



# Live encounters

POETRY

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

GUEST EDITORIAL  
PAUL CASEY  
IRISH 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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# CONTRIBUTORS

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## Guest Editorial & From Which it is Torn - 11

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)



## A Land Elsewhere

Thomas McCarthy

Thomas McCarthy was born in Co. Waterford in 1954 and educated at University College Cork. He has published *The First Convention* (1978), *The Lost Province* (1996) and *Merchant Prince* (2005) as well as a number of other collections. He has won the Patrick Kavanagh Award, the Alice Hunt Bartlett Prize and the O'Shaughnessy Prize for Poetry. He worked for many years at Cork City Libraries, retiring in 2014 to write fulltime. He is a member of Aosdana. His collection, *Pandemonium*, will be published by Carcanet Press in November.



## Chopping Wood Poems

John Walsh

John Walsh was born in Derry. His first poetry collection *Johnny tell Them* was published in October 2006 (Guildhall Press, Derry). In 2007 he received a Publication Award for his second collection *Love's Enterprise Zone* (Doire Press, Connemara). In 2010 Salmon Poetry published his third collection *Chopping Wood with T.S. Eliot*. His debut short story collection *Border Lines*, was published in April 2012. He is now co-director at Doire Press, which he founded with his American partner, Lisa Frank. More at [www.doirepress.com](http://www.doirepress.com)



## Frayed Austerity

Patrick Cotter

Patrick Cotter was born in Cork in 1963 where he still lives. He spent periods living in Germany in the 1980s and in San Francisco during the naughties. He has published a verse novella and two full-length collections of poetry as well as a number of chapbooks. His poetry has been translated into fifteen languages with substantial selections in Croatian and Estonian and a full volume in Macedonian (*No One Knows*, Velstovo Poetry Nights Publications 2014). He received the Keats-Shelley Poetry Prize in 2013.



## In Plain Sight

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.



## That Love

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.

## Celebrating 6 years 2010-2015

Live  
encounters

POETRY  
SEPTEMBER  
2016



## From The Levant

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.



## New Poems

Robin Marchesi

Marchesi was born in Hampshire England. He was educated at Oxford and London Universities. He has lived 'on his wits' throughout the world and has several published works including *Kyoto Garden*, *A B C Quest* and *A Small Journal of Heroin Addiction*. His latest book "Poet of the Building Site" about his time with the Sculptor Barry Flanagan (1941 - 2009) is published by Charta Press in association with the Irish Museum of Modern Art. At the moment he is living in London completing his latest work entitled: "Prospero's Cell."



## Immigrants

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](http://www.nparvaz.wix.com)



## Two Poems for Young People

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)



## At The World's End - I

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)



## Brought to Surface

Eileen Casey

Eileen Casey is based in South Dublin. Her poetry, fiction and prose is widely published in literary anthologies, journals and magazines. Dedalus Press, Faber and Faber, New Island, Jelly Bucket (Eastern Kentucky University) are among inclusions. As publisher and editor, recent collections include: *Circle & Square* (2015) and *Reading the Lines* (2016), a joint venture with *Live Encounters*. She received an Individual Artist's Bursary from South Dublin County Council in 2016.





Novice studying at night on the grounds of the Wat Xieng Thong temple complex. The main Buddhist temple was built in 1559-1560. Luang Prabang, Laos. Photograph (without flash) by Mark Ulyseas.

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**PAUL CASEY**

IRISH POET & WRITER

## How many Poets can you fit into a Poet?

Influence is perpetual revolution-fuel. Collective and compounded. Trying to outdo the masters is futile. So read, read and write and let the words fall where they may. Poetry is a portal of portals. A mythical cauldron leading down, around and through a connective matrix of infinite worlds, an endless nexus of intermingling realities and imaginings.

I rarely trade in 'found poetry'. Like 'experimental poetry', it's really just another loose term to describe all poetry. But coming down the home straight and glimpsing the finishing line of my first collection, some five years ago now, I was siezed by a severe anxiety attack. And contrary to what I might ever have imagined, 'found poetry' was to be my salvation. I'm an eclectic reader and pursuer of activities, with an equally multifarious life story, so I'm diverse in my writing, both in form and subject. I believe I am the aggregate of every moment I've lived, defined by my resistance to, or embracement of the myriad of changes I encounter every day. The loudest critic in my head has always been my own voice and I've never really given much heed to how much influence any particular writer or text or poem has held over me, especially when crafting my own work. Like many people, things wash over or through me. They stick or don't.

Poetry is a high powered periscope. It's a corridor of stethoscopes, a museum of microscopes and unlocked, semi-opaque doorways to countless forms, narratives, senses and the unknown. It's Google Earth for the human heart.

'The secret of my influence has always been that it remained secret,' said Salvador Dali.



‘Grace is the beauty of form under the influence of freedom’, penned Friedrich Schiller. If that’s true, poetry is the freedom of beauty through form, under the grace of influence. Poetry is the language of journey, of representation by way of our metalanguage of life-lexicons. It’s empathy with all things and beings! So what’s there to be anxious about?



I hit that late hurdle far too hard to recover at first, ambushed by my only ever *anxiety of influence* attack, something I didn’t know was an actual thing until I considered Gerry Murphy’s eponymous poem *The Anxiety of Influence*, after Harold Bloom’s theory of poetry. *Gerry, you Yeats...* I was staring past my laptop screen in the celebrated Tyrone Guthrie Centre retreat in County Monaghan, scanning the exquisite Annaghmakerrig woodlands and lake when it struck. Could it be that I’ve been unconsciously plagiarising out of everything I’ve ever read or heard? Can I ever hope to escape the long shadows of all the greats I’ve irreversibly read? Was I now the derivative ‘poet in a poet’? Or *poets* in a poet? Upended with dread, I hadn’t a clue how much my reading material had been inhibiting or creeping into my lines. I was up against a tight deadline too and my inner critic was nowhere to be heard. Then every imaginable alarm-voice I had never heard before began to flood my brain. To say I was frozen in a state of panic would be a euphemism, or struck by the perplexity of an impending, inescapable disaster – no, that wouldn’t do it either. I was creatively paralysed. Full stop. A psychological stroke cast from the nebular-blue birth of a lethal doubt. It was a significant game-changer. I remembered then my work having been once called Eliot-esque, and the warmth of the compliment. Now I was potentially *any-number-of-poets*-esque. The air was scorching. It almost roasted any thought I had of publishing poems again. *What if nothing I had ever written was valid?*

Poetry isn’t much more than a morsel of wandering, daydreaming or mindful doodling, keeping the insatiable seeker centered and occupied. It can tease out the full definition of your imaginative fingerprints. ‘No, generally I think influence is used as a nice word for plagiarism’, said Gilbert Gottfried, the comedian. ... Many a true word?

This happened about four days into a two week residency, so I had to come up with a plan post-haste. And by some miracle, the enviable 150 year-old Tyrone Guthrie poetry library came to the rescue. When I was seven I was thrown and dragged by the stirrup halfway around the track by an overly spirited mare. As soon as the swelling abated, I was pleaded with to get straight back up before the fear set in for good. Well I’m glad I did, but there was no saddle to be seen amongst the vast volumes of classical and contemporary verse here. No reins, no leg-ups, no large, reassuring eyes. The ghosts of the poetry library must have been listening though, as the apparition of Miss Worby materialised, screeching and flinging me a very finicky-looking key. I intuited its meaning instantly. If I couldn’t identify and control these invisible pressures, these odorless poisons and airborne modifiers that were busy wreaking havoc, then I would flood them with so many poems and of such variety and weight that no individual style, or sentiment or voice could possibly persist. A bespoke purge.

So I began to write fifteen cento-sonnets, fourteen of which I’m delighted to discover will be published in this fine journal, but I was to do this by selecting and rearranging 210 lines of poetry from 210 individual poets’ collections. And four uninterrupted days later, I made my jailbreak. I was freely suspended in a supreme order of clarity, completely void of the concentrated angst which had thrust its quick sword towards my poetry center. I was able to polish my hard-earned pages with renewed zeal and I had also, as Eliot called it, created a new ‘whole of feeling’, through a sequence that may otherwise have never been conceived.

Poetry allows multi-lingualism to develop within the individual language. The multiple languages of emotion, of senses and of the mind, combine to form for each of us our own unique meta-language. ‘The most hateful human misfortune is for a wise man to have no influence’, said Herodotus.

I’m grateful that these centos have found such a fine home. After they saved the day five years ago they were retired and left to gather dust until I was prompted to send unseen work to an unsuspecting poet. That poet in turn encouraged me to finish them properly and seek publication. In the very same way that each line in *From Which it is Torn* resounds and echoes and magnifies and changes the light cast upon its neighbours, so do the poems in *Live Encounters* convey tremendous cultural contrast and transcendence, through first-rate world variety. The magnificent compendium of poems featured in this e-journal enrich the reader with widely disparate narratives and truths. They arm the poet with far more than is needed to become a ‘good’ poet - as Eliot wrote, ‘A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest’. I always thrill in the meeting of vastly differing voices and worlds, in the dissonance as much as in the harmony. The wonders and windows that are blown wide open by the unexpected reverberations of astounding ideas and art. In such artful multicultural environs, I listen for the sounds of possibility as they echo from mind to mind, heart to heart, syllable by syllable. All the while humbling and widening our ravenous eyes.

‘Grace is the beauty of form under the influence of freedom’, penned Friedrich Schiller. If that’s true, poetry is the freedom of beauty through form, under the grace of influence. Poetry is the language of journey, of representation by way of our metalanguage of life-lexicons. It’s empathy with all things and beings! So what’s there to be anxious about?

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

## Nature

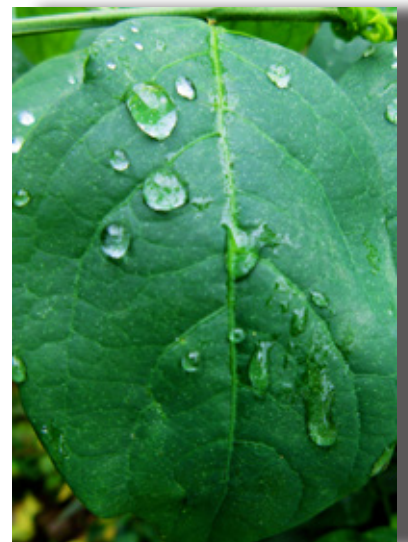
At last the days are even with the nights  
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow  
The shadows of a school of whale-grey clouds  
The stars will be shining, the dark seas will turn and turn  
The lions, inexhaustibly fierce, never retreat, never give in  
For I am soft and made of melting snow  
The blue thrust of mountains behind wide fields  
Blackberries were stars shining in a green sky

Meadow saffron blooming all the year  
Birds came to my fingers and nibbled there  
Night falls on someone else, constellations fall  
This morning at twist of winter to spring  
With so many flowers to feed, I'm worn  
At dawn the pheasant in the mist beneath the leaves

## Rain

Always rain and only rain freed me  
As I leave the house the rain is powder fine  
An evening when the rain glances off the hours  
Rain-mist drifts down hill, hangs by the stream  
Then, the sound of rain falling straight and thick  
Each footfall looms in the lens of a raindrop  
I would follow you into the rain-thorned water  
Under rain the frost rises into mist

Witchdoctors, I know, do it better but this is personal rainmaking  
It rained as though I dreamed a double dream  
And yet each drop recalls the diamond absolutes  
A night of heavy rain and force eight winds  
Rain on the rooves, rain on machines, the fury of drains  
Millions of soft knuckles on the corrugated roof



## Water

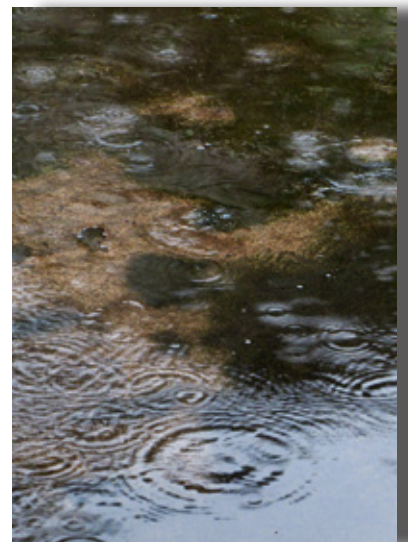
All the water has drained out of the earth  
Water that answers questions no-one has asked  
On your forehead all waters are holy waters  
In the water you live in the water you die in the desert  
This is our winter and we are rivers, frozen  
A woman, water flowing into water, intimate as water  
Her half-moon steals from my water-colour  
I came like water, and like wind I go

I have perfected the knack of walking on water  
I've seen you lift the splashing rocks without a sound  
So concrete does the flow of water seem  
Where water, gone to ground, springs out like nerves.  
Staring for spring in the stars through yards of water, if  
I could speak words of water you would drown when I said 'I love you'

## Simile

That the moon is as far away as the ocean is wide  
Sand stretched out like the margin of a parchment  
Friendship tipped out like sand from a shoe  
Brooding like a funerary marble among the ruins  
Night spreads like fallout over the raging city  
Sometimes emptiness swoops like a vicious bird  
To live among the great vanishing as a cat must live  
'Uncle' Oswald vamps on the piano, like a seal

With a head like a fish with something wrong with its head  
As though I were storm with lightnings forking from my fingers  
The water spills from her body like torn silk  
Her blue iris, hazed like a windscreen  
Like a not-yet-lover's not-quite-accidental touch  
My fingers as cold as the bones in the grass





**Thomas McCarthy** was born in Co. Waterford in 1954 and educated at University College Cork. He has published *The First Convention* (1978), *The Lost Province* (1996) and *Merchant Prince* (2005) as well as a number of other collections. He has won the Patrick Kavanagh Award, the Alice Hunt Bartlett Prize and the O'Shaughnessy Prize for Poetry. He worked for many years at Cork City Libraries, retiring in 2014 to write fulltime. He is a member of Aosdana. His collection, *Pandemonium*, will be published by Carcanet Press in November.



## A Retrospective

In truth I have always want to ask her why she abandoned  
Her life in art. To me it seems tragic, how a talent  
That placed etchings before us, etchings as fine  
As anything birdlike by Morris Graves or dog-like  
In the manner of Lucian Freud; how such a woman  
Could become indifferent to her great gifts: she is a mystery  
To anyone for whom art is difficult. Her husband  
Who is neither openly proud of her, nor discouraging,  
Would nervously fix a complicated drink for me, or,  
Worse still, fix me in his cold gaze, as if to ask:  
Why are you so interested in my wife's unused talent,  
What business is it of yours? Mr, you are too late

In the life of her work; and even if you'd come early  
Into her studio you'd never have been chosen. His  
Arrogance is as vain as her long silence, it says  
She abandoned art not because something died within,  
But because life has revealed itself. Their inner  
Annoyance, a thing intimate and personal like a marriage,  
Has created an atmosphere; keeping us out, keeping art in.

## Bathing In Rimini

Five hundred ocean-going yachts in out-of-season  
Rimini, white stallions bobbing in the Adriatic trough

Here where rich Europe plunges its ravenous snout  
And rises for oxygen in a gasp of folded spinnakers.

Female stragglers, in one single fountain of Italian  
Breasts, play dangerously in the late waves. Connoisseurs

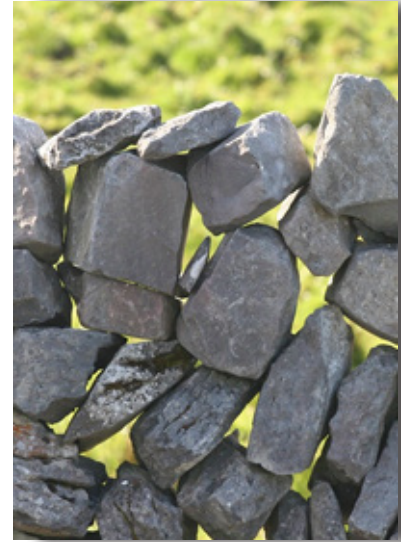
Of human beauty maintain their unembarrassed gaze –  
It is never nearly enough to have once loved, to have

Lusted after everyone while young; but, if you own  
A seventy foot ledge of heaven, you must maintain

The hope of eternal youth, of that male eternity  
Covered in fresh varnish; an eternity ravenous still

In the way hard cash is ravenous when it faces sexuality,  
The way a blob of gelato melts between us and the sea.





## Ten Ways Of Looking At A Theme

i.

When it was September, beginning of the new  
college year, when my torso was tanned from months  
of gardening, and every bit of her was tanned  
from sailing round Carbery's hundred isles;  
she liked to check my new work for imperfections  
by spreading the poems  
on my naked back: just checking the charts, she'd say  
between your white buttocks and sun-burned sea.

ii.

I just wanted to admit my indecision was final  
though hardly a matter of life and death  
more a kind of waiting in the ante-room  
of a railway inspector's office,  
not sure how to make a connection between Ulster  
and the South on a bone-dry day  
in mid July. All the trains were running  
late that day: that hiss and rumble  
of borders, in a way difficult to explain.

iii.

I wasn't sure whether it was  
The young patriot who preferred short lines  
Or the patriot who knew about half-rhyme  
who planted the bomb that killed a daughter  
of that part-time policewoman  
in Fermanagh, but I knew  
when the lock on the second cage  
was slammed shut  
that poems could never shift the darkness.

iv.

Daisy chains were an unsatisfactory engagement ring,  
But wild flowers were all I could afford  
At the time, and, anyway, you were never a woman  
To choose a jewel above the feelings  
Behind it. Even now, it is time's small fragments  
In the form of snatched conversations late at night  
That mean more to you  
Than any other kind of possession; as if, somehow,  
We keep what's shared and not what's hoarded.

v.

The light streamed through a high window,  
Full of dust as if it was very old  
Like the bed lodged in a corner between  
A tattered Caravaggio poster  
And seventy tiny multi-coloured chemist's bottles,  
Each bottle with a polished fragment of your soul  
Or the one soul we were making together,  
Unselfconsciously, the way a diamond is a stone.

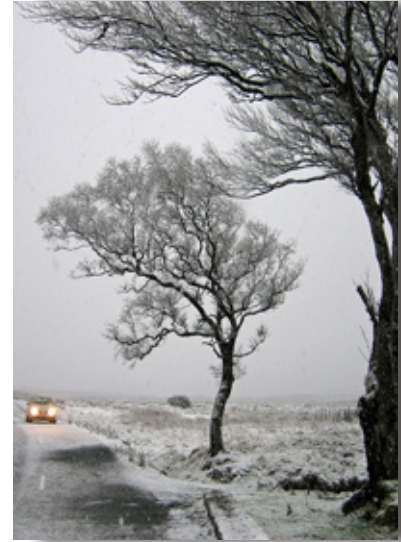
vi.

I knew that it was too much to ask  
of Jeffaries Commentary on The Collected Poems  
of W.B. Yeats but at that moment I did  
place as gingerly and quickly as possible  
the first edition on the blood-stained breast  
of a woman I'd seen thrown  
through the shattered plate glass  
of an Expressway bus: that one day  
when I was young and still learning.

*continued...*

© Thomas McCarthy





## Ten Ways Of Looking At A Theme *cont...*

vii.

And so, I was locked by mistake  
 Into a darkened tack-room after a heavy  
 Downpour during fruit-picking. So many spiders  
 Assembled around me, refugees  
 From the pestilence of water: they and I  
 Hardly noticed the smell of a rotting saddle,  
 The magic one for cures, with its blue  
 And natural hue of penicillin.

viii.

It was the plate-glass  
 That brought so much heat into our Starbucks  
 Across the road from the Waldorf  
 So that I had to move to where an elderly woman,  
 Pearly neck as rich as the South Seas,  
 Sat reading Lyndon Johnson's To Heal  
 And To Build, a book I hadn't seen  
 Since I left the Party in 1970, or was it '74?

ix.

The trains that rumble across borders still,  
 joy of arrivals, hiss of grief,  
 seem like the packed bars swaying on Saturday  
 night in any busy entrepot; the way poems  
 switch gauges while the night sways  
 and so much is left unsaid or so much lost  
 in a cacophony of nods: such tall yellow vases in the windows  
 of an Express, held steady by agents,

x.

Everyone's gone home on the Dungarvan train:  
 yet again, this way of looking inserts itself  
 into a corner illuminated by that shaft of light  
 from a cinema in the early Sixties  
 where I linger with the last projector beams  
 the way a fox sometimes lingers  
 before deciding whether it's trapped or set free  
 by a back-light that illuminates the hunter's face.

## An Attempt At Snow

Not knowing Canada, Cork city makes a little attempt at snow  
 In the way a child with an old scissors thinks it's Matisse.

Scraps of white paper fall everywhere and become mere stone.  
 A grey snow-laden cloud changes partners at the wrong

Moment and slides away with an adroit and travelled wind.  
 He has left a trail of confetti to mark the way he went, this

Canadian Matisse of winter, this giant of a land elsewhere  
 That leaves its mark even in the most unexpected part of Cork –

This book, for example, this book that I've carried across the sea,  
 With its inconsolable, impossible letters of Elizabeth Bowen,

So full of yearning for a man elsewhere it might all be snow.



**John Walsh** was born in Derry. His first poetry collection *Johnny tell Them* was published in October 2006 (Guildhall Press, Derry). In 2007 he received a Publication Award for his second collection *Love's Enterprise Zone* (Doire Press, Connemara). In 2010 Salmon Poetry published his third collection *Chopping Wood with T.S. Eliot*. His debut short story collection *Border Lines*, was published in April 2012. He is now co-director at Doire Press, which he founded with his American partner, Lisa Frank. More at [www.doirepress.com](http://www.doirepress.com)



## Máméan

Fair play to you.  
You knocked the anger out of yourself,  
scorched the earth within you, rolled your tongue  
around the curse of your existence.  
Look where you are now.  
Whipping your poor donkey up that steep mountain  
to get out of the wind and rain. You're a sorry sight  
to a world that doesn't give a damn. No pity  
for your plight, no interest in you whatsoever.  
Not a soul among us would change places with you.  
But fair play to yourself.

From the half-light, the passing souls torment you.  
To see how far they can push you. If you  
were left alone, you'd maybe hold out.  
But they have no hearts.  
The wind guts your candle.  
In the dark they break your patience,  
head off your swipes at their mockery.

I'll make my way up one of these days,  
to see if you are still there. These winds  
are too fretful for me. And that road.  
There's money to be got out of them this year  
for that devil of a road. After all their talk.  
How can you stand it, when  
not a being darkens your door?  
Fair play all the same.  
Fair play to you.

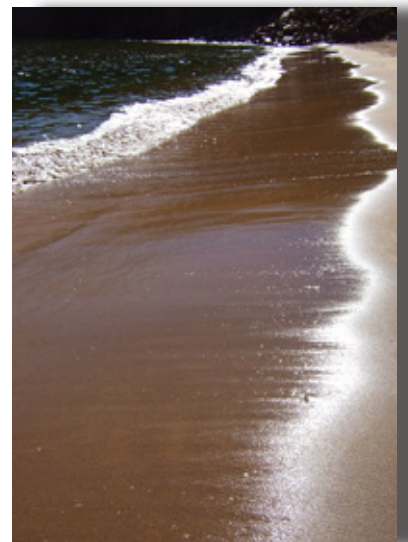
There was nothing but the leaden light  
weighing down the horizon,  
the stripped stacks of the mountains  
bowed in going nowhere. They saw  
some terror in their day. No two ways.

I warned them not to cry,  
but with your body and the life  
gone out of it, there wasn't a hope.

Where to? It makes no difference.  
To whatever is out there waiting to recall.

If in the end we are all there, I said,  
and you're not, what good  
will there be in it? What if  
none of us are there, I said?  
All the good will be taken out of it.  
But if there is no end, it will be all good.

The donkey waits by the darkened lake,  
hugs the lee of the mountain, hungry  
for a trickle of sun to brighten its path.





## Summer House

That man felled trees on the border of our holding.  
Within his rights, he left these crippled stumps.  
The sun they stole from him cuts into our hearts.

There is anger in the simmering of the season,  
bitter in the tangling of the roots.

When the time is right, we will move closer to the lake.  
Sometimes we swim across and back.  
You see that house? It stands alone.  
It cannot be reached by road.  
They ferry everything from the lower bank.

The wind unhinges the hanging blossoms,  
makes them scuttle across the lake.  
Today the water reads twelve degrees.

There is anger in the lapping at the edge,  
bitter in the scouring of the rock.

We will forge our own place again. In the evenings  
pike will stab the air, gasp at phantom flies,  
the voices of our children mirror off the lake.  
We will save the birch for one year before firing.

There is anger in the stillness of the land.

## Tranquility

Why has that dog stopped barking  
in the middle of the night,  
just when I was getting used to  
the sound of him?

It's not right.  
There should be a law against it.

I think he's blind. Never barks  
until I get a few steps past him,  
after he picks up my scent.

Right now he's freaking me out.  
All I can hear is the wind and it reminds me  
of this book I'm reading about the moon,  
where there is no such thing as wind,  
so in reality the flag could not have been blowing  
when Neil and Buzz staked it in the lunar dust.  
Which seems to prove to some people anyway,  
that they never went there in the first place.  
Thank you very much.

Wherever that dog has gone,  
he's costing me lost sleep.  
And that moon doesn't look  
like a face to me anymore.

I wonder what Neil sees when he looks up,  
being the first man and all, knowing more  
than the rest of us. But they say he's the type  
wouldn't tell you in a million light-years.  
Well, that's okay, I think.

I only wish that dog would bark.





## Sea Spinach

Wind from the east, the clouds curl at the ends.  
A local fisherman checks on his curragh,  
his green ex-post van stands out on the pier.  
Another new house going up, its skeleton  
roof gleams in the distance.

The sea spinach is thriving; after winter rains  
and early sun flourishes like weeds,  
a velvet coating thick on the leaves.

Gerry says to throw it in the pan with  
a pinch of butter and some nuts. A few  
minutes will bring out its tangy taste.

The brown foal sprawls on the coarse grass.  
Its mother, pestered by tenacious flies, is  
cautious at first, then tugs at the long stems.

## Spread-eagle

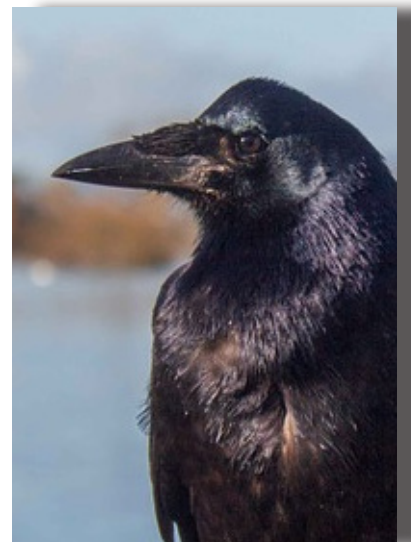
Way before the troubles ever started, my uncle  
Pete insisted you'd get a worse beating from  
a Free State Garda than from any RUC man.

When the army raided his house (the time  
they raided the whole street) my aunt Josie  
swore the officer had been a gentleman.

Yet every week  
the Derry Journal had more pictures  
of homes that had been ransacked.

Were people doing it to themselves,  
out of spite?

Maybe I was glad the night  
they pinned me spread-eagle up against the wall,  
kicked my legs apart, told me not to make any  
funny fuckin' moves or they'd blow my head off.



© John Walsh

**Patrick Cotter** was born in Cork in 1963 where he still lives. He spent periods living in Germany in the 1980s and in San Francisco during the naughties. He has published a verse novella and two full-length collections of poetry as well as a number of chapbooks. His poetry has been translated into fifteen languages with substantial selections in Croatian and Estonian and a full volume in Macedonian (*No One Knows*, Velstovo Poetry Nights Publications 2014). He received the Keats-Shelley Poetry Prize in 2013



## The Pebble Peddler

Last decade people scrummed  
to purchase my painted pebbles  
the acrylic-dipped, the gold-sprayed  
the dabbed-with-brushes-  
of-all-kinds-of-animal-hair

horse hair, dog hair, boar-snout hair  
the hair of pygmy shrew  
each imbuing the emotional  
disposition of its origin  
into the expression of the pebble

whatever the colour of the paint,  
or texture of the stone:  
lime, sand, bath or granite.  
Some I shaped into globes  
or ovoids, arrowheads or hearts.

The arrowheads were mostly failed  
hearts which split after no matter  
how much care or craft.  
The point is, they were once  
very popular at Christmas.

Though of no practical value  
they sold to those who wished  
to give them away, wrapped  
in seasonal foil or dropped  
in stockings. One woman told me

the arrowhead she bought  
was for placing under the bedsheets  
on her husband's side. A boy bought  
a heart coloured blue, dabbed  
with a brush made from a grey-haired

Rastafarian's discarded dreadlocks.  
He posted it with stamps showing  
Christmas angels with wings outspread  
to a girl whom he had never even kissed  
who lived on a sunny slope of the Tyrolean

alps - a blue which matched the lake there  
and her eyes and the hue of his heart  
since she had left for home.  
But all that was last decade  
before the crash, before malevolence

sorrowed everyone's pennies away,  
sunk the weightless desires of everyone  
you ever knew. My pebbles are not  
weightless and my old spine protests  
at their collective heft gathered

in my haversack which I haul  
to my favourite pitch on a street-corner  
where an old cinema and tearooms  
have been remodelled into a dying  
record store and fleeting fashion emporium.

The Art Deco embellishments I treasured  
from childhood are concealed  
behind plywood partitions and slogans  
of commerce. I sell without desperation  
since I need not do this for a living

and never charge more than shillings  
meant to my grandfather, but still  
people pass by with austere looks  
and only the occasional will stop  
look and touch, and fewer still

will buy with a mood, as if  
they are doing me a favour, as if  
I am a sad old man of little means  
with nothing to offer but coloured stones.  
They know nothing of the power

of my stones and I do not tell them.  
I do not hawk. I do not squawk  
out loud their qualities.  
I merely sit quietly on my stool  
of spalded birch and count

by the hour the dwindling custom  
in these days of little hope.



## Portrait of a Town in Economic Distress

Recall the derelict canning-plant where  
we embraced; its hint of stark sardinishness  
a half remembered scent too faint for the nose

more like an olfactory ghost haunting.  
I was distracted by the iron light-fitting  
without a bulb whining in the wind rushing

through the glassless window, the light-fitting's edges  
rusted to the same hue as your spare, wispy,  
dry-as-a-leaf pubes; my thoughts loose as I lay

beneath your proliferating orgasms;  
my ass the medium by which you kneaded  
the disturbed floor dust. I was detached as if

I was a mere witness to the unwilling act  
of the long braided rope of your hair prodding  
my chest with each coital swoop; the russet hair

which was the provocateur of anxiety  
in the dreams of all the boys of the town who  
could never speak to you as you strolled the streets

with an armadillo on a leash, your hair  
crowned with a tiara of writhing, starving  
iguanas: greenness being brought to market.

## Zombie Bees

The florists must conceal their glee  
at the mass tragedy: the cortege  
with its defile of carnation carriers  
like a flock of birds of paradise

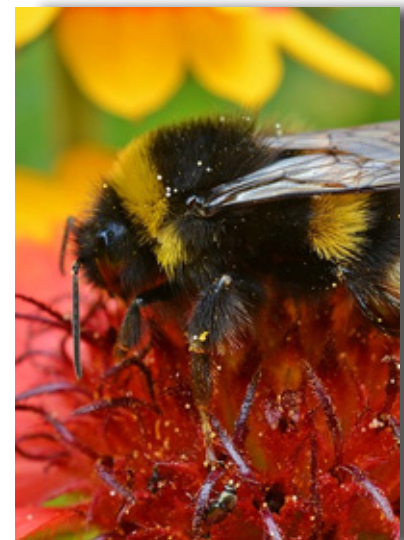
in-step, each on two snappy leather  
-surfaced feet, unwinding for miles  
through the city streets and the bouquets  
mounding in towering dunes of roses

and tulips before the railings  
of the National Monument;  
their colours spread in lambent  
reflections on the undersides of dark

-edged clouds. They overwhelm the air  
with the perfume of desiccated berries.  
So much nectar going wanting, the bees  
are rumbled in their November graves,

stirring in their black and yellow ruffs  
with frayed wings, where they have lain  
beneath leaf mould and the overturnings  
of earth-worms in their apiary of the dead.

Tired and worn, with all splendour spent  
they fly now like flakes of mindful soot  
towards the flowers of mourning.



**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.



## Tender Loving Care

The child meant for summer, they say, came early in April,  
light as a poppy, breaths that were barely breaths  
fluttered his day-lily lungs,  
speedwell-veined eyelids shut to a future  
of *TLC only* prescribed on his chart.

Rumours flew round the small town that the mother  
shed never a tear, but her breasts wept  
when his fingerbuds opened, boneless as blossoms.  
She read the plea in his palm, fixed  
a soft pillow for his head.

They say she came back once, after her sentence,  
begged the baker to water his Easter-dyed chicks.  
A pigeon fancier at a loft near the graveyard  
said someone the spit of her spat on a stone  
and scrubbed off the moss.

There's talk in town of pink-and-blue chicks sipping water  
from a hubcap in a window of broken glass,  
they say someone's seen an empty coop and a stranger,  
and a flock of opals swooping over a grave.  
Some say the devil exists; some say angels.

First published in Poetry Ireland Review, issue 118 April 2016 ed. Vona Groark

## Three Sisters

Whip-graft my floating rib to a spur of the quicken tree  
so my spirit endures as strong as the day I was born,  
for I must destroy the destroyers of Bella, Donna and me.

Bella was fifteen and skilled in the remedy  
for the man's complaint. For her healing hand she was burned  
but I spliced her wish-bone to a spur of the quicken tree.

Gossips said good sister Donna left wifing for witchery,  
damned her as Devil's whore when she bore the six-fingered bairn.  
I raked the pyre for her bones. Burners of Bella and Donna knew me

as mild. The youngest. A child. I smiled, hid my ferocity.  
Seducers, goodwives, magistrates came to strange harm  
while I tended my sisters on the stock of the quicken tree,

threaded rosaries of devil's cherry to garland each nursery.  
Shrank men's acorns to sloes. Stilled babes in the womb.  
Destroyers of Bella and Donna, you almost destroyed me,

but on Bonfire Eve a six-fingered boy set me free  
with tincture of nightshade and yew seed in wychbane tea.  
He grafted my floating rib to a spur of the quicken tree;  
now we three unite as destroyers: Bella, Donna and me.

First published in Authors and Artists Introductions Series 10 (Windows Publishing).





## The Stranger's House

The stranger's house under the beech  
is lousy with verdigris summers.  
The clotted path at the gable-end  
is alive with the fretting of bees,  
wasps in the orchard hollow pippins  
that cling to cankered limbs  
or rot in a tangle of nettle and dock.

Mist off the river fields shrouds  
grimmed-over windows.  
In the gloom behind one starred pane  
a mummified cat lies under the hearth,  
a hagstone is nailed to the lintel,  
a votive over the mantel  
is snuffed by the quickening dark.

The chill in the muttering air  
clings to leery wallpaper roses,  
corpse-pennies blacken in cleaves  
and still under the eaves is the sound  
of a greenstick child, breathing  
the silence that hardened  
her bones to a stranger's.

First published in Deep Water Literary Journal 2016 Issue 2

## To Paul, a Refutation

(Re: 1 Corinthians 7:9. *It is better to marry than to burn*)

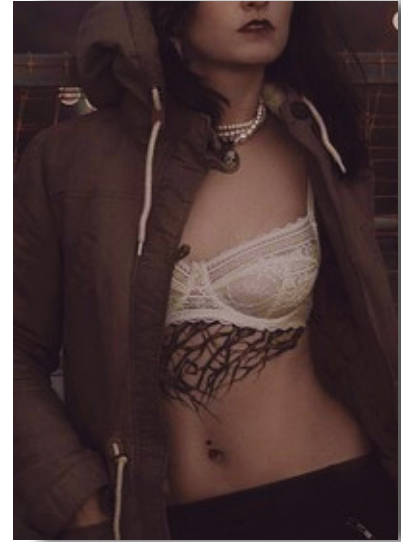
When I have buried my husband, said the wife,  
and wept to the moon,  
I'll take the brush with the dented back  
and unravel the knots in my hair,  
splash my face and hands with water,  
walk out in high heels.

I'll direct the police to the *Museo de Brujas*  
where I'll give them a guided tour,  
show how the spikes inside the Iron Maiden  
compare with my old wounds,  
invite them to test the thumbscrews  
on my unsocketed bones.

Wearing careful grey cashmere and high collar,  
I'll steady my nerve with red wine  
and wait among the instruments of torture,  
evidence of what women make men do.  
I'll write what was dictated:  
*it is better to marry?*

They'll arrive with shrieking sirens,  
smell the petrol and roasting smoke.  
By then I'll be ash, floating.  
In ten years' time or a thousand,  
they'll know ash knows no locks or borders;  
it is better to burn.

First Published *In a Hare's Eye*, Breda Wall Ryan. Doire Press 2015



## Dreamless

A million crawling things run spiderwise  
inside her skin, her skeleton is glass,  
she needs another hit, and fast,

her skin is needle-tracked, she works  
the street for heroin to stop the spiderlings,  
she does a punter in a dash against a fence

and scores a thirty-second rush,  
glass splinters in her veins fuse  
into a waterfall of raindrops,

magic light spills from her fingertips,  
she's blissed out, dreaming weightless while  
the good brown horse outruns her dream,

she's goofing now, slumped outside a church,  
between her knees a paper cup she holds out  
like a sacred heart to passers-by,

small change spills through her fingertips  
but not enough, another stranger in a car  
earns her more dreams, she sucks her tongue

for spit to swallow fear, swears  
on the Sacred Heart that she'll get clean,  
then mugs the punter with a syringe,

again the spiderlings criss-cross her skin  
and crawl inside her arm-tracks,  
two blow-jobs on her knees to get a high,

she cooks the gear, a bag of china white,  
loads up a syringe, smacks a vein, ties off  
and hits; her hopes are answered with amen,

the dragon's knocked brown sugar girl  
off her horse, the fall has sucked out  
all her breath, her eyes are pinned,

she feels no crawly things, she has no skin,  
her bones are glass, her heartbeats trickle  
from her fingertips like raindrops when

the rain's about to stop...



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.



## That Love

Time goes by  
day after day  
different the colors  
of the new dawns and  
the sunsets  
changes the scent  
of the seasons that  
slowly follow each other  
with monotony  
while like a candle  
your life is burning out

Lost at night  
in the memories  
of your youth age  
still you feel the call  
of that Love  
since long in your breast  
you keep tight  
and in the silence  
of your barely lighted room  
clear flow in your mind  
images of a life  
never lived

Besets you melancholy  
while timidly tears  
stream down your face

## From Present To Eternity

Crystal glasses on the tables  
and bundles of roses  
guests, elegantly dressed  
chat smiling  
while from a grand piano  
softly comes the sound  
of romantic melodies

You there  
silent sitting  
your eyes  
once of a light blue  
now like the twilight colors  
of an autumn eve  
staring in the void  
absent

Your lonely soul  
crosses space and time  
from present to eternity  
dreaming the winds  
take you up to her  
the clouds open a way through  
birds point the way  
up to the gates of heaven  
And you can  
once again  
lay your lips on hers  
and softly touch  
her ethereal face  
still so much loved.



## Words

Words like butterflies  
 I see freely fly  
 proud of their thousand meanings  
 aware they seem to be  
 of their might  
 I'd grab them now  
 my thought my intimate emotions  
 carefully to enclose in verses  
 but spiteful they escape  
 like air in the hand  
 quickly they go  
 sand through hourglasses  
 Patiently I'll wait for them  
 maybe later tonight  
 they'll no longer have the wil  
 l from bloom to bloom go  
 In the silence  
 of my room  
 the light on  
 open the window  
 I'll invite them and  
 with a deep insight  
 slight a breath of inspiration  
 I'll pen some lines  
 It's in the deafening quiet  
 of the late hours  
 that usually they overlap  
 each of them aspiring  
 to be protagonist  
 But turned off the light  
 the window closed  
 a few stay on my page caged  
 the others are there outside  
 gleaming stars dust  
 to fill the night air  
 of secret messages  
 of things unsaid.

## Again

It was about noon  
 and we were sitting  
 in the shadow  
 of the willow tree  
 on the left side  
 of the house

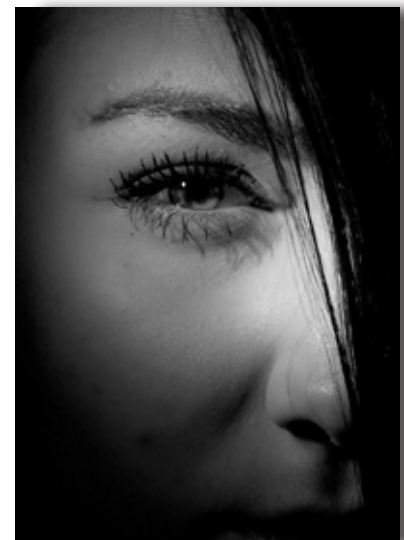
The heat made us talk  
 of the weather  
 and he asked me  
 of the colors of the leaves  
 of the morning light  
 in that season of the year  
 of the sea waves  
 we could faintly hear

And the sun  
 what about the sun  
 he asked

Fuzzy and blurry his memories  
 for the long time gone by

I patiently offered him  
 details and descriptions  
 of the objects and things  
 that one after the other  
 he mentioned  
 veiled his voice  
 by a quiet nostalgia

I don't fear death  
 he said unexpectedly  
 when I am dead  
 I'll get back to see  
 again





**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 number of his haiku are to be included in the forthcoming anthology of Irish haiku. His longer poems are looking for a home.

Photograph of Anton by Carole Anne Floyd



## waiting for the barbarians

*Translated from the Greek of C P Cavafy*

what are we gathered here in the forum expecting to happen?

it's the barbarians they'll be here today

why such idleness inside the senate?

why do the senators just sit and not legislate?

it's because of the barbarians they'll be here today

what laws need the senators enact now

when the barbarians come they'll do the lawmaking?

why did our emperor rise so early this morning

to sit in state at the city's most imposing gates

on his throne wearing his crown?

because the barbarians will be here today

and the emperor is waiting to admit their leader

indeed he is provided to present him with a parchment

on which he has inscribed many titles and names

why have our two consuls and magistrates turned up today  
in their purples their embroidered togas?

why have they donned bracelets with so many amethysts

and rings of luminous and gleaming emeralds?

why today do they clutch precious batons

superbly embossed with silver and gold?

because the barbarians will be here today  
and such things distract the barbarians

and why don't our eminent speakers come forward as they always do  
to state their opinions to speak up for themselves?

because the barbarians will be here today  
and these types have no time for eloquence and public speaking

why all at once this unease and the confusion?

(how the faces have become so serious)

why are the streets and the squares emptying quickly

and all are repairing to their houses deep in thought?

because it is nightfall and the barbarians haven't come

and some have arrived from the frontier

and have said how the barbarians no longer exist

and now what shall become of us without barbarians?

these people were a kind of solution

## the gods abandon anthony

*Translated from the Greek of C P Cavafy*

when suddenly you hear them  
a passing band of midnight revellers  
a ghostly stream in exquisite voice  
don't rue your failing luck  
with your work not coming off  
and the plans of your life all false  
don't rue your losses now  
there's no point in doing that

as someone long since at the ready  
brave too and blessed with it  
say farewell to her now  
the alexandria that's leaving  
most of all don't fool yourself saying  
how it was a dream  
how your hearing tricked you  
don't stoop to these empty ploys

as someone long since at the ready  
brave too and blessed with it  
it is fitting that you worthy of such a city  
square up to the window  
and listen with your heart but not  
with a coward's govening complaints  
take as your very last pleasure their sounds  
the exquisite playing of that secret troop  
and bid farewell to her the alexandria you're losing

## an old man

*after C P Cavafy*

behind a tent of newsprint  
huddled at the corner table  
close to the traffic of coffee cups  
and politics an old man sits alone

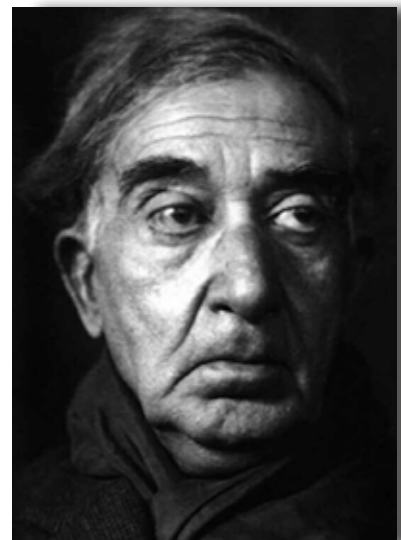
his eyes see winter in his hands  
they despise the blue ridges  
of his raised veins  
such is the cold dry misery of age

it wasn't so long ago  
when he in his strength  
could argue with the best  
when his looks turned heads

but his reasoning then  
had played him false  
time too - so full of its promises  
so well-practiced at betrayal

his young face comes into his mind  
mouthing words from a satirical poem  
mocking him his prudence  
all those days and nights of denial

and so  
wearied by these rehearsals of his past  
he drains into a sleep – perhaps his last



© Anton Floyd



**ithaca after c p cavafy**  
*for Panos and Haris Hartiotis*

just before setting out for ithaca  
look to make it a long voyage  
eventful and useful too

the laestrygonians and the cyclops  
angry poseidon - there's no call  
to fear them or their likes  
as long as you aim high  
and as long as you're ready  
to be moved body and soul

you'll not come across  
the laestrygonians and the cyclops  
the angry poseidon  
unless you carry them inside you  
or summon them up before you

and hope for a long way round  
and for lots of those summer mornings  
imagine the pleasure and the joy  
each time you sail into a new harbour  
to sample those phoenician emporiums  
to buy up fine goods  
mother of pearl and coral  
amber and ebony  
potent perfumes of every kind  
perfumes enough to please your senses  
then move on to different egyptian cities  
to take in all the learning they have to offer

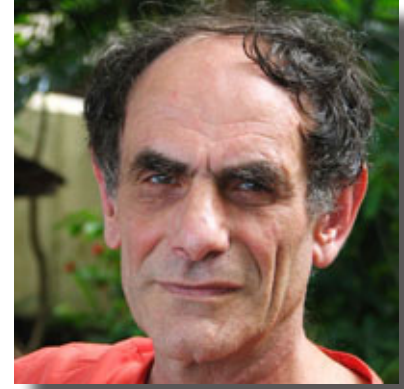
all the while have ithaca in mind knowing  
that getting back is always on the cards  
but take care not to rush the journey  
better to take your time over it  
to be old when you get back to the island  
rich with all you've gleaned on the road  
and don't expect ithaca to give you wealth

for ithaca gave you the great voyage  
without her you wouldn't have taken to the road  
she has nothing else to offer you now

and if you find her poor ithaca hasn't cheated you  
as you have become so wise with your experience  
you will have realised by now what these ithacas mean



**Robin Marchesi** was born in Hampshire England. He was educated at Oxford and London Universities. He has lived 'on his wits' throughout the world and has several published works including *Kyoto Garden*, *A B C Quest* and *A Small Journal of Heroin Addiction*. His latest book "Poet of the Building Site" about his time with the Sculptor Barry Flanagan (1941 – 2009) is published by Charta Press in association with the Irish Museum of Modern Art. At the moment he is living in London completing his latest work entitled: "Prospero's Cell."

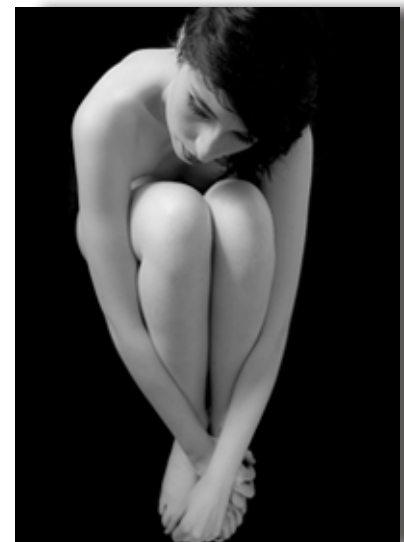


## Velvet Underground

The paper rocks  
 A story done  
 Metallic hearts  
 A retreating song...  
 Repeat these patterns  
 Of what's installed  
 It's not the digit  
 I recall...  
 The blessed are frozen  
 In a heinous throng  
 While the righteous woven  
 In a truth that's gone.  
 We laid misfortune  
 She was quite a screw  
 But it's not important  
 To the chosen few...  
 Yes, emotion shattered,  
 Broken and dusty it lies  
 On an internal ocean  
 Reaching out for the skies.  
 Degrade it with flowers  
 That scent to the sun  
 Waste endless hours  
 Alone on the run...  
 I didn't invent this game  
 That you play  
 Nor create any lies  
 Along the way  
 It's vicious – It's terror,  
 That trial and error,  
 Haunting the sound  
 Of your velvet underground

## East 55<sup>th</sup> Street

You tempted me  
 With false pretence;  
 Your fallen features  
 Devoid of sense...  
 Blood on blood  
 Face to face  
 Bud on bud  
 This heart has pace...  
 Do we own,  
 The breath we breathe  
 When it's unknown  
 This life we lead?  
 A maze exhorts,  
 This city fire  
 I drew its picture  
 Burnt desire...  
 Old negatives,  
 Of time and space;  
 We spread them all  
 Our paths to trace...  
 The maps that lie  
 Decades replace  
 Dimensions caught  
 Perceptions shape...  
 You tempted me,  
 It was too late,  
 Your 'War – Hole' world,  
 Designed by Fate...  
 It's on the floor  
 That crystal state,  
 Not written in stars,  
 Your knurled fingers  
 Create...



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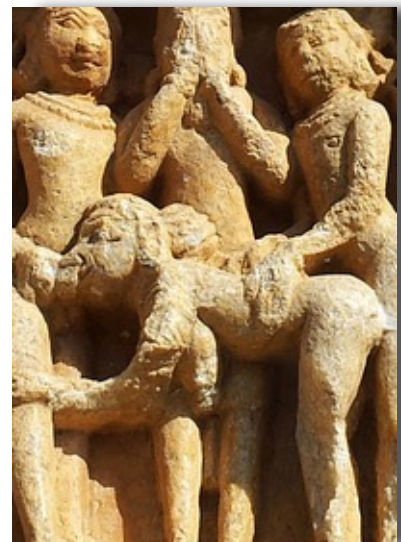


## Westminster Bridge

This old, ancient city,  
 Seen as Wordsworth saw,  
 From Westminster Bridge,  
 Centuries ago.  
 Even the electric blue skyscrapers,  
 Cannot erase this ancestry,  
 Beneath the waters we walk over,  
 A London of legend...  
 In your presence, on this promenade,  
 The weight of my life long moment,  
 Its' battles, torments, loves & ecstasies,  
 Are lifted, lightened,  
 As I search,  
 The darkness of your eyes,  
 Igniting passions,  
 I thought, forever departed,  
 And now;  
 Newly discovered, in the weight,  
 Of your arm in mine...  
 We all, inevitably, flow, as this Thames,  
 To the tide of an ocean,  
 And the here and now,  
 Of this bridge we cross together,  
 Already moves to memory,  
 Even as it shines inside,  
 On this mutual journey we share,  
 Floating, as one, united, bonded,  
 No sense of what comes after,  
 The passing, of our eternal laughter...

## Love

A man leaves a residue in a woman  
 What is this residue?  
 Does, in its microscopic materialization,  
 The left over semen make a permanent mark?  
 Do I, as a man,  
 Wish to leave traces within you,  
 A form of forever that nestles in the womb?  
 Or is there another way  
 In which man may give  
 Substance to her, who has stirred his loins  
 Can I be stronger than I've ever been?  
 Will I be able to give love without demands?  
 I wonder why I need to disown a feeling  
 To beautiful to own  
 Must it go?  
 Depart  
 Tiny traces,  
 No more than residue  
 In an unseen, personal, world?



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**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. After her release in 1990, Nasrin resumed her activities and once again she found herself being followed by Islamic guards. She realised she could no longer stay in Iran and she fled here to England, where she claimed asylum in 1993. Nasrin's prison memoir was published in Farsi in 2002. A summary of her memoir was published in Feminist Review (number 73) in 2003; and it was published in Italian in 2006 by Effedue Edizioni. Nasrin's stories appeared in Exiled Writers Ink, and two of her poems were published in Over Land, Over Sea, Poems for those seeking refuge, published by Five Leaves, in 2015. <http://nparvaz.wix.com/nasrinparvaz>



## Aylan, little dead boy in the water

Your red shirt,  
challenges the blue sky  
but doesn't tint the water  
it is as if your blood was not red  
and you never mattered  
more than seaweed drifting in the water.

Your picture, posted everywhere  
breaks our hearts, though  
we know they use it  
to spread fear among us.

Your picture warns us  
to die quietly at home  
or in the refugee camps  
not to risk a different death.  
Yet we must flee  
the bombs are getting close.

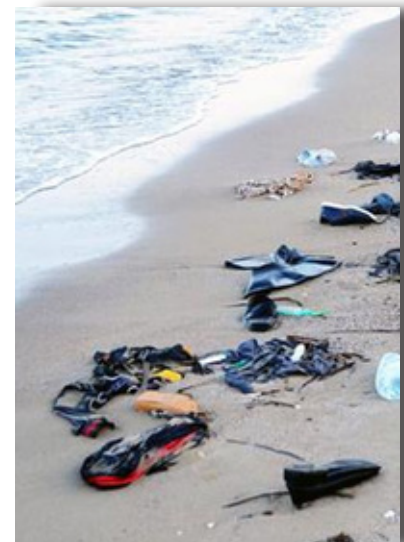
To die here or to die there, or where?  
Oh dear Aylan, one little dead boy in the world's crushing water.

## Shooting the boat

Moving through the blackness of the night  
to the Greek Isle of Leros,  
listening to the oars kissing the water  
I finally see starry lights from the shore  
and I feel joy as we head towards safety.

Out of the sea, gunshots kick the boat  
A man shouts: 'The fucking bastards have shot at us.  
We're sinking fast.'

A woman near me screams:  
Help me save my children!  
I scoop my own little daughter  
along with one of hers  
but there are more babies than arms.





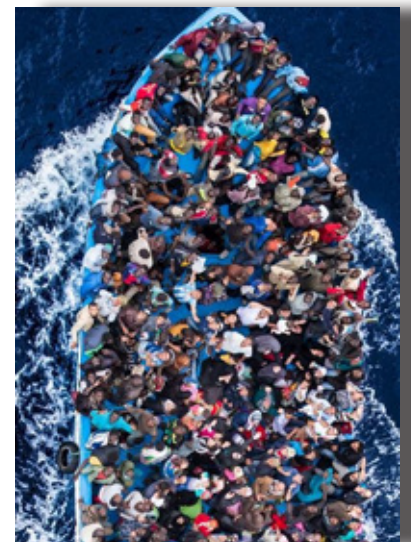
## Adam and Eve

The whole earth is a drop of water  
holding you and the boat  
you see nothing except the mist  
time stand still  
you don't even realise the boat has been hit  
only the others disappear  
like drops of rain in the desert  
your life ends there  
before your eyes.

Yet somehow you reach a new world  
naked like Adam and Eve  
bringing only your memories.

## Dots at sea

We were listening to the waves' stories  
when a page rose above the horizon  
a boat full of little coloured dots  
our hearts quickened  
suddenly the boat disappeared  
the little dots scattered  
we shouted with horror  
for the dots to swim  
pleading to get themselves to shore  
we heard their desperate cries  
our tears swam in the sea  
as the dots disappeared  
into the massive dark blue water  
like shooting stars dissolving in the dawn.



© Nasrin Parvaz

These two poems, *Newcomer* and *A Song for Peace* are part of three short plays I've been asked to write for young people. Young people like rhythm, chorus work, strong message and beat when performing so I'm attempting to satisfy their 'likes' when and where possible.

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



## Newcomer

Teach me, newcomer, teach me.  
 Teach me how not to smirk  
 and be smug  
 when I see you struggle

and teach me

to turn my smile to your aid  
 when words fail you  
 and your teeth chatter  
 like hard hail on the doorstep

and teach me

to understand the small song  
 you sang for us  
 while we rattled out  
 a weary Christmas hymn

and teach me

to set out for school  
 as a child  
 and to return as a teenager  
 ready to speak up  
 in songs of defiance.

Teach me.

Let me learn  
 the true language  
 of the lark  
 and the white dove –  
 let me learn from you.

## A Song for Peace

In a village on a long slope  
 by the river  
 we lived together.

We lived in peace  
 we did  
 we lived in peace.

We were children  
 in the village  
 by the river  
 when trouble broke out.

We lived in peace  
 by the river  
 till then  
 till greed was rife.

And then voices  
 in the village  
 by the river  
 grew louder by the hour  
 grew louder by the day.

Burn down the shed  
 kill off their cattle  
 get rid of the pest  
 get him and the rest.

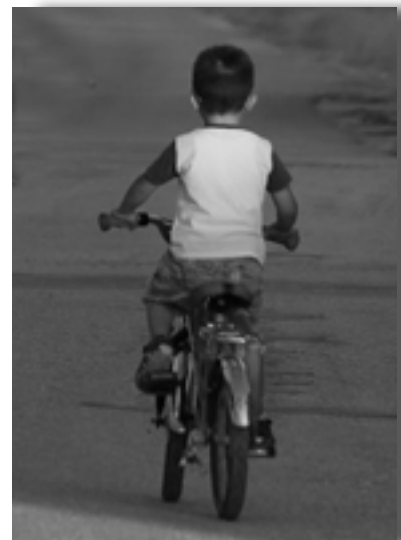
We lived in peace  
 in the village  
 by the river  
 till then  
 till hate broke out.

They rattled and battled  
 with flails and sticks.  
 They stomped in swathes  
 swinging pitchfork and picks.

The Wise One came  
 from over the hills  
 to call on people  
 to listen to flowers  
 to music in peace.

We're at peace again  
 in the village  
 by the river.

Our meadows are alive.





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)



## The Day The Eagle Died

*A Tawny Eagle, electrocuted*

My friend, I have seen you sit  
 Upon a eucalyptus perch  
 Above the trails of winter mist  
 Cut loose and floating in the wind;  
 The first sun always caught  
 Your tawny coat and made it shine,  
 Sparks bursting when your wings  
 Spread out and flew,  
 Shafting the crow's egg blue  
 Of the morning sky.

I have watched you hold  
 And use the wind, curving along  
 The tunnels of the higher air,  
 A harmony of flowing form,  
 Balancing the power of speed and flight;  
 You – master, you – the pinion god,  
 You – spirit of order, justice, truth.

Now, bent upon the street,  
 Wings stiff, claws crumpled,  
 Eyes moving restlessly in sockets;  
 I stand towering above you,  
 Suddenly powerful, in command,  
 Ashamed, confused;  
 You look up at me, past me,  
 Past the crowd of eager eyes  
 Feasting on a tragedy,  
 Waiting for you to die.

I wrap a cloth around my hands,  
 Fearing your claws and beak,  
 Then place you in a patch of sun  
 Where you can pass in peace.

## Requiem

*Lines for the forests of Ranthambhore*

The wind bounds from crag to crag,  
 Slips down into ravines,  
 Whips shrubs standing sentinel along streams  
 Till they shiver deep to the tips of white roots,  
 And the bell of a sambar wanders the evening  
 Like a mouthless word.

Stillness falls,  
 A flock of egrets rise, trailing a thread  
 Of water, Lake Padam ripples;  
 Their eerie squawks  
 Sail overhead into the night.

Darkness now, a comet breaks across the sky,  
 Stars stone-dead a million years ago  
 Clutch mirrors in frozen hands  
 Arch in clusters over leaf-licked hills.

How many forests have vanished into stone ?  
 How many stones have vanished into sand?  
 How many grains of sand have slipped  
 Down the gullets of streams?  
 How many streams have breathed in mist?



## They Brought Him From The Sea

A sponge, they brought him from the sea,  
The last victim of a capsized craft,  
Gently they laid him down upon the floor  
For fear the sea would gush out in a flood  
Of salt, weed, worms, guts;  
Sun flaked, lampreyed, tight-skinned, he lay,  
His arteries clogged with mud, a rock-heart still,  
Estuaries of blood silted with silence.

Outside the bamboo mud-walls and the thatch –  
Three hundred dried fish hung on wooden racks,  
A harpooned stingray still beneath a sail,  
Baskets of kicking king prawns and dead crabs,  
Night heron cries, twelve anchored fish-boats  
Huddling into pairs;  
Along the beach, lanterns breathed, then choked.

## To A Child In Karahal

*A region in central India, known for its settlements of the Saheriya tribe*

Ghostly trees, grotesque limbs, leafless,  
Stream bones strewn, crumbling with heat,  
Eyeless quarry sockets pit the land,  
Green water holes sunken into themselves.

Wrapped in your father's arms, toil smelling,  
The future scarred upon his palms,  
Voice subdued by sun, wind and other men,  
What can he promise you but death and waiting?

And you child, made slowly in a womb  
That gave you nothing but pale blood  
And dying forest juices, hopeless dreams,  
What can you give back to this sapless earth?

A bundle of bones? Ashes?  
A thumb impression on a futile sheet?  
A sweaty footprint on the unforgiving soil?  
Or another heart gifted from your womb?





**Eileen Casey** is based in South Dublin. Her poetry, fiction and prose is widely published in literary anthologies, journals and magazines. Dedalus Press, Faber and Faber, New Island, Jelly Bucket (Eastern Kentucky University) are among inclusions. As publisher and editor, recent collections include: *Circle & Square* (2015) and *Reading the Lines* (2016), a joint venture with *Live Encounters*. She received an Individual Artist's Bursary from South Dublin County Council in 2016.

*Brought to Surface* is a new poem.

*Spit and Clay* was part of a manuscript that won the Green Book Award. *From the Royal School* appeared in *The Ulster Tatler Literary Miscellany*, edited by Glenn Patterson



## Brought to Surface

A Turkish bath tile, milk scalded, Champagne bottle  
fragments from the great staircase and in 1985,  
news of Titanic's bow and stern over 2,000 feet apart  
across the ocean bed, as far perhaps as fabled Atlantis.

The stern was where musicians slept,  
scores still playing in their heads. Show tunes,  
hymns for more sombre moments;

the drowning of a ship  
keeping their fingers dredging until the end  
Sunday songs of hope and joy,  
carried to the lifeboats by survivors.  
This much we know.

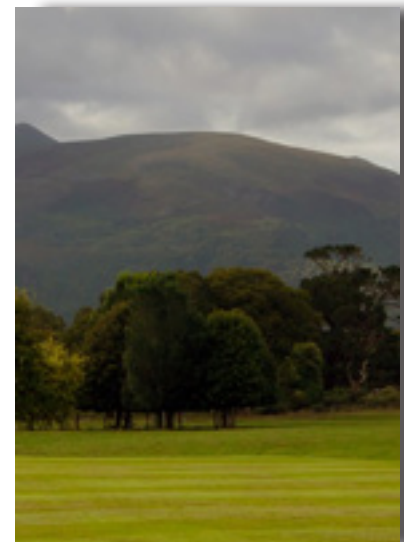
When the hull was raised, a creaking carcass  
skinned to bone, swung over the sea  
sieving out ghosts of ragtime medleys,  
together with pale fish, brood pouches  
filled to burst, flitting across a ballroom floor;

diving between rhapsodies, a painted fan playing  
over the bow of a woman's tremulous smile  
before she lifts her satin hem. Sails out to dance.

Also brought to surface, staccatos fisted  
in the hold, on an iron door  
no amount of force could open -  
when pushed against the waves.

## From Spit and Clay

In times of drought, plants drop their leaves  
Conserving water, even the honeysuckle –  
Such bell shaped beauty – is willing as a novice  
Shaves her hair to the bone, to shed all vanity.  
Deciduous leaves, the generous scattering of petals,  
Give rest and shelter to the soil  
As a wattle made from earth and water  
Acts as preservation.  
Shoulder to wheel, nose to grindstone,  
The swallow too follows nature's deciduous ways  
Builds its nest from spit and clay.



## From the Royal School

It's now a week since I saw the boy King Tutankhamun  
put on show in Dublin. Taken from his resting place

inside three coffins – which in turn were housed in four containers  
leafed in golden hieroglyphics.

Replicas all, as if the past might be constructed  
from old photographs and settled under glass.

Left in total darkness.

Absolute stillness.

Until layers unpeel beyond a golden mask.

Under that again, wrapped in linen shrouds  
eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

Here in Armagh, I'm bound to be reminded  
and by the smallest thing no less, a clump of petals,  
withering on the path outside this door  
fallen out of bouquet or hanging basket –  
like a yellow chick from its nest –  
who cares or who can tell?

Yet bringing me love notes all the same,  
strewn by a child bride before the lid was closed.

In the Royal School, that first night's sleep tears  
on the briars of finding peace in a strange place.  
Still ... I wake to Harold's Cross, hear traffic  
rumbling by. Headed towards the city  
of my eighteenth year.

A narrow, single bed takes me to the present tense,  
reaching for ghost warmth; my husband's sleeping back.  
This small window tells me how little or indeed, how much  
I piece together that makes sense.  
A town is a town, is a town is a town.  
I can pull my blind up or roll it down.

From these remnants I sew. Curving pathways  
flanked by green. A wild bird, mysterious Ibis?  
Or just a solitary crow pecking for an early worm  
as my pen pecks at blank pages.  
That bird is usurped at evening by pigeons -  
roosting in McGarry's shed in the Midlands  
where I come from - forcing out such guttural sounds.

Across tracks of green and time, houses lean together,  
gossiping in mime. Beyond those houses,  
a rush of angles, streets shielding each other  
from full view and scarce a glimpse of moon.

Muscles in my thighs feel the steep rise to Market Square.  
Armagh Cathedral. Bearings taken from the launderette  
at its gates boasting 'squeaky clean,' while collapsing.  
Into ruin.

My window sill is wide enough to sit upon.  
If Lancelot comes I will gladly gaze upon his trace.  
For I've not seen one living soul pass beneath these panes,  
only swallows gorging on the wing  
for flying south.

The Royal School seals me in. Swaddles of stairwells.  
Each one leads to another story. Across the mall are names  
inscribed in stone, names I knew the childhood taste of;  
Smith, Durcan, Talbot, Delaney, Walsh, Daly, Boyce, Wilson,  
McNally, McCarthy and O'Neill.

These voices silenced now, this monument a meeting place.  
Young men and women stake their claims to life and love,  
while children play on the canon as if it were an iron horse  
riding out at noon or grazing, staying put.

It's that time of year too. End of summer bricking itself up,  
dresses in the shops touched by strangers are marked down,  
soon-to-be covered in polythene. Put in storage.

I half expect to see my mother in Armagh. These streets  
Appear to be the same as home.  
A town is a town is a town is a town.  
Or, a neighbour long since dead,

Sarah Purcell. Her blue black hair, the one luminous thing  
glinting under sunlight. A woman whose sleeves rolled  
to the elbow. Who kept her legs, arms and head bare.  
Breathing every bit of air.

Her house was the last one on our road to be connected,  
electricity flooding into places used to flickering shadows.  
Unsettling her for days. Breaking up her words in strangest ways.





# Live encounters

POETRY

Celebrating six years 2010 - 2015  
Free online magazine from village earth  
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Photograph by Mark Ulyseas