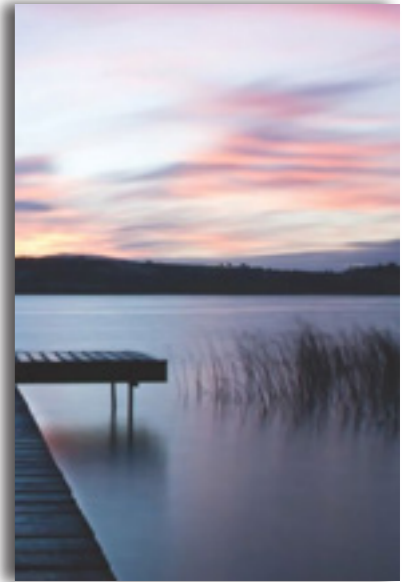
Levelled Kincora mutates to The Green
 where farmers mustered to trade cattle
 and faction fighters to do battle,
 Corbans and Hourigans venting their spleen.
 A downhill charge, the mob follows,
 towards Cheesehouse and Fern Hollow.
 Cudgels crack on heads,
 shots fired, three men dead
 after attack and police counter-attacks
 in the place where modern revellers pour
 into the bracing air from Molly's Bar
 and Saturday night discos in Sergeant Jack's.

4

Through the Ford of the Tributes
 the tide of the red-eyed lough
 funnels by Cullenagh and Knock-
 yclovaun, takes aim and shoots
 headlong through thirteen stone arches,
 below Marble Mill and pealing churches.
 Fathoms deep the murky waters hide
 the ghosts of Friar's Island, drowned boys,
 and the backed-up jetsam of the Shannon Scheme,
 sluice gates and salmon falls
 succumbing to head race and the blank walls
 of Ardnacrusha's hydro dam.

5

To build Ard Coillte we cut down trees,
 for Ash Grove Meadows lumbered ash,
 converted woods and paddocks to cash
 and eating house to Indian, Chinese;
 our corner shops replaced
 by forecourt, SuperValu, Mace,
 McKeogh's and Jimmy Whelan's in step
 with Tuscany Bistro and Polskisklep.
 But though Kincora's gone, all is not ruin and rack.
 Demesne and clachán may be past,
 Railway and Fountain Stone not meant to last
 but Janus looked ahead, as well as back.



6

Our washerwomen need no foot bridge now;
 they stuff their trendy duds
 into a Hot Point's churning suds.
 No lower orders bow or kowtow;
 our living heroes, Keith Wood,
 Foley, Breen surely as good
 as any Raparee or Dál gCais
 laoch, or Setanta wielding ash.
 Slieve Bernagh trekkers zig-zag
 on woodland paths of gravel
 and see no devil, hear no Aoibheal
 in Ballycuggeran and Cragg.
 The morbid cholera fires give way
 to festival fireworks display;
 the guns of militia, agitators,
 Irregulars, Free Staters
 transposed to curios, souvenirs.
 Hedge schools blossom to community college
 where frisky teenagers court knowledge
 in classrooms purged of fear.

7

*Ryninch, Cloonfadda, Inchamore, Drumbane,
 Grange, Inchadrinagh, Ballycorney, Aillebaun,
 Killestry, Ardcloney, Legane, Templechalla,
 Roolagh, Creeveroe, Lackareagh, Kilmastulla.*

The engineers, merchants, bargemen, dreamers;
 revenue police and poteen makers;
 the stone cutters, weavers, bakers;
 and royalty embarking on steamers;
 ship's cargo and human freight,
The Lady Lansdowne, The Francis Spaight.
 Where Duffy's Circus pitched its tents
 on Shantraud; where Astor Cinema stood;
 where famine migrants lined the Pier Head;
 where Volunteers drilled and went
 to fight in Picardy and Flanders,
 returning to rejections, slanders;
 where smithy's anvil rang
 and Sean Ryan's dulcet tenor sang;
 where seed drill sowed, scythe and sickle mowed;
 where Sarsfield's stealthy cavalry rode;
 where Thorgrim carved his name in runes and ogham,
 we gaze about us, proud to call it home.

Born in Italy, **Maria Miraglia**, graduated in Foreign Languages and Literatures, got a Master's degree in Evaluation and Assessment and in Teaching of Modern Languages. She taught in public high secondary schools, was lecturer for post-graduated students and foreign languages teachers. She has collaborated with the Italian Department of Education. Author of *Le Grandi Opere di Yayati Madan Gandhi*; author and editor of *Antologia Poetica*. She is the Literary Director of Pablo Neruda Italian Cultural Association, secretary general of Writers Capital International Foundation; contributor of many poetry pages both in Italian and English. Founder and chair-woman of World Foundation for Peace. Some of her poems have been translated into Turkish, Spanish, Macedonian, Azerbaijani and Albanian. Two anthologies containing some of her poems will soon be published.



A Rose

Intense the scent
of the red rose
you brought me
last night

You went
it is still here
on the table
where your hand
laid it

Together with its perfume
yours is there too
and I won't move it from there

Darkness and Light

The full moon
through the open window
has drawn a white beam of light
in the darkness of my bedroom
tonight
that light ray
coming from so far away
like an open eye allows me
to see just some
of the familiar objects
since long there
all the others stay unseen
unreachable
well as when
I try to perceive
the hidden emotions
in the hearts of the people
around me or
going through the world
or scrutinize
with my inner eye their souls
to understand the reasons
of their certainties and fears
so well concealed
in the hazy caves of their hearts
but just some grains of truth
I can seize
like distant planets
in the cosmic void
the motions of their souls
Great my ambition
to know the unfathomable
slight the chance
to cover long distances



Falling Raindrops

A rainy summer morning
so unusual here
and me at the window
looking at the falling drops
beating on the roofs of
a still sleeping town

Only few people
down in the street

With me my thoughts
I so often keep
as in a well closed cage
to hold sway over them

But unruly
they go on their own now
freely more than the winds

I can see them go afar
as feathers filling the air
with imaginary figures
happily hovering
for their conquered freedom

And hear them cry loud
asking the emotions and feelings
to come they too to the open

Get yourselves free
they say
and fly high
with us

And I stay silently watching
while my face opens up
to a smile

Lost Lives

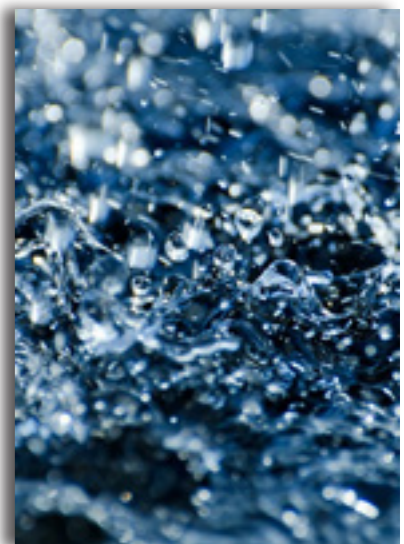
Lives lost in dark waters
nameless bodies
lined up on the shore
unlike the colors of their skins
their faiths their beliefs
united, now
in a common doom

Grimaces of pain
among the bystanders
vanishing away
like the dark colors of night
at the first light of dawn

Men and women
in far lands
still wait for boats
still will face remote seas
still will die
along their harrowing calvary
towards hope

And, the concentrations camps
are still there
spectral places where
you can still heard the moans
of thousands people,
victims of the human folly
the bombs on Hiroshima or Nagasaki
are not far memories
the fumes of the burned bodies
can still be smelt in the air

And you and me
and we still
blind and deaf in front of
the human miseries



Smoke Circles

A cigarette lighted
in the dark and
the memories of
some others smoked
surface
A puff after puff
and I let me go
looking at the circles
of smoke rising up
listless
in the evening air
to soon after vanish away
Not the memories
flowing in the mind
fresh and clear
as the waters
of a mountain stream
albeit distant
in space and time
Faces of beloved
their shapes
their pleased glances
are there with me

And smiles
sometimes sad
sometimes sweet
appear on my face
in the silence of
the quiet night
And I feel the then emotions
and can hear
as from a distant echo
the exchanged words
everything returning
as the sequences
of an old movie
I thought forgotten.

Uncaring

You that celebrate peace
and invoke spirituality
blind you stay
in front of the human misery
deaf as a bell
to the cries of sorrow
uncaring keep going on
when his hand open
a child
his hair ruffle dirty his cheeks
barely lit by the large eyes
asks you for charity
bread his meager body needs
a drop of your love his soul
your smile
dim a light of hope
a sun ray
in a winter morning
to warm his little heart

But your head down
you hurry home
perhaps on human values
to write an essay
and if your mind by chance
to that child goes back for a while
soon you start thinking
of the ineluctability of the human fate

Is it to feel in peace with your Self
or is it because you believe
that also misery
is for a God's will



Breda Wall Ryan's poetry is widely published in Irish and international journals and has won the iYeats Poetry Competition, Poets Meet Painters, Dromineer Poetry Competition, Over the Edge New Writer of the Year and The Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Prize. She has an M. Phil in Creative Writing from Trinity College, Dublin. She was selected for Poetry Ireland Introductions Series 2014. *In a Hare's Eye* (Doire Press 2015) won the Shine/Strong Award for a first collection.



Sevenling: he is ruled...

He is ruled by geometry.
He shelves his books by height and width
in careful symmetry.

Theme rules my library;
The Ancient Mariner and Jacques Cousteau
stand by The Perfect Storm on The Sea, The Sea.

Yet we are perfect-bound

Debut

He shredded my rose, showed
his teeth, nipped my tits,
pinned me down with a paw,
bared his claws.

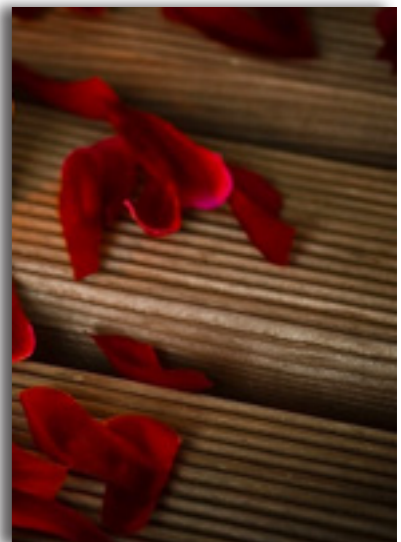
I wriggled and screamed,
bit his tongue, squirmed
out of my frock, punched
his grin,

sprouted fur, laid my ears
to my skull, flexed
my gluteus maximus, ran
through a gap

with the slaver of hound
at my heels. Now he's stuck
in the hedge spitting thorns,
calls me tease, trollop, bitch.

I jink to the car, drive home,
scrub my stain with dock root
and sage, pretend self-heal
can mend my torn rose,

assuage my guilt.
Diamanté button glitters
in the cut-glass jar--
Grandmother's eye.



David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles from the Socialist History Society (SHS) of which he is the Secretary. He writes regularly for the SHS Newsletter, occasionally for the Morning Star newspaper and for a range of other online and printed publications.



People Passing

Each and every one of them
 When they look into their mirror -
 Presumably they possess a mirror -
 To prepare for the day ahead
 To put on their face to face the critics
 To shape their mask and style their hair
 Must believe that they are somehow beautiful
 Alluring, beguiling, in their way quite unique.
 How utterly deluded we are
 How flawed the human judgement
 Entrapped in our webs of self-deception

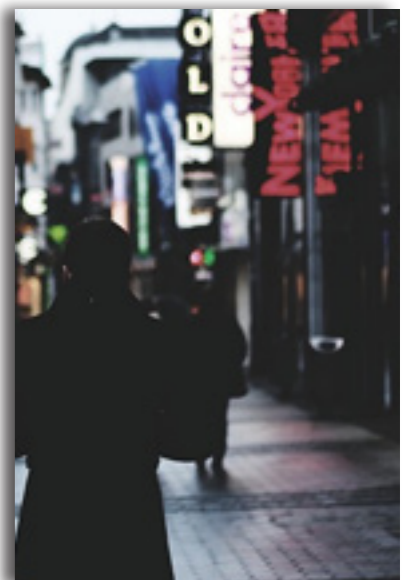
Not Very New Unmusical Distress

I'm once more browsing the NME*
 The first time since about 1983
 This time I'm handed it for free
 Outside the Tube station, don't you see?
 When I first read it less than avidly
 I felt really quite old at just gone 20
 The rebellious youth hardly appealed to me
 I certainly didn't feel at all carefree
 Now, three decades on, it's just the same
 Excepting that it all seems lame and tame.
 The NME has stopped dead for me
 In fact it never really started

**New Musical Express*

Something Borrowed

One day on a train, in a carriage,
 I found myself seated directly opposite a girl,
 A girl who looked just like you
 But she wasn't you, although she might have borrowed your face
 Your expression, your charm
 I looked at her for a while
 I smiled discreetly but inwardly I was sad
 She wasn't you
 But she reminded me of you
 I was sad but happy too
 And immensely grateful to the anonymous girl
 For granting me that fleeting glimpse of you.



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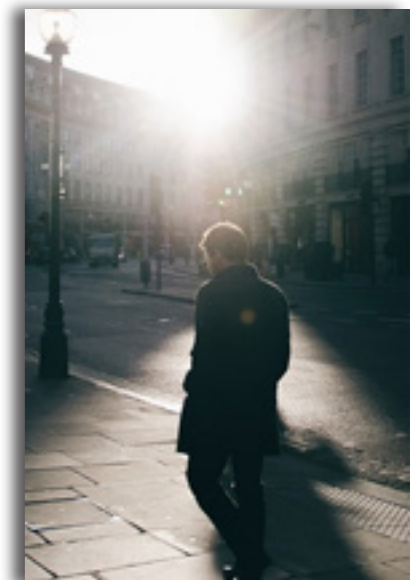
The Destruction of London

The Romans in their legions
 They came, they saw and conquered
 They made their mark but left us quite unscathed
 London's the great survivor
 The plague that infested and infected
 The Great Fire's fierce inferno
 All the tumults, risings and revolts
 All left London still standing
 A city that braced the Blitz and rose again
 But now real estate developers take their toll
 With blow, after blow, after merciless blow
 The destruction of London is at last complete
 Shifting the very ground beneath our feet
 From Brick Lane to Park Lane
 We know who's to blame
 Street by street and brick by brick
 Invasion of corporate finance has done the trick
 The destruction of London every brick

Boris in Turkey

Lines written on the occasion of the British Foreign Secretary's visit to Ankara

Washing the Truth Out
 Old Boris is in Turkey
 Looking only to spin
 Half-truths, patent untruths
 Absurd asides, a boyish grin
 Shaped and fashioned at Eton
 Polished malice with wicked intent
 The best we can produce?
 From our class-cursed pettiness
 Lacking any prettiness
 Ugly side, under side
 Upside, every side
 A truck load of piffle
 A no-holds barred morality
 Crafting its crass conclusions
 As shambolical as it is diabolical
 Pale face, bare faced special pleading
 Extreme audacity, offensive capacity
 Comic turns to engineer the spin
 Bit of fun concealing black heart within
 A routine, a multitude of sin
 Diplomacy is lying for your country
 Deceit, conceit, sealed with a snigger
 Veering into its comic cul-de-sac
 A nation's reputation hanging in the balance
 Sagging, teetering on the brink
 Recourse to jokes to please the host
 But they just don't translate
 And no-one's now laughing



© David Morgan

Nasrin Parvaz became a civil rights activist when the Islamic regime took power in 1979. She was arrested in 1982, tortured and spent eight years in prison. In 1993, she fled to England. Her prison memoir was published in Farsi in 2002, and it was published in Italian in 2006 by Effedue Edizioni. A novel, *Temptation*, based on the true stories of some male prisoners who survived the 1988 massacre of Iranian prisoners was published in Farsi in 2008. Her stories appeared in Exiled Writers Ink. Since 2005, together with poet Hubert Moore, Nasrin has translated poems, prohibited in Iran, from Farsi into English. They appear in the Modern Poetry in Translation series. Her article, Writing in the 'Host' Language, published in The Great Flight, MPT 2016 Number 1, and is on the MPT website. <http://nasrinparvaz.org/>



To: The General Director Of Doctors Without Borders

You say you know
the hospital was
attacked on purpose
but you don't know why!
Why don't you know?
It's obvious.
The doctors were interfering
with the genocide.
The bombing was a warning
to these doctors without borders.
Don't go to the Middle East.
Don't help the doomed.

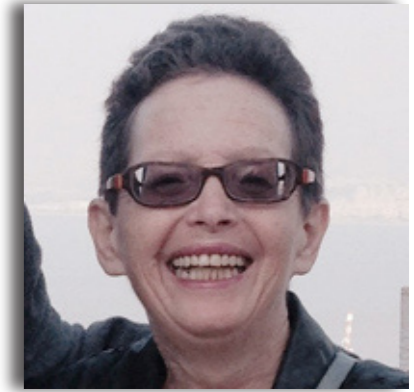
Burkini

To convince their own people
that they oppose radical Islam
and had nothing to do with its creation
they force a Moslem woman on a beach
to take off her burkini.

Yet when the Queen of England, Thatcher or Merkel
go to any Islamic state, Iran or Saudi Arabia
where the women are imprisoned in hijabs
these "free" and "important" Western women
bow down before Islam and put on long skirts and cover their hair.



Born in Birmingham, England, U.K., Natalie Wood began working in journalism a month before the outbreak of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. She emigrated from Manchester to Israel in March 2010 and lives in Karmiel, Galilee from where she writes several blogs, micro-fiction and free-verse. She features in Smith Magazine's *Six Word Memoirs On Jewish Life* and has contributed to Technorati and Blogcritics along with *Jewish Renaissance* and *Live Encounters* magazines. www.perfectlywritepoetry.blogspot.co.il



A Living Will

After I'm gone, say
the God I barely recognised
was indivisible.
Just One.

After I've gone, don't
recite *Kaddish*. The
dying is for me.
Not Him.
Make the funeral short.
Let my body burn.

Should these requests be
judged thoughtless, most
perverse, let it be known
that I deserve no prayers,
praise, lies or crocodile tears.

What I did was wrong.
You'll know this -
after I've gone.

Buy less milk and butter.
Turn the heating low.
Feed the cat. Cut
the kids' hair monthly,
check their homework's done.
Remind them they are Jewish -
after I'm gone.

When you make
Jack's barmitzvah,
do invite my mum.
It'll be good for
her to see him
wear Dad's prayer shawl.

After I'm gone, carry
on as normal. Have
Janie round for tea.
I find your loving
comfortable.

Let's not pretend.
It's clear. She's
a better mother
than I'd ever be.

After I'm gone,
pin a notice on our door.
"This woman,"
it should read,
"seemed honourable,
kind, fair; steadfast,
generous, taught her
children well.

"But as the final drips
of life seeped from her,
measured by the agonised
ticking of the clock, the
truth poured out.

"In a dream she
killed her father,
made mad her daughter,
then watched agape
as oblivion snatched
her, too."



Live Encounters celebrates 7 years 2010-2016

Live encounters

P O E T R Y

FEAST

Free online magazine from village earth

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