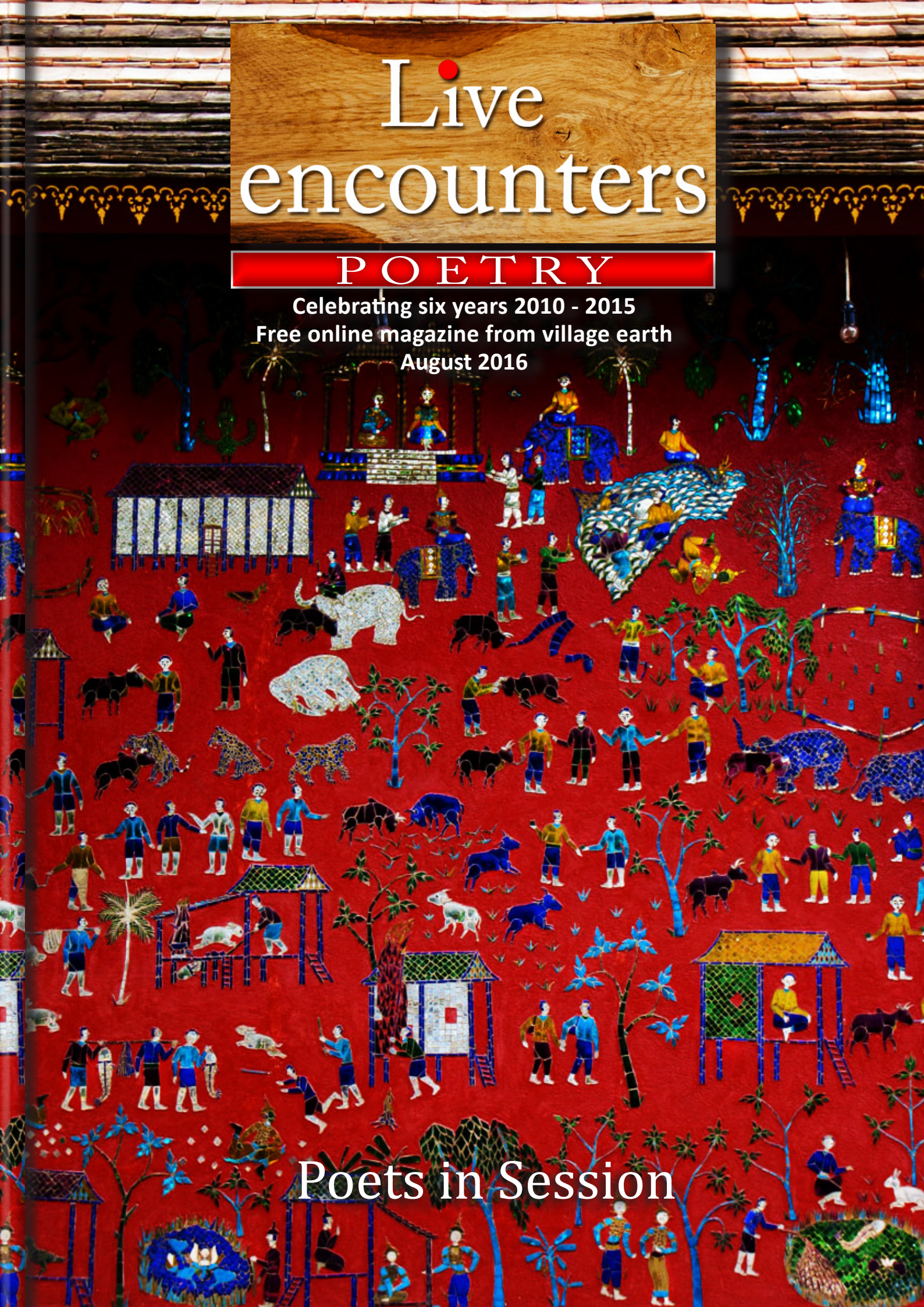


# Live encounters

POETRY

Celebrating six years 2010 - 2015  
Free online magazine from village earth  
August 2016

Poets in Session







**Support Live Encounters.  
Donate Now and keep the Magazine alive in 2016!**

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.

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. Please help spread the free distribution of knowledge with any amount that you feel you want to give for this just cause.

**BANK DETAILS**

**Sarita Kaul**

**A/C : 0148748640**

**Swift Code : BNINIDJAXXX**

**PT Bank Negara Indonesia ( Persero ) Tbk**

**Kantor Cabang Utama Denpasar**

**Jl. Gajah Mada**

**Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia**

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

[markulyseas@liveencounters.net](mailto:markulyseas@liveencounters.net)

**All articles and photographs are the copyright of [www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net) and its contributors. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the explicit written permission of [www.liveencounters.net](http://www.liveencounters.net). Offenders will be criminally prosecuted to the full extent of the law prevailing in their home country and/or elsewhere.**



# CONTRIBUTORS

Click on title of article to go to page



## Lady Cassie Peregrina

Terry McDonagh

Irish poet and dramatist, Terry McDonagh, taught creative writing at the University of Hamburg and was Drama Director at the Int. School Hamburg for 15 years. He now works freelance; has been writer in residence in Europe, Asia, Australia; published 7 poetry collections, book of letters, prose and poetry for young people translated into Indonesian and German, distributed internationally by Syracuse Uni. Press; latest poetry collection Ripple Effect/Arlen House; children's story, Michel the Merman, illustrated by Marc Barnes (NZ). He lives in Hamburg and Ireland. [www.terry-mcdonagh.com](http://www.terry-mcdonagh.com)



## Two Songs

Randhir Khare

Khare is an award winning author of twenty one volumes of non-fiction, fiction, translation and poetry. Executive Editor of Heritage India, the International Culture Journal, a Director of The Rewachand Bhojwani Academy and Visiting Professor to the Dept Of English, Pune University. Recently he was given The Residency Award by The Sahitya Akademi (India's National Academy of Letters) for his contribution to Indian Literature and the Human Rights Award for his efforts to preserve and celebrate marginal and minority cultures. [www.randhirkhare.in](http://www.randhirkhare.in)



## Selected Poems

Eileen Sheehan

Sheehan is from Scartaglin, now living in Killarney, County Kerry. Her collections are *Song of the Midnight Fox* and *Down the Sunlit Hall* (Doghouse Books). Anthology publications include *The Watchful Heart: A New Generation of Irish Poets* (Ed Joan McBreen/Salmon Poetry), *TEXT: A Transition Year English Reader* (Ed Niall MacMonagle/Celtic Press) and *Winter Blessings* by Patricia Scanlan (Hodder Headline Ireland). Her senryu and haiku are published in many journals including The Heron's Nest, Frogpond, Acorn, Paper Wasp and Shamrock. Her work is featured on Poetry International Web's Irish section. Her third collection, *The Narrow Place of Souls*, is forthcoming.



## Command, Control: a digital-cyber mix

Ian Watson

Ian Watson was born in Belfast but has now spent most of his life in Bremen, Northern Germany, where he worked as a senior lecturer in British and Irish Literature and Creative Writing. He has published poems, articles and literary translations widely and also worked for radio and television in Germany. From 1994 to 2012 he edited **newleaf** magazine and ran **newleaf** press. His recent publications include two books of poetry and short prose - *Kurzpassspiel* (German) and *Riverbank City | A Bremen Canvas*, and his collection *Granny's Interpreter* was published in March 2016 by Salmon Poetry in Ireland.



## Life and Affection

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.



## Elemental

Trevor Conway

Trevor Conway writes mainly poems, stories and songs. He also cuts his own hair, though maybe with less success. Things he typically writes about include nature, sport, society, creativity and profound experiences from his life. He posts to his website/blog occasionally ([trevorconway.weebly.com](http://trevorconway.weebly.com)), and his first collection of poems, *Evidence of Freewheeling*, was published by Salmon Poetry in 2015. Trevor's mother likes some of these poems, but finds a few of them "a bit weird".

## Celebrating 6 years 2010-2015

Live  
encounters

POETRY  
AUGUST 2016



## From Which it is Torn - 1

Paul Casey

Paul Casey grew up between Ireland and southern Africa. He has published work in five of his spoken languages and has been featured at festivals and venues worldwide. His second full collection from Salmon Poetry is *Virtual Tides* (2016) and his poetry was recently translated into Romanian by Singur Publishing, in the Contemporary Irish Poetry volume, *Blackjack*. He edits the annual *Unfinished Book of Poetry* for Cork City Libraries (secondary schools writing) and is director of the Ó Bhéal poetry series in Cork, at [www.obheal.ie](http://www.obheal.ie)



## Thoughts Unwound

Mike Gallagher

Mike Gallagher was born on Achill Island and worked in London for forty years before retiring to Kerry. His prose, poetry, haiku and songs have been published worldwide. His writing has been translated into Croatian, Japanese, Dutch, German and Chinese. He won the Michael Hartnett Viva Voce competition in 2010 and 2016; he was shortlisted for the Hennessy Award in 2011 and won the Desmond O'Grady International Poetry Contest in 2012. His collection *Stick on Stone* was published by Revival Press in 2013.



## Ulster Poems

Gary Allen

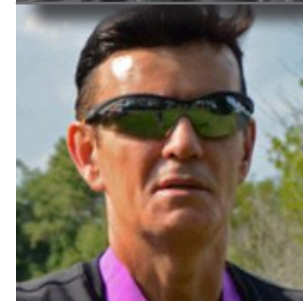
Gary Allen was born in Ballymena, Nr. Ireland. An award-winning poet, he has published fourteen collections, most recently, 'Jackson's Corner,' Greenwich Exchange, London 2016. A new collection, 'Mapland,' will be published later this year by Clemson University Press, South Carolina.



## Where the Inner and Outer Meet

Barbara Flaherty

Barbara Flaherty is the author of two books: *Holy Madness* (Chanting Press 2006) and *Doing It Another Way* (Chanting Press 2008). Her works have appeared in journals, anthologies and encyclopediae. A citizen of both the United States and The Republic of Ireland, she was a recipient of the 2005 Irish Drogheda Amergin Poetry Prize. Barbara writes out of both the Franciscan and Sufi traditions. Her current work is focused on the world as sacred text. She lived in Alaska for thirty years, is a former chaplain and dual diagnosis clinician.



## New Poems

Carl Scharwath

Carl Scharwath, has appeared globally with 80+ journals selecting his poetry, short stories, essays or art photography. He won the National Poetry Contest award for Writers One Flight Up. His first poetry book is 'Journey To Become Forgotten' (Kind of a Hurricane Press). Carl is also a dedicated runner and second-degree black belt.



## Epiphany

Saliha Khan

Saliha Khan is a young lexophile and poet in the making from a small town in South Africa hoping to complete a Nursing degree and travel the world. Her style of writing involves internally rhyming to warp the natural rhythm of the intonation of words to express a deep sensual chaos through poetry. She has written more than 500 poems, her writing evolving just as she does. She aspires to inspire through her semantic subtleties as she crafts intense poetry of two extremes - pain and passion.

*Lady Cassie Peregrina*, the title of my next poetry collection, is due for publication in autumn, by Arlen House in Ireland. The book is based on experiences and travels from Cill Aodáin, Kiltimagh, Co Mayo to Hamburg with Cassie, a border collie we got from an ISPCA centre in Ballyhaunis, Ireland.

The whole collection is really just one poem in six sections – three sections allocated to Cassie’s point of view and three to mine.

These two poems are from my point of view.

## A Mirror to Self

This is a journey from dawn to dark.  
When the sun no longer rises  
and I lie in unrelenting darkness,  
will I have come to my final end?

We’ve been In Ireland for a year.  
In that time we’ve acquired  
a dog – a true friend.

*Cassie,*  
*should we go or should we stay?*

Progress is an uneasy companion.  
With Cassie in the back and  
our son, Matthew, on the back seat,  
we point our heads round and hard  
towards the goal ahead, hiding  
the flood and ebb between heart and eye.

*As they go through the valley of the weeper  
they make it a place of springs – Psalm 84.*

Dawn in Cill Aodáin – morning in  
Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, the Border,  
Belfast, Larne and the boat at noon  
in Dumfries and Galloway  
to Castle Douglas  
to fix a foundation in darkness.

Do we prefer our own countryside  
or  
do we live at the mercy of the wind?

Founding Contributor of Live Encounters. 2010  
[www.terry-mcdonagh.com](http://www.terry-mcdonagh.com)

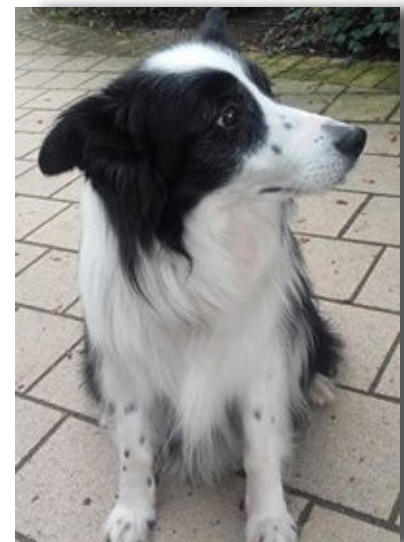


Peregrinus had wanted to put a tip of gold  
on a golden life. I’d love be a Cynic  
but I see myself pulling the motor  
that’s meant to push me. It’s all uphill.

My tongue is floundering  
out of its depth in pools of doubt  
heading for Newcastle  
with the road shortening – the end  
of a legend or perhaps the beginning.

## Sailing

Sailing lightward and sailing darkward  
is a hard sailing  
even in a car  
between couplets  
going nowhere in particular.



© Terry McDonagh



Randhir Khare, award winning Indian Writer, Artist, Teacher,  
 Founding Contributor of Live Encounters Magazine 2010 [www.randhirkhare.in](http://www.randhirkhare.in)  
 Watch Randhir's poetry performance at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q\\_rh9OcmoGM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_rh9OcmoGM)



Midway this life we're bound upon  
 I woke to find myself in a dark wood...  
     Canto I, Hell,  
     Dante

## Song Of The Void

I sing of the earth dancing in the void  
     Heavy with love  
         Disasters  
             Revelations  
 Poppy songs  
     Body bags  
         Headlines lisping hallelujahs  
             Fat greasy fingers of power  
 Stroking prayer beads  
     Rivers flowing red  
         And the eternal song of sirens  
             Lure the hungry  
 To death camps of promises

I sing of the beauty of killing fields  
     Of mass marriages  
         Cries of newborn trailing out into the void  
             Swarms of bees in search of hive queens  
 And the honey of belonging  
     My lungs expand with the breath of darkness  
         Freckled with light  
             My throat exuding ash and seeds with wings  
 To be born again and again.

I sing of you whirling in your cycles of rebirth  
     Strung between yes and no  
         Strung between the harbour and the high seas  
             Strung between wanting and denying

Strung between centuries that haven't arrived  
     Strung between seasons under a faceless sky  
         Strung between forgiving and executing  
             Strung between exits and arrivals  
 Strung between the way and the longing  
     Strung between heartbeats and eternity

I sing of my life burning with sun song  
     Washed in moon glow  
         Feet rooted in moist earth  
             Nothing to gain and nothing to lose  
 Only the certainty of song on my lips  
     Only the words and the music  
         Only the ecstasy of harmony and disharmony  
             Swallowing my own tail till I vanish

Will I vanish

Sing with me dance with me  
     Rise with me and the ash  
         And the winged seeds  
             And the poppy songs  
 And the hallelujahs  
     Rise with me and the notes of my song  
         The flow of my body as I move  
             Twirling like a new leaf opening  
 Like a bird shot in flight  
     With the suddenness of forever

Sing with me.



## Song Of Arrival

We have reached the frayed edges of silence  
 Your hands tremble  
    Put out the light open the window  
 I want to say a prayer with your body  
    Then watch trees shiver under indifferent stars

What is beyond this flesh I hold in my hands  
 This warm mouth this tenderness  
    What will the stars say tomorrow  
    When this prayer ends

They stand around this bed watching and listening.  
    It's strange how many people loved in this room  
    I can see them hear their voices  
    They have come back to share this prayer

You must not be afraid  
    We will cross the edge  
    Tomorrow the last rain will trail  
 Across the river  
    And the grass will speak in the wind  
    As it always does  
    Morning will smell of hay and sparrow's feathers  
 The sickle will return to the field

It will come to pass  
    That the moss and the marigold  
    Will touch in the last sunlight  
    And your hands gentle as morning  
    Will fall to your side  
 Love that fleshed your heart  
    Will wander out into the green air

You will speak of all that has happened  
    And I will not be able to answer you  
    Let alone speak to you  
    Or touch your hand your hair and your lips  
 Which fuse to a message I cannot hear

Let me love you now as night tears its wings  
    And cries with moon-eyes  
    That drip on windowpanes  
 Catching our bodies in shadows of waiting

This is the hour of the old bull  
    Broken under the plough  
    Remembering the young fields and harvest mist  
    And the bonfires embering at dawn  
    As white egrets work at worms and soft spiders

Angel hour we are alive and breathing  
    We are alive and remembering  
    We are alive with night's  
    Blood whispering in our veins  
    Crying with the old music of yesterday

Eileen Sheehan is from Scartaglin, now living in Killarney, County Kerry. Her collections are *Song of the Midnight Fox* and *Down the Sunlit Hall* (Doghouse Books). Anthology publications include *The Watchful Heart: A New Generation of Irish Poets* (Ed Joan McBreen/Salmon Poetry), *TEXT: A Transition Year English Reader* (Ed Niall MacMonagle/ Celtic Press) and *Winter Blessings* by Patricia Scanlan (Hodder Headline Ireland). Her senryu and haiku are published in many journals including *The Heron's Nest*, *Frogpond*, *Acorn*, *Paper Wasp* and *Shamrock*. Her work is featured on Poetry International Web's Irish section. Her third collection, *The Narrow Place of Souls*, is forthcoming.

<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poet/item/23096/Eileen-Sheehan>



## What She Sings Of

Once in a time he was the sky clothing me,  
the warm earth supporting me,  
the all-in-all of every night and day to me.

He was salt waves washing me,  
he was wind caressing me, fire igniting me,  
the first and last of every cause that moved me.

He was fish that jumped for me,  
bird that sang for me, beast that nourished me,  
the craving and cure of every need inside of me.

Now he is a bright ship pulling away from me,  
white sail gone from me, his rough wake drowning me,  
he is shimmer of scales growing out of me;

soon I will sing to him, comb out my hair for him,  
draw him back to me, lure him down to me.

First published in *The Watchful Heart: A New Generation of Irish Poets*  
(ed Joan McBreen/Salmon Poetry)

## What of the Heart?

so, the heart found  
a calm cave to retreat to,

so, it was a home of sorts,  
a haven, if you will,

so, there was a certain comfort  
in the song of insects, the predictable wind,

so, there were tasks to complete,  
a daily round, some small achievements,

so, heart learnt to make-do,  
expected nothing, was not disappointed,

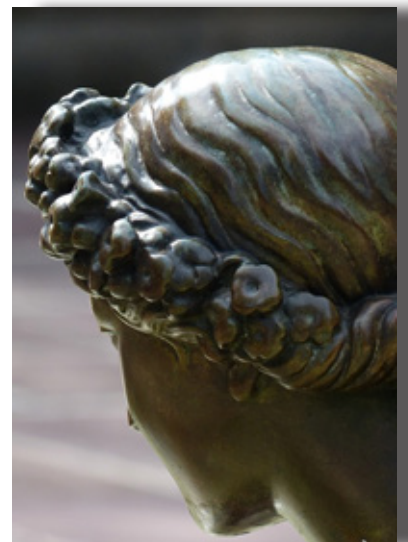
so, tiny creatures succumbed to the night,  
she counted bones, furred corpses,

so, when he tracked her there,  
she had forgotten his face, his darkening features,

so, she ran towards him,  
kissed him, full on the mouth,

so not what she thought  
she was about to do.

First published in *Sixty Poems for Haiti* (Cane Arrow Press)



© Eileen Sheehan

## Poets at the Beach

*i.m Maurice J. Reidy, poet*

No matter what we write, our rivers will insist  
on flowing downhill; sand will infiltrate  
our sandwiches and the years will grow  
age-spots on our skin. All this, too,  
is extraordinary. I tell you how

my father knew a poet who made water  
climb a tree, not in a poem but in his own  
backyard. A man who utilized  
whatever was at hand to build a contraption  
that drew water up a sycamore,

harnessing gravity flow to a tap  
in his cottage scullery. You point  
a little further down the strand to where  
children squeal as the dead crab they picked  
an hour ago suddenly takes legs across the sand.

Our laughter at its sideways break  
for freedom weakens our resolve  
to solve the mysteries of what is wondrous,  
what is not. Our talk trails off; our thoughts  
lie down before us, take the sun.

First published in *The Café Review: A Gathering of Irish Voices* (Ed Steve Luttrell)

## By Hedges

She taught me the time by a dandelion clock,  
one o'clock, two o'clock, three

She taught me my colours by hedges and fields:  
white for the clouds overhead, green for the grass and the leaves,

blue for bluebell and violet, yellow for buttercup, feileastram,  
red for rose hip and haw.

She taught me music through birdsong, through wind,  
the gallop of rain on tin roofs.

She taught me secrets through snail shells, through burrows,  
shadows of night-time, the path of the fox.

She taught me patterns by season, by cobwebs,  
by leaf-veins, the movement of sun in the sky.

Daily she taught me, is teaching me still  
but she never has told me her name.



© Eileen Sheehan



Ian Watson was born in Belfast but has now spent most of his life in Bremen, Northern Germany, where he worked as a senior lecturer in British and Irish Literature and Creative Writing. He has published poems, articles and literary translations widely and also worked for radio and television in Germany. From 1994 to 2012 he edited **newleaf** magazine and ran **newleaf** press. His recent publications include two books of poetry and short prose - *Kurzpassspiel* (German) and *Riverbank City | A Bremen Canvas*, and his collection *Granny's Interpreter* was published in March 2016 by Salmon Poetry in Ireland.

<http://www.irishwriters-online.com/watson-ian/>



## Prologue: 'Believe me, Winston ...'

You have partaken of the forbidden fruit:  
the wall-to-wall tracking cookie. We can chart  
the progress of your addictive pursuit.  
We know where you have been browsing,  
for we have accompanied your cyber-carousing —  
we know what you have in your shopping cart.

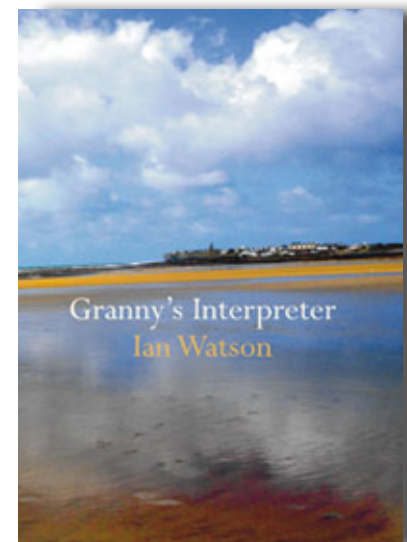
## The Long Long River

Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought:  
*Engels's Condition of the English Working Class*,  
*The Undigested Thoughts of Chairman Mao*  
[Does anybody really still read that now?],  
*Das Kapital*, *Antonio Gramsci's Greatest Hits* and  
*The Economics and Politics of the Extreme Stages*  
*of Capitalism in Decay* (1934) by Rajani Palme Dutt.

Tell us, do you actually read this stuff?  
Are you an active member of this lot,  
or are you only interested in, let's say,  
an academic kind of way?

If the latter, do you teach? Do you teach this guff?  
Do you recommend it to students? Have you caught  
any students recommending this to you?

If the latter, um, it's just that we thought ...  
well, we could maybe overlook any  
possible blot on your copybook, if  
you could maybe provide a name or two;  
so we can ask them if they'd like to be  
our friends on Facebook.





## Comfort and Safety

See, see; you're on TV,  
waving your gun in the bank clerk's face.  
We can recognise him as clear as day,  
but they won't catch you coz — just in case —  
you're wearing shades and a balaclava.  
You're anonymous and that's how you'll stay,  
but the clerk's becoming a celebrity;  
he's been recognised from Orsk to Ostrava  
from Bakersfield to Bratislava —  
he went viral on YouTube on Tuesday.

\*

Look, look! You're courting rebuke,  
out in the backyard kissing the cook;  
for the pub's protected both front and behind  
and infrared cameras can never be blind.  
And just at this moment her muscled husband,  
the landlord, is having his hourly look  
at the video screens behind the bar —  
and is reaching for his butcher's hook.

\*

Look, see? You're on TV.  
Even in the local gallery,  
where I felt myself unobserved  
to write, I am under scrutiny.  
Below the ceiling, round about  
the place where Joseph Beuys  
liked to locate his buttery fleck,  
a pistol's eye points in my direction.  
But — says the lady at reception —  
it's for my own comfort and safety.  
I tell her I'll be grateful, straight from the heart —  
if I'm ever attacked by a work of art.

## Heart of Glass

*kick-started by Michael Croissant's sculpture 'Kopf und Schultern' (1976),  
Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen, November 2014*

Somewhere between my head and shoulders  
is the place they have selected. They have not  
yet determined the reason or the instant  
when the vitreous human splinters.

My head is on the block, each thought lies  
legible, accessible to authorised users.  
But when that silver flash drops from its box,  
my thoughts will lie in glistening shards.

Swept and collected, they will not reply  
to questioning. Glass head, glass heart,  
glass hand, glass soul - the only response  
the dustpan offers: permanent fatal error.

## Glasnost

We know nothing about the powers that be;  
they know everything about you and me.  
This is civil society stood on its head;  
this is glasnost upside down.  
A diaphanous you and a translucent me;  
this is their dream of transparency —  
at our bowl of cornflakes and going to bed;  
we're all see-through people in a dressing-gown.



© Ian Watson



**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.



## Her Silhouette

–A tribute to Jill Meagher

Pain gathered in his chest,  
a sense of being marooned,  
so thick, it clotted,  
choked his breathing.

His wife, lying  
in some unmarked grave,  
he wished he was invisible,  
had evaporated into green-silk,  
and misty air.

Sun set in sharp autumn chill,  
silhouette quavers,  
her image  
on a rippling sea.

## The Rain on the Grand Canal

For once, I don't have  
to look at my watch. You talk,  
relive memories of the canal.

The black water sparkles  
in the moonlight, reeds sway  
with orchestral harmony.

A sudden rain  
like a force of a pebble  
strikes my wide hat.

You laugh,  
pushing up the limp brim,  
and kiss me.





**Trevor Conway** writes mainly poems, stories and songs. He also cuts his own hair, though maybe with less success. Things he typically writes about include nature, sport, society, creativity and profound experiences from his life. He posts to his website/blog occasionally ([trevorconway.weebly.com](http://trevorconway.weebly.com)), and his first collection of poems, Evidence of Freewheeling, was published by Salmon Poetry in 2015. Trevor's mother likes some of these poems, but finds a few of them "a bit weird".



## Carbon

You lurk in bones and blood,  
Xylem and phloem,  
In scurrying legs, watchful eyes.

A plant will draw you from its world,  
Bind you with water  
To build its sugars,  
Consumed,  
Exhaled,  
Excreted.

Deep in the earth, pressure will blacken you.  
Men have danced as you spewed  
From dusty ground in swirling deserts,  
Blind to the years that bled you.

I feel you there as I walk down the street,  
In swaying grass,  
Soil  
And sky.

And I've read about you:  
A fifth of me is you,  
Sitting,  
Thinking,  
Breathing in,  
Breathing out.

## Relativity

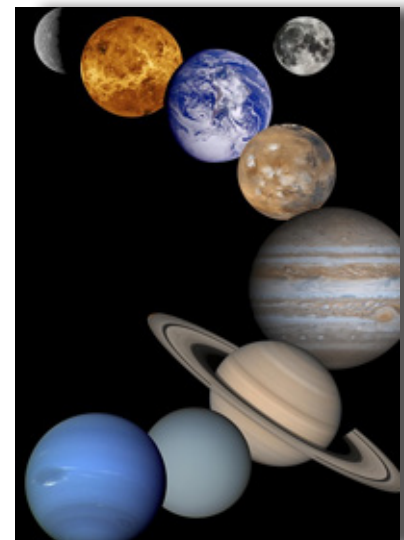
Opinions are the crudest things,  
Delivered like a trumpet solo  
Out of time.  
They come in clusters,  
Defined by their neighbours.

Saturn's moons  
Follow like besotted suitors:  
Push them gently –  
They'd follow Jupiter  
Instead.

Earth was flat  
Till inflated by science,  
Fat as a Renaissance priest.  
Its flatness grew  
From the dream of fullness.

Sonnets, songs and painted scenes  
Are fashioned from comparison,  
Analogy their core –  
The flare of a tail  
Miles from the sun.

Can you measure any thing  
In a vacuum?  
These lines could be eclipsed  
By Whitman, Frost or Poe,  
Or your nearest neighbour.



## February

To birds, wind is snow,  
A thick flow disabling flight.  
They trudge on with laboured lives,  
Twisted feathers  
Slapping  
At their heads.

Sudden gusts usurp their wings,  
Swerving at silver poles,  
Cement-stubbed walls,  
Flung back to face the same fight  
For ground and sheer relief,  
With squirming, treadmilled wings.

Downwind is a snowfight,  
Bending trees like playground swings  
Wild enough to pounce  
And knock their bodies about.  
There'll be no foraging today,  
None of the usual things.

You might see a flock rise from a field:  
A few at first,  
Rippling further down,  
Only to tremble slowly  
Back to sturdy ground,  
A billowing sheet subdued.

## Little Boy

Carried in the talons of a B-29,  
The darkest raincloud you've ever seen,  
I am the boy who plays alone,

The king puppeted by few fingers.  
Feel the tremble,  
The sheer electricity, of

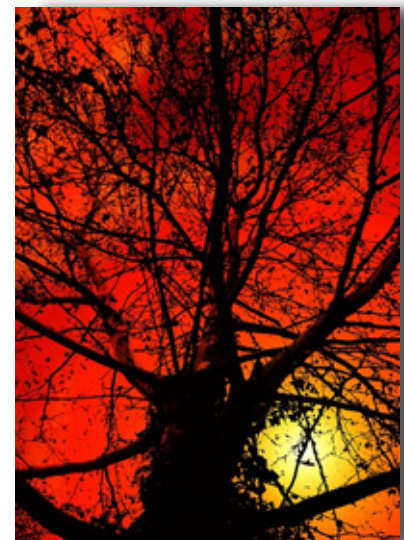
– Thirty thousand feet above –  
Anticipation.  
My weight is transformed:

The most dangerous dandelion that ever caught the air.  
A crosswind sweeps me from my target,  
Creeping, unnoticed, down the sky.

I see the girl who has stopped by a window,  
The man's paper pinned by ribs and elbow,  
The sleepy nurse quick-stepping her dread to work.

Look up: a second sunrise.  
There'll be no work today.  
In the glare, there are half-drawn eyes.

My rumble will scale the generations.  
Good morning, Hiroshima.  
I am the boy who just wanted to play.





## Nothing Like a Death

There's nothing like a death  
To bring in a crowd:  
A slow-stepping wave of sorrow,  
Sober faces, solemn words,  
Whispers at the fringe.

Lichen-spotted stone  
Stands in congregation  
As careless steps  
Collect a skirt of mud,  
A deep impression in dirt.

The coffin drops,  
The body consumed  
Slowly,  
Painfully.  
The shovel grunts  
As the fact is nailed home.

And with a blessing,  
All are scattered;  
The squawk of a crow  
Stark as a bell.  
The count of heads  
Has measured the person,  
As wheels turn on gravel.

There's nothing like a death  
To bring in a crowd.  
Death's tragedy  
Is greater than life's  
Familiarity.

## Logic at Six Years

If you dig deep enough,  
You'll end up in Australia,  
Falling from the sky.

The birds and bees make babies together  
While sheep play leapfrog.  
And did you know that time can be stopped  
By taking out a battery,

That inflammable objects won't ever burn,  
And deep footprints on the path  
Are proof of super powers?

They fought the Cold War with snowballs,  
When people had grey skin,  
And had to smoke cigarettes  
And wear hats.

Listen close:  
You'll hear everyone confess the murder  
At every funeral.  
But it's okay –  
Dying makes you a good person,

Unless you're Hitler  
(Who used to act  
In silent movies).

And God, because he's beside everyone,  
Is too busy  
To answer me back.  
That's what happens  
When you're everyone's father.



**Paul Casey** grew up between Ireland and southern Africa. He has published work in five of his spoken languages and has been featured at festivals and venues worldwide. His second full collection from Salmon Poetry is *Virtual Tides* (2016) and his poetry was recently translated into Romanian by Singur Publishing, in the Contemporary Irish Poetry volume, *Blackjack*. He edits the annual *Unfinished Book of Poetry* for Cork City Libraries (secondary schools writing) and is director of the Ó Bhéal poetry series in Cork, at [www.obheal.ie](http://www.obheal.ie).



Extract from the cento-sonnet sequence: *From Which it is Torn*  
for T.S.Eliot and after 210 poets

## Weather

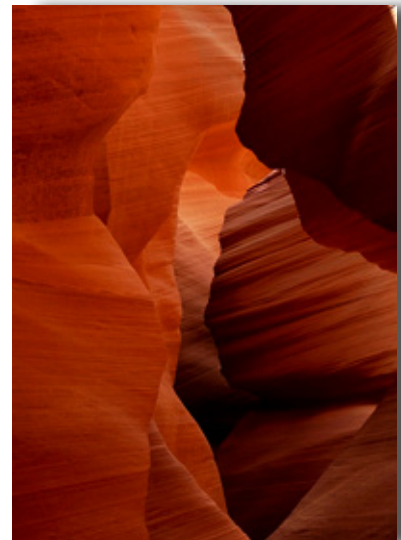
After that it was all weather  
Your room was a storm of flowers in bowls  
I wake, glad to be so, glad even of rain and cold  
The wind bears horrific news from the north  
The dervish dance of sleet and hail has crusted backs of sheep  
And heavy clouds mass somewhere over the ocean  
Deep snow will be here by nightfall  
A storm speeding up to pass through concrete

The clouds will curdle, the clouds will begin to burn  
Some like a little shiver, some like a freezing river  
The drizzles like moods, the tightness in the air  
The snow-bound gutter crunches ... Don't let your teeth catch cold!  
Through the flood-sodden ceiling we'll sail (Noah II)  
There's a quality when the sky opens cloudless in early morning

## Colour

The purple stole away from the skins of plums  
Everywhere we turned became a maze of colour  
I protect you with an indigo coloured whisper  
You curve the ends of my black and white day  
Coffee brown, is mole, dying leaves, dry earth  
But smell led me here, the smell of yellow  
The blue, white and red stripes of exotic confusion  
Moving over the green gravel of a formal grave

I wet my lips and a blackbird flies out of my mouth  
Faces in the front row, silvered in screenlight, focus  
I thought everyone knew what was meant by sugar-paper blue  
Tyrian dyes and flax and peacock plumes  
Gold and yellow where the clouds crack and break away  
Anemone-blue mountains outlined against the pearl-grey morning





## Moon

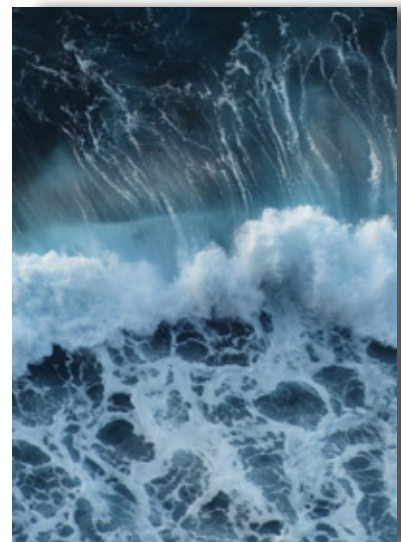
A Hawaiian girl named for one of Jupiter's moons  
Once queued for hours to see the moon in a box  
When she rises attendant moons whirl around her  
The lime-washed terrace turns from moon to pink  
I array the moonlit ceiling with a mosaic of question marks  
The moon is a lump of rock and sand and interplanetary debris  
Moonlight is like the sun through a filter  
Over the shining mud the moon is blood

The moon washed the rooves as we flew around the city  
Moon is the dance-floor out of which we grow  
I dive in and swim below the surface of the moon  
The next time Venus emerges from behind the moon  
Each thought, like the moon will have no light of its own  
Oh moon of Mahagonny, we must now say goodbye!

## The Sea

The sea is everywhere now; the sea is the sky  
The seagulls are plunging past the window  
Sea-waves empty into sands, on and on  
Seaweed stacked in a glistening breakwater  
The soft click of stones, where the tide falls back  
One day the tide goes out and never comes back  
Though soon enough the waves will heave and swell  
But the cold grey hands of the sea clap

The sea unmask a phosphorescence  
The waves open and close like eyelids  
If I must cross the sea, I will cross the sea  
And with the dark sea between us brimming with time  
With the winds of the Atlantic laughing through it  
We'll pluck from this ocean, its menacing storms



## Trees

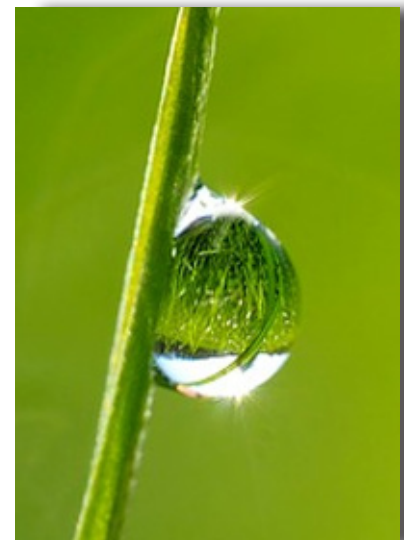
Forests, a mile away, making their noise of an inland sea  
One tree can never best a mountain, but four trees may look like a hill  
The trees are rinsing themselves of leaves  
So many trees, with exchanges of colours and birds, are gone  
There'd be chirruping birds from tree to tree  
Honey-scented, the trees sang, dizzy with sunshine and bees  
Springwater from the roots of a hawkfaced fir tree  
One sunbeam has strayed into the gloom of the firs

that dip in the streams and sweep the branches  
Snakes recline in the shadows of palm leaves  
And the apple blossom is allowed to wither on the bough  
Ash over conifers and birches, over berry thickets  
Leaves flow in the branches of your hair  
Symmetries of the leafless void that is in you

## Reflection

No sooner can a child walk, than he has to start running  
We have stripped the world down to its bones  
It might have been more of a hill than a mountain  
My youth was overshadowed by oppressive storms  
Though nothing touched me. The days just slipped away  
Ancient Ireland indeed! I was reared by her bedside  
I used to pass my grandmother's house on the way home  
Everything was slightly dusty, slightly subdued

Sometimes letters would reach me, torn into pieces  
And once I followed stirring words and was dismayed  
The currents of my feeling would not set towards a shore  
The dead mirror of the marshes reflected for me a stranger's face  
Strong proof of leaves at the bottom of every mug  
How strangely it behaves when you haven't got much of it left





Mike Gallagher was born on Achill Island and worked in London for forty years before retiring to Kerry. His prose, poetry, haiku and songs have been published worldwide. His writing has been translated into Croatian, Japanese, Dutch, German and Chinese. He won the Michael Hartnett Viva Voce competition in 2010 and 2016; he was shortlisted for the Hennessy Award in 2011 and won the Desmond O'Grady International Poetry Contest in 2012. His collection *Stick on Stone* was published by Revival Press in 2013.



## Sunday Read, Cill Rialaig

A glossy picture of Rubaya.  
just a place where miners toil for pence;  
they dig in descending steps  
down to Congo's brown-red core,  
each step is eight foot long by eight foot wide  
by nine foot deep (this last dimension  
decreasing the chances of decapitation;)  
their quarry; coltan, a rare commodity used in  
mobile phones and computers;  
its high market value lures the usual jackals:  
the multinationals, other criminal gangs,  
corrupt politicians, fat cats,  
each comfortable with their greed,  
each steadfast in their right to make slaves of others.

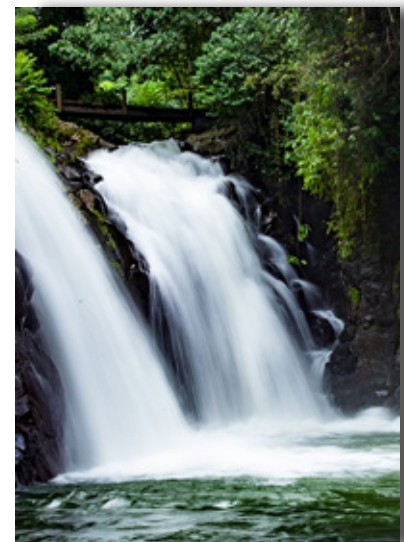
But what of us, the workers, the drones,  
Capital's little helpers, the oilers of its grinding wheels?  
What of us, the teachers of false values,  
too scared to say when enough is enough;  
false preachers of acceptance  
too snug to say that This is wrong;  
pseudo Coms and cuter Cons  
debating shades of pink and blue  
at overlaid tables;  
politics's scum still plucking the poorest  
to feather their own soft-centred nests?

But what of us, the locust tribe  
devouring all before us,  
leaving nothing in our wake? What of us.  
consumers of the latest fad,  
the brands, the trinkets, the tosh,  
bloodied by lost fingers of some child slave in Bangladesh,  
or the last polluted gasp of a peasant in China or India,  
or the soil-stenched sweat of an African miner?  
What of us? Do we care? Do we care at all?  
Driven by our greed, surrounded by our clutter,  
do we count the cost to our fellow men?  
Do we rate them above our poodles?

Are we not, all of us, jackals at heart,  
some slightly uncomfortable?

## Row Back

Petulant sun quarrels with crabbed sky  
It probes, prods, sneaks  
Through gaps in broken cloud,  
Catches the crests of waves that roll  
In deep swells across the estuary.  
Gales lash the craggy headland  
Pummel long-stemmed grass into submission;  
Rain shards pierce weathered faces  
While wrens search out the whin's snug core.  
It is midsummer's day and Nature rages:  
*Brother Man, row back, row back,*  
***Our world is not, is not, yours to destroy.***



© Mike Gallagher

## The Road to Ballinaruan

Stop! For time itself has stopped  
 On the road to Ballinaruan.  
 In the eastern sky,  
 Grey cloud is banked  
 On grey cloud,  
 Mythical townlands are  
 Enveloped in pagan mists.  
 Hump-backed haggards  
 Of rock and rush,  
 Lurk on either side.  
 Before me, an outcrop  
 Of Burren stone-  
 Glacial currachs  
 Upended, abandoned-  
 Is marooned within  
 Walls built by giants,  
 Each boulder a palette  
 Of green and white  
 And yellow lichen.  
 Through gaps, the passing wind  
 Plucks at strings of threaded scutch.  
 A prying finch lands on wire,  
 Looks, listens, waves his scorn and goes,  
 Sure in his dominion.  
 Dark brown hummocks  
 Of heather and bog unfold onto  
 A chocolate- ripple landscape.  
 Low pines fill gaps  
 In a grey horizon.

In the sun-trapped west,  
 Crisp white clouds  
 Bounce off Clare's scrawny spine  
 To reveal an unmoving far-blue sky.  
 There, still, white-washed cottages  
 Give way to Atlantic breakers  
 Arriving from the distant everness  
 Of Inismann and Inisheer,  
 Outposts of a barren, rich landscape,  
 Strangely colourless, yet full of colour,  
 Every yard a bubble of hue and texture and motion.

-----

splitting  
 even as it merges  
 the splinter group





**Gary Allen** was born in Ballymena, Nr. Ireland. An award-winning poet, he has published fourteen collections, most recently, 'Jackson's Corner,' Greenwich Exchange, London 2016. A new collection, 'Mapland,' will be published later this year by Clemson University Press, South Carolina.



## London buses

I have seen them stripped naked  
down to the bare bones  
the moulded cast-metal chassis  
of great lumbering dinosaurs  
numbered and indexed for the factory floor.

Does the evangelist in him bless each one?  
my cousins worked on the assembly line  
fitting out these tiny Titanics  
with flooring, electrical wiring, plastic seats for London bums  
when they weren't hiding bored out replica guns  
in their work lockers

or intimating the Poles in the factory yard  
or clapping English Transport Ministers  
who waxed on about Frankfurt and Hong Kong.

Did he say a little prayer  
from the evangelist church he raised  
beside the factory, *For I was a stranger*  
*and you took me in*  
on early morning test runs  
down Antrim country roads

the neon signs showing Tooting  
Barking, Lambeth, Bletchley Park  
as their cousins stood in burned-out rows  
like charred wagons  
stinking of petrol and religion.

## A photograph from Europe

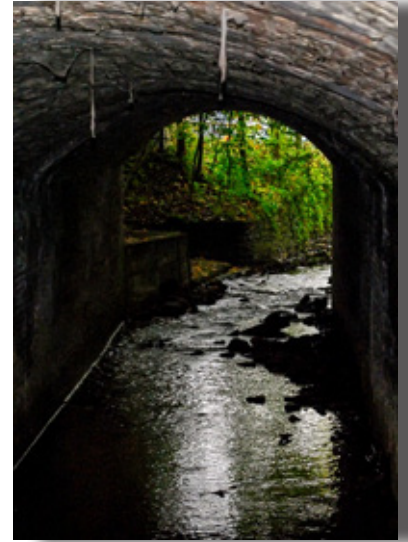
It could have been taken in some forgotten part of Greece  
or somewhere on the fringes of Europe  
Salonika, Macedonia, Bosnia  
the dwarf pines and Cypresses and Firs  
the chalky white ground, the shallow natural amphitheatre

she has the whitest skin, and you feel embarrassed  
when your eyes wander over the curves  
the strand of black hair, the white adolescent child  
she clings to, naked in her arms  
tighter than the passage of time or righteousness

a banker's wife, or small business man's?  
once, and the merging lines of whiteness into whiteness  
of an amateur souvenir photograph taken in the blinding sun  
of naked bodies already past caring  
entwined in intimate ways only the dead can choreograph

the child in her arms is blond and terrified  
she buries her face in her mother's arms  
the weight of her white hips pressed into the mother's thighs  
one thousand years, and still Europe could not accept them  
in their innocence, they stain the ground  
after this picture is taken, so real, it could have been only yesterday

a small boy walks away from the horror he wanted to see – informant?  
a soldier stands off focus, but is smiling  
as the determined face of the executioner  
taken at an angle that makes his appearance  
elongated in the sun, yet grotesque  
some Margarete's husband on a forgotten front  
who raises a stick-like arm, and points his gun.



## Dark mouth

The wooden table and chair is placed strategically  
in the middle of the high barn  
pen, ink and paper carefully arrayed in full view  
colours nailed to the mast  
the wide doors flung open  
the cold Northern wind cutting to the bone  
not a place to meditate  
the fields and road a stew of mud -  
this is the place of poems.

I have known the dark mouth too  
never spoken, but open always in a shattering scream  
always dressed in matriarch black  
warning of shortages and hardships still to come  
as they made their way like executioners to church

and the long Sundays they fermented  
with no talking, or sitting in the bedroom alone  
no going outside to beat the neighbour's dog with sticks  
or taking sling shots at the stupid pigeons  
but the dull tick of the clock and the wasted hours  
sitting around the kitchen table  
watching the long day go with the leaving of the watery light  
reflecting the beads of water on the jug and glasses

my aunt lying back before a miserly fire of cheap grade coal  
the incestuous black handkerchief covering her face  
the burning sores of her ulcers and the smell of body and iodine  
while my uncle thin faced snored  
and I carefully sliced pages from the bible  
beneath their closed eyes  
in delicious profanity in the destruction of words  
just as you would later piss on their tables.

## The glass king

You'll know when you've come to the last station  
the red fire brick is grubby and chipped away  
signs point to somewhere, once, but are irrelevant now  
the sunny smiles of the children on the beach  
with their bucket and spades, is fading and curled at the corners  
the swimwear girl arouses no more curiosity.

Did he say, cross the caged walkway to the next platform?  
where empty trunks are stacked with waiting bicycles  
and upright porter trolleys, flattened cigarette packets  
the locked doors and empty cobweb-grates of the public waiting rooms  
the café/bar advertising tea and Double Diamond  
and far off, on another platform, you hear a whistle  
and the crack-crack whack of carriage doors slamming down the line.

Where would you go on this local of local lines  
that stops at brickworks, closed factories, silent steelworks?  
no more wedding guests or mail bags or massed arrows, striding pylons:  
time has slipped away, in parking-lots  
or the steep climb of subway stairs in small university towns  
in upstate New York, hotel rooms whose curtains flap inwards  
Saturday sports results on a transistor in the kitchen  
then the jolt that ends the reverie of drowning -

you know how it is, you imagine something is steaming and roaring  
out of the dark tunnel, only to realise that this particular branch line  
was boarded and blocked off sometime back in the Fifties.



**Where the Inner and Outer Meet: Landscapes of the Soul** - These poems are soul talk written in a loose English language adaptation of the Arabic ghazal form in which the poet often speaks to him/herself as well as her audience. There is a dynamic loose association within the structure of the form that allows a playfulness and surprising grouping of metaphors. I wrote these in one of those scary times of transition we have occasionally.



## You Don't Need a Compass

Stop this crazy belief in your work and what you do.  
Have you forgotten that space when your eyes feast  
on the mountains and you are no longer there?

A woman made her home in the currents and sea tides.  
The salmon beneath, the heron above loved  
this human company that did not care to get from here to there.

You want a guarantee or some laundry list to tell you  
how to move with the great energies within.  
Any fool knows only mysterious angels carry you there.

People have agendas and are owned by them.  
They only notice the early snow is gone. They don't  
see how the night wind bared the tree and put its leaves over there.

Your unseen friend is waiting to converse with you  
when you finally just let things be.  
You don't need a compass or a will to be carried there.

The repairman is near you, tinkering in the house,  
adjusting valves, installing something new. When you look  
you will wake, taken by silence into what is there.

Do any of us know the meaning of love?  
The hidden child within me shared my blood, bone and air.  
When he came out we lifted him up, shouting, There!

## Surrender

What is written in the homing pigeon  
that leads it home, the scent of love,  
that sense of direction is written in your surrender.

What the master said to the beloved disciple  
whispered discreetly in the ear is said to you.  
To hear you must lean through your fear into surrender.

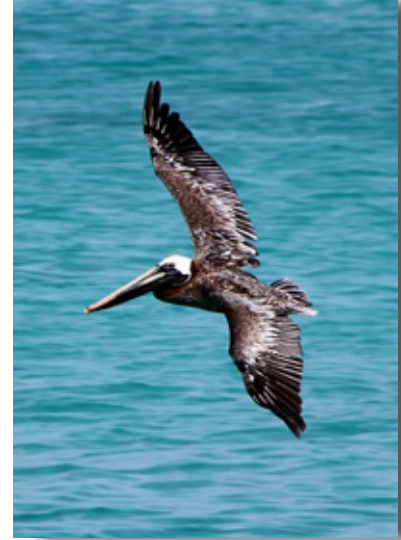
The caribou are alert to the shadows. They quiver  
in the sounds of the howling wolves. They know  
for something to live, something has to surrender.

The green grass said to the blanketing snow,  
I would die in your love. The birds at the rowan berries  
trembled in joy to hear such surrender.

When they dug up Tutankhamen's mummy  
the world was in awe. People are crazy. They should go  
to graveyards singing with joy to see the real surrender.

When the stray dog found the leavings of the banquet  
she savored each morsel, but her other hunger grew.  
People don't know the joy of a true master until they surrender.

Don't ask a cow how it made milk or a calf why it needs the utter.  
When a true empty cup is overfilled, drop to your knees  
to lick the over spill. Each drop is surrender.



## Free Fall

The skylark in its free fall wild song  
hears the crows with their endless warnings.  
You must change your path to save it.

The Dalai Lama against his own heart  
made the long trek into exile.  
Sometimes we must leave what we love to save it.

Small people cannot digest this, wanting to know how and why.  
Open your eyes. The snake left its skin on your doorway.  
He didn't try to sew it back on, in an attempt to save it.

Your terrible confusion is your Dharma protector.  
What hems you in or blindsides you knows how willingly  
you would sacrifice your integrity to save it.

Jesus' heart loved the whole world, but that is not enough.  
The Baptist's waters demand even organic conversion.  
He let his own good heart go, and did not attempt to save it.

The women and the bears have gathered all the berries.  
Their juicy lips sing traveling songs to scattering flocks of angels.  
We hope to see you again. Summer is gone; they don't try to save it.

The ocean laughed when the river's mouth said,  
"Wait a minute! I thought if I got here I'd still be myself."  
Soon you will give that separate self up with no attempt to save it.

## How Close?

The valves of the heart open and close softly  
or loudly speaking in their own timing.  
Insistent, they whisper, come closer.

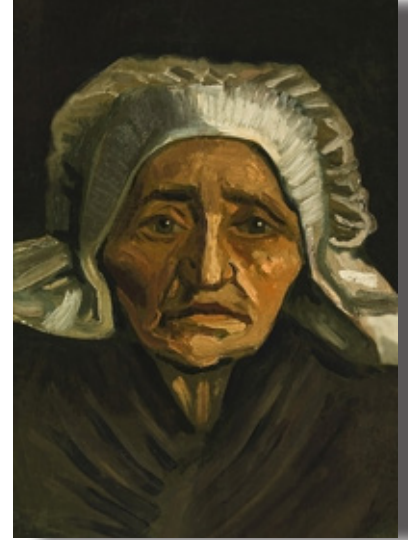
People who walk in the territory of the soul  
grow strange with longing. They read the palms of the sky  
listening to the night bird, they pray, come closer.

Some people rush to the edge of the ocean of God  
hauling their skin boats ready to drown in this sea.  
They risk it all saying, eat me, kiss me, just come closer.

The lover says, something in me wants to give itself  
completely to something that moves within you.  
Ruth said this to Boaz and Boaz said, come closer.

I learn to be held in this energy of heart  
where you are a lighted match and I am your torch,  
a cord of wood stripped to the pith begging, come closer.





## The Tapestry of Night Songs

People do violence to self and others everyday,  
Don't be part of that. Even when they castrated  
Abelard he could still make love to Eloise.  
This is a master of soul and heart.

The rose sang her love by simply being.  
The tiger's bloody lips cried out in praise.  
But the seal made its way through the sea  
in the currents of the heart.

I don't want any holding back of love  
in some crazy self protecting separateness.  
The amulet Jesus truly needed was his openness  
to what pours forth from the silence of the heart.

Francis sits in ashes with the birds.  
He doesn't worry about the tiger in his soul.  
That empty cup, his beggar bowl holds the flash  
of paradise, the bewildering paradox of heart.

Georgia O'Keefe didn't stop the love-words  
coming from the silence. Her flowers, her art,  
bloomed like her naked body out of nothingness  
from the pure land of heart.

This space is a tapestry of night songs  
and ruined cloaks, but whose cloaks we never know.  
We live apart, but lovebirds sing into being  
each weaving thread that issues from the heart.

The bones of old men and women sing in ripe fields,  
their lungs filled with fearless breaths, their tongues with joy.  
Something within requires us to love fiercely and freely  
the startling unexpected graces singing in the heart.

## Scrubbing and Anointing

Everything in the pot must be heated, everything cooked.  
When an old woman whose body is soft with fat  
stands in a kitchen cooking the last grain seed,  
you know extraordinary love is about to flower.

If some old goat of a prophet hands her a scrub brush,  
she had better fall to her knees.  
Every stroke of that brush on the floor beneath her feet  
is a late summer field of flowers.

The Baptist poured watery flame on the carpenter's son.  
Men and women run from this anointing.  
When the son lets the fire's kiss touch each cell  
of his body, love descends, his whole being flowers.

Some old poets need to be cleaned and anointed like this.  
Let the witch with long bristly fingers brush their skin alive,  
pour the pressed oils of seed, bud, flower, fruit, until their soil  
brings forth words like untamed fields of wild flowers.

Jesus said let the wheat and weed grow together,  
shocking the tame, the neat, and the captive cultivators.  
When judgment day comes the oldest word will set to fire  
all of our fields into blazing bright flowers.

The butterfly people weave with large hooks and tweezers  
pulling even the useless threads into the fabric of being.  
Woman, you need to trust. When the feral colors of French fields  
touched Van Gogh's brush, the stars themselves began to flower.

**Carl Scharwath**, has appeared globally with 80+ journals selecting his poetry, short stories, essays or art photography. He won the National Poetry Contest award for Writers One Flight Up. His first poetry book is 'Journey To Become Forgotten' (Kind of a Hurricane Press). Carl is also a dedicated runner and second-degree black belt.



## Wayfaring

City rain breathing  
Radiation from the storm clouds  
As tar black feather balls  
Disguise the avenue.

Ghosts in the metropolis  
Leer from empty buildings  
Poisonous tomb stones  
Rising in the shadows

Devout of humanity  
Lifeless and forsaken  
On what journey  
The victim returns?

## Admonitio

You are the genesis of today  
The cancers of a desperate heart  
etched in the loss of hope.

Vision doubled, fractured  
fragments give warning  
Blood rushes in a sojourn

Following the Daughters of Zion  
adorned in self-alienation  
to a future world, without history.

## Axis

The passion shall escape  
While the past,  
Flickering hungry  
Is Bleached invisible.

You gaze at  
The unfeigned light  
Walking out determined  
From the world.

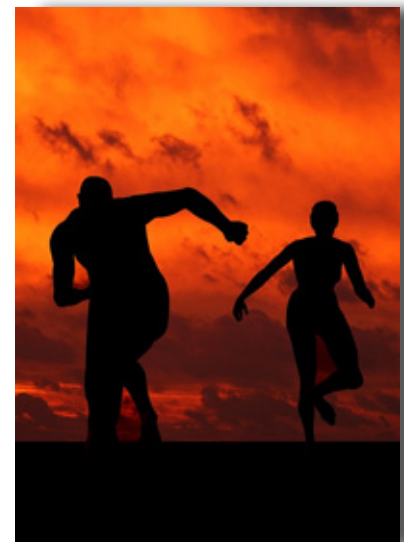
Knowing how it feels  
To be broken  
And have a black hole  
On your time-line.

## Endemic Soul

Among the painted faces  
lost in a labyrinth  
of emotional chaos.

Lies a linguistic fault line  
meandering down the  
expanse of imagination.

The day obliterated  
in metaphysical time  
searching for yourself.





## Countdown To Darkness

Translucent and awake  
lost in broad daylight.  
The sun will vanish  
flickering,unseeing.  
Blurring at the edges  
darkening,hesitant  
and shinning curious.  
The light evanescent  
in a trace of sadness.

For how long  
will a stranger stop  
in a different light  
as the end begins.  
Looking for landmarks  
talking to himself  
at the edge  
of the world.  
Insanity feels good.

## Aphonic

She is the lament  
of the voiceless

consuming silence  
onto parchment

into the psyche,  
histories skirmish

chains of the enslaved  
loosen their duress

to her words–  
we together manipulate

the pendulum  
to rebuild our most treasured

commodity-



**Saliha Khan** is a young lexophile and poet in the making from a small town in South Africa hoping to complete a Nursing degree and travel the world. Her style of writing involves internally rhyming to warp the natural rhythm of the intonation of words to express a deep sensual chaos through poetry. She has written more than 500 poems, her writing evolving just as she does. She aspires to inspire through her semantic subtleties as she crafts intense poetry of two extremes - pain and passion.



## Epiphany

Epiphany, Epiphany, how nice of you to meet me in solitary solitude,  
 How nice of you to sow my sorrows like seeds  
 And watch them manifest as trees...  
 How nice of you to come to me  
 And coax the birds from my trees,  
 To make me watch them leave their nests  
 As I pray and hope that they do their best,  
 To make me laugh as they learn to play alongside the bees  
 And to watch me cry as they scrape their knees.

Epiphany, Epiphany, you're blue-eyed and at a distant distance  
 And I still wonder how you are  
 But you have made me take a stance,  
 It's so nice of you to let me be  
 And encourage Time to teach me  
 Of all the ways of scraped knees  
 Of bee stings and all those worldly things.

Epiphany, Epiphany, you have come to know me,  
 Taken my hand and led me through your gardens of wisdom,  
 Through your enlightening Eden,  
 Epiphany, Epiphany, through all my life, where have you been,  
 To come to me now and make me begin again?

## The Hands of a Man

Only you can take time to pull their actions apart,  
 To find the motives of their hearts,  
 To tell yourself comforting lies  
 As you lie in their arms and they devour you with their eyes.

The hands of a man,  
 The way it inflicts and intrudes  
 And colours you in every hue...

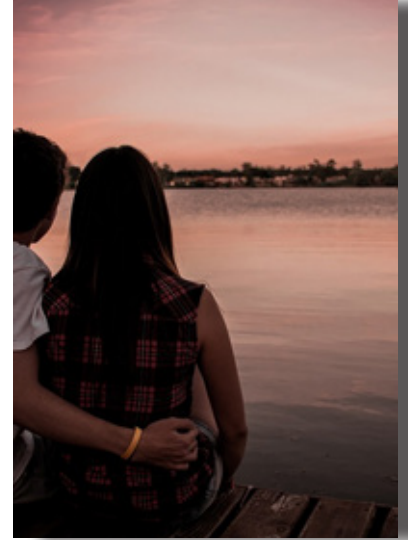
He's no better than that man,  
 The way he thoughtlessly misconstrues,  
 The way he ingrains his metaphysical runes,  
 In a merciless attempt to change you.

You wish to escape the hold of man,  
 Prodigious prints from their hands,  
 Gloating in shadows  
 As they watch you wallow  
 In the dirt with your hurt,  
 Hollowed heart, womb,  
 The hold of a man feels just like a tomb,

Keeping you embalmed,  
 Locked up in their charms,  
 Their gold chains a noose round your neck,  
 Their every wish that you command is your sign of respect.

And only you can take time to pull apart your actions,  
 To make sure your motives are pure after every inflection,  
 To make sure you are truthful  
 As a justification when they call you beautiful...





## Cingulomania

I suppose when passion,  
Vibrant and illuminating passion,  
Starts at tender birth,  
Extends even to the tips of fingertips,  
Even to the ends of the earth,  
I suppose then everything touched,  
Will, without free will, turn to gold,

And I imagine when you touch me,  
You will discover infinite mines  
As you open my mind  
With your sapphire eyes,  
I imagine we will cry  
As the heat of skin  
Tenderly reassures once again...

## Carter

I find you in the passageways  
Blue-eyed spectre of the past  
Walking past me in an unbuttoned coat  
You've got that same old gait  
But I stopped waiting for you to walk by  
I sigh in disbelief at how the time flies

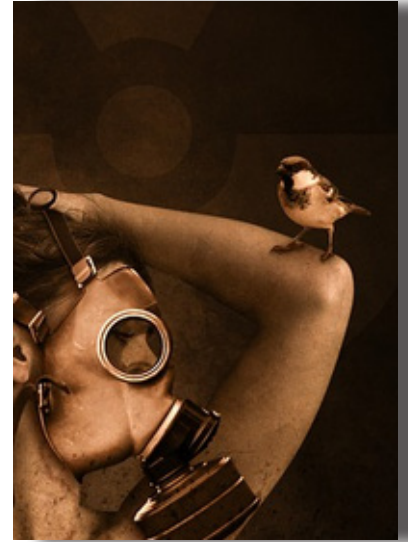
Now I'm a deer in the headlights,  
A hollow laugh at the funeral,  
I bled through my wedding dress.  
I killed myself.

I took the form of anyone,  
Everyone,  
All the broken dwellers,  
I lost my light from all the fires,

I killed myself.

Because those things stayed with me  
And scarred me for good  
I ran from the room when our songs played  
It was Our dream  
But there was a man beside me

I died for you, Carter  
In the end.



## The Paramour

Paramour on the precipice of war,  
A war of passion and cure,  
That permeates every score.

Paramour, sleeping with the enemy  
Whilst knowing that the arms of the ally  
Is where she ought to be,

Her blood stains red, her fire not yet dead,  
She held up a white flag  
As the enemy infiltrated her head,

The enemy  
Infiltrated  
Her bed.

“The enemy, the enemy, the enemy!”  
Her troops cried out,  
But her heart would not relent,

Her spirit could not be bent,  
Little did she know that along with her people,  
The paramour would become no more...

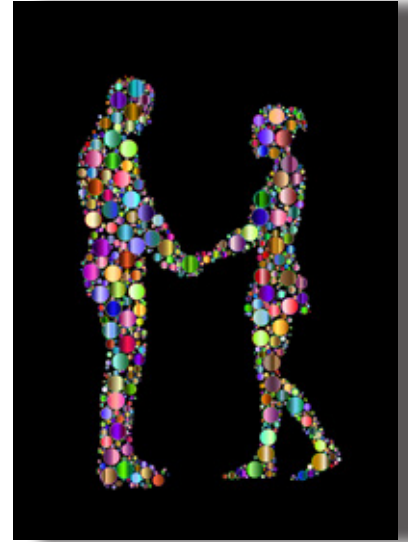
## Rewind

In waves, in whirlwinds, it comes  
To claim all I thought I had become,  
In dark of night I ponder on patterns memorised  
In fluorescent eyes  
And I cry for all the makeshift dyes  
To fashion such a passionate canvas,  
To make such a love, once again come alive...

In wordless warmth, in music rooms,  
My mind rewinds to a love that bloomed  
Out of songs of hearts belonging,  
Out of voids and societal wronging.  
Two misguided souls unguarded,  
Two deprived hearts rewarded,  
For their bravery, for the journey.

As time passed and seasons changed,  
So did forms, hearts, and minds endanger  
Each soul to an unknown path; two separate lives,  
No longer living for each other's eyes...





## I Am Him, I Am Her

I am him, I am her.  
 I do not know who I am.  
 Perplexed; I smell of new clothes  
 And settled woes,  
 Marc Jacobs and cigarettes,  
 Aramis, and my past.  
 I kiss her décolletage  
 And remember to feel something  
 When all I taste is her infidelity,  
 Her milky skin now the flavour of sins,  
 Her stolen sentences, articulately laced with reticence.  
 I loved her, yet all I long for now is penitence.

I don't want her back, I want what she took.  
 I'd rather have that than an unpublished book.

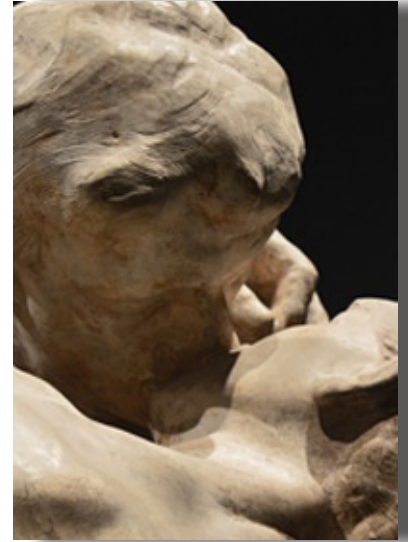
He assures the past is past,  
 He wants part of my undisclosed heart.  
 He is all I know; father and lover, and woe.  
 She detests him, but I protect him:  
 He accepts me, collects me, creates me,  
 Piece by piece. There is no need for release.  
 I want to be his until he is no longer.  
 So he can taste youth for the last time, and I can taste death for the first.  
 I am him, I am her  
 I do not know who I am.

## Illuminated

Honey coloured strands play in the wind,  
 Illuminated by an embarking twilight.  
 I uncover your struggle, your inner din  
 As your calculating countenance abates  
 And I find that once again, I question fate...

The dark road behind disintegrates,  
 And from the dim globe on the ride home,  
 I find your eyes refracting a million lights  
 In all the depths of me man does not go.

The perspiration of palms, of interlocked hands  
 Settles my alarm as I come to understand  
 That along with every past rhyme,  
 This life is mercilessly mercurial -  
 But these moments are fixed in time.



## The Allegory

It was the night of the 15th

The night I knew  
This year would not be rued...  
It took a long time for me to let you

Climb into me and become me,  
Reach into me and deplete me,  
Just to relent to be replenished.

31st the roses came,  
With my heart at your door,  
Our once burning flame  
Dying at your feet, on the cold cinder floor.

We were sitting by the fire,  
Waiting to burn, to die,  
You and I...

We, like dying stars,  
Were once the moon  
Centred in the sky like timeless art,  
Awakening together so soon...

From dreams where I held you close  
Insatiably, inseparably,  
In states of comatose,  
But in the daylight it was clear to me...

We were closer to an end  
Than to each other's once untouched,  
Quivering souls,  
Unsung, and much too old,

Closer to our next lapse of faith  
Than we were to what was once,  
Our fated leap of faith...

## My Lover's Breath

My lover's breath upon my skin,  
I'm at the hands of her ecstasy,  
She knows my body, the soul within,  
We find ourselves in close proximity.  
I can feel her knowing grin,  
For she has yet to touch me,  
The heat like echoes from her skin,  
I find I'm barely breathing.

Our lips touch, my heart does race,  
The blood rushes to my face,  
We withdraw to draw a breath,  
Upon my neck my lover's lips,  
Swallowing the unpaced pulse,  
Her hands roam between my hips,  
Every part of me awakens,  
But my knees give in to sleep...

Suddenly her grip tightens,  
My mouth widens,  
Her breathing alters,  
My thighs falter,  
My mind is screaming,  
"Please don't leave me",  
But silence surrounds us,  
Euphoria consumes us...

I'll be the light in her life,  
For the nights in her arms,  
She expels all the strife,  
She is warmth, she is calm,  
Loving me in every form,  
The sun after the raging storm,  
I haven't felt this human  
Since the day that I was born...



# Live encounters

## POETRY

Celebrating six years 2010 - 2015  
Free online magazine from village earth  
August 2016



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas