

Live encounters

POETRY

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Free online magazine from village earth
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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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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



A Land Elsewhere

Thomas McCarthy

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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



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.



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



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



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



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.

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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.

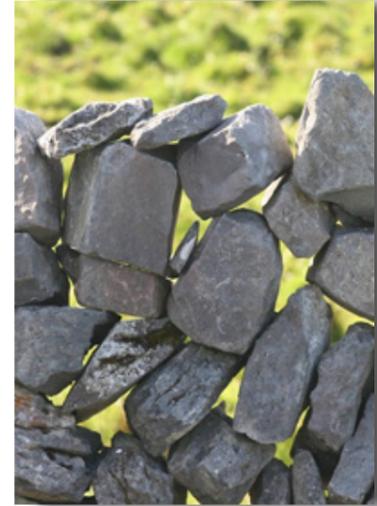
Female stragglers, in one single fountain of Italian
Breasts, play dangerously in the late waves. Connoisseurs

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



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.

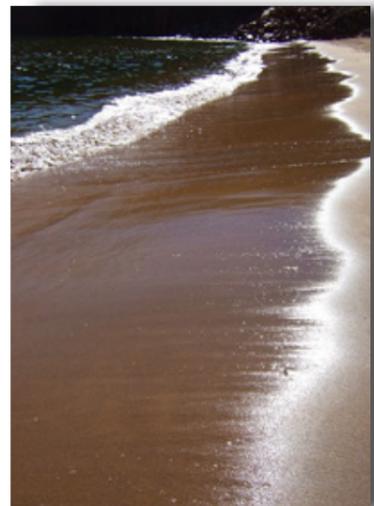
There was nothing but the leaden light
 weighing down the horizon,
 the stripped stacks of the mountains
 bowed in going nowhere. They saw
 some terror in their day. No two ways.

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.



© John Walsh

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

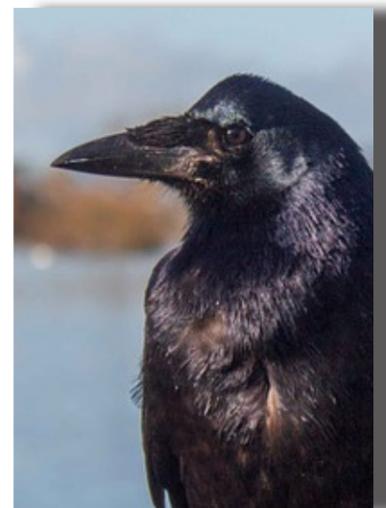
Way before the troubles ever started, my uncle
Pete insisted you'd get a worse beating from
a Free State Garda than from any RUC man.

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.



© Patrick Cotter

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
grimed-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

© Breda Wall Ryan



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 will
 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 gowelling 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

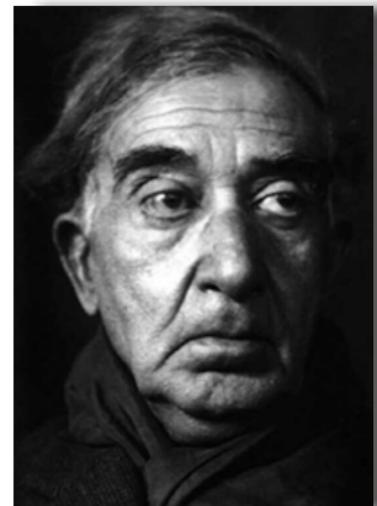
his eyes see winter in his hands
they despise the blue ridges
of his raised veins
such is the cold dry misery of age

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

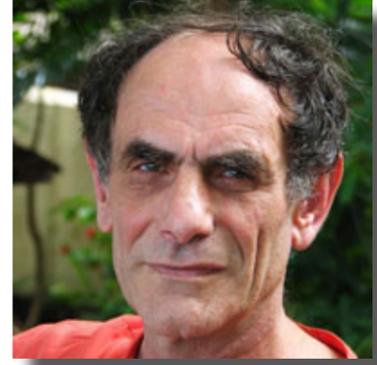
all the while have ithaca in mind knowing
 that getting back is always on the cards
 but take care not to rush the journey
 better to take your time over it
 to be old when you get back to the island
 rich with all you've gleaned on the road
 and don't expect ithaca to give you wealth

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."

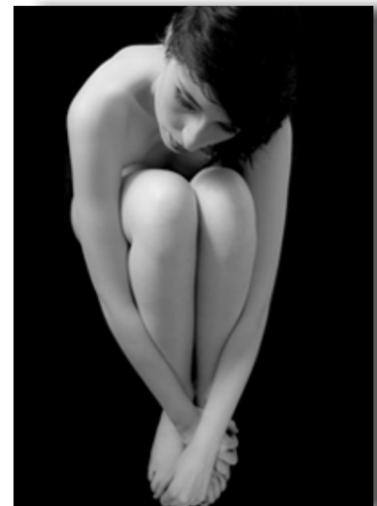


Velvet Underground

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 55th 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...



© Robin Marchesi

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?



© Robin Marchesi

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.



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



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
 Watch Randhir's poetry performance at 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.

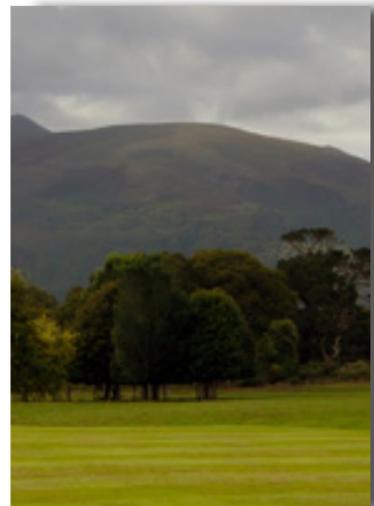
When the hull was raised, a creaking carcass
skinned to bone, swung over the sea
sieving out ghosts of ragtime medleys,
together with pale fish, brood pouches
filled to burst, flitting across a ballroom floor;

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.

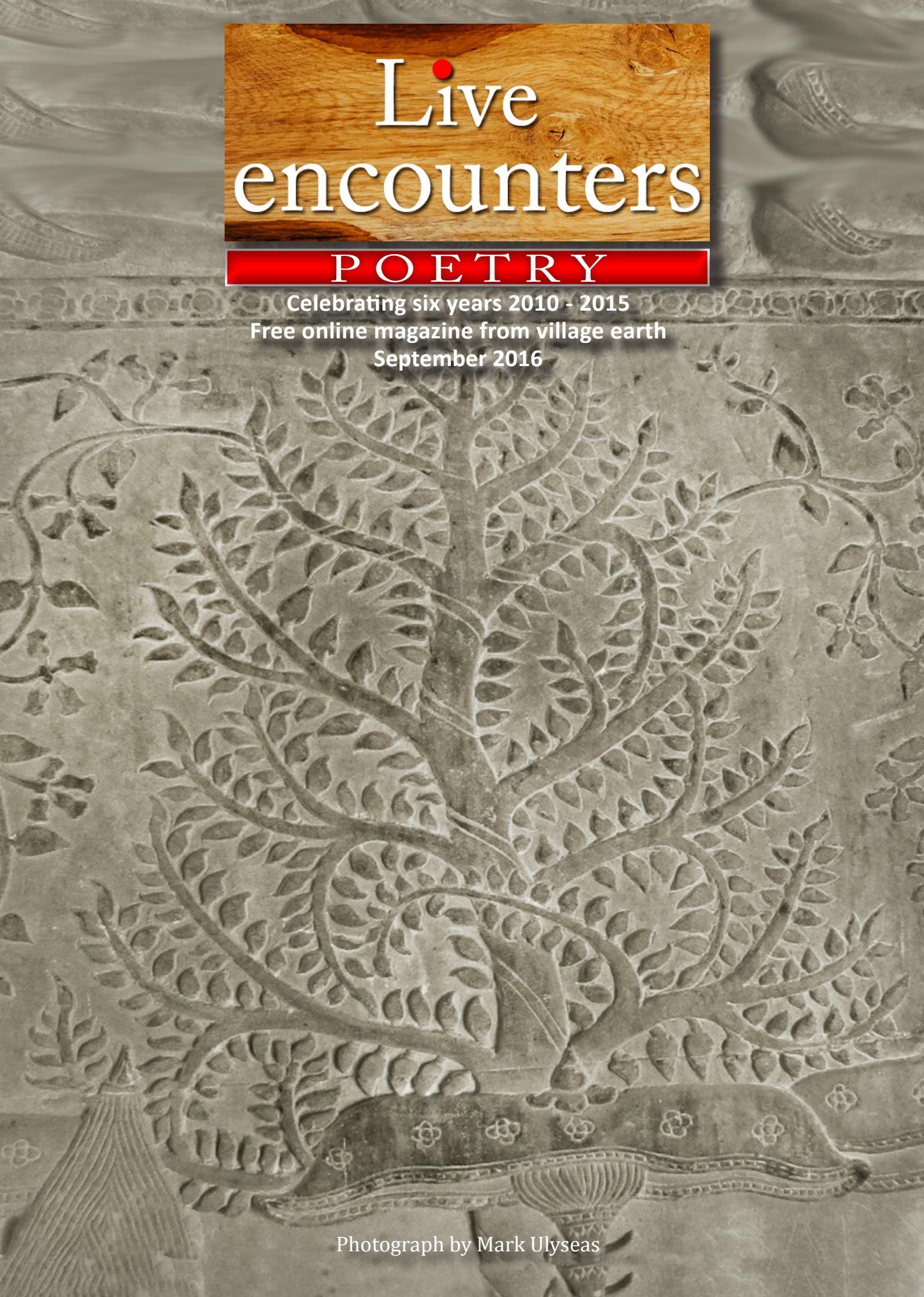
These voices silenced now, this monument a meeting place.
Young men and women stake their claims to life and love,
while children play on the canon as if it were an iron horse
riding out at noon or grazing, staying put.

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
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