

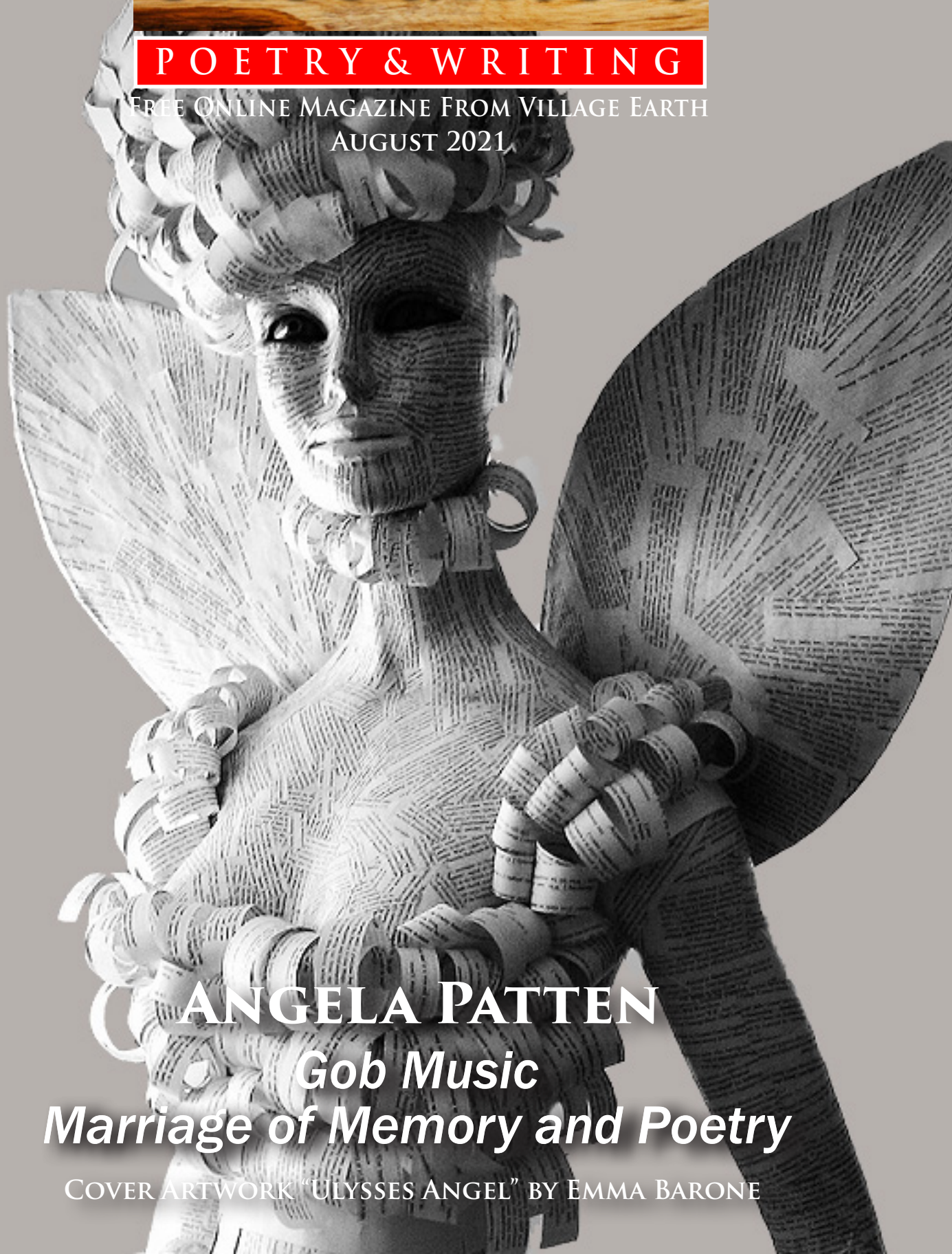
2010 - 2020



# Live encounters

POETRY & WRITING

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH  
AUGUST 2021



ANGELA PATTEN  
*Gob Music*  
*Marriage of Memory and Poetry*

COVER ARTWORK "ULYSSES ANGEL" BY EMMA BARONE





Water lily, photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



### SUPPORT LIVE ENCOUNTERS. DONATE NOW AND KEEP THE MAGAZINE LIVE IN 2021

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. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of:

*Live Encounters Magazine* (2010), *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* (2016), *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* (2019) and now, *Live Encounters Books* (August 2020).

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. **Please help by donating any amount for this just cause as events are threatening the very future of Live Encounters.**

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas  
Publisher/Editor  
[markulyseas@liveencounters.net](mailto:markulyseas@liveencounters.net)

**Donate**

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



## CONTRIBUTORS

ANGELA PATTEN

COLETTE NIC AODHA

LYNN STRONGIN

ROBBI NESTER

JEAN O'BRIEN

ELSA KORNETI

LYNDA TAVAKOLI

BEATRIZ COPELLO

RICHARD W HALPERIN

ILHEM ISSAOUI

MARGARET KIERNAN

BOB SHAKESHAFT *book review by Arthur Broomfield*



Angela Patten's publications include four poetry collections, *The Oriole & the Ovenbird* (Kelsay Books), *In Praise of Usefulness* (Wind Ridge Books), *Reliquaries* (Salmon Poetry, Ireland) and *Still Listening* (Salmon Poetry, Ireland), and a prose memoir, *High Tea at a Low Table: Stories From An Irish Childhood* (Wind Ridge Books). Her work has appeared in many literary journals such as *Calyx Journal*; *Nimrod International Journal*; *The Café Review*; *Crosswinds Poetry Journal* and *Poetry Ireland Review*; and in anthologies including *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*; *The White Page/An Bhileog Bhan: Twentieth-Century Irish Women Poets*; *Cudovista Usta* (Marvellous Mouth), *Drustvo Apokalipsa* (Slovenia); *The Breath of Parted Lips Volume II*; *Birchsong I and II: Poetry Centered in Vermont*; and *Roads Taken: Contemporary Vermont Poetry*. Born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, she now lives with her husband, poet Daniel Lusk in Burlington, Vermont, where she is a Senior Lecturer Emerita at the University of Vermont.



## ANGELA PATTEN GOB MUSIC: THE MARRIAGE OF MEMORY AND POETRY

During the Covid pandemic, my brother invited me to participate in “Healing Words,” a weekly homegrown Zoom session of song, storytelling and poetry, hosted by Irish poet Imelda Maguire and her husband Finbar who live in Donegal. Not being much of a joiner, I was hesitant at first. But the connecting thread was that we were all Irish and had a love of words, and I was made welcome. I was born and grew up in Ireland but I have spent most of my adult life in the U.S. Other regulars to the group live in Germany, Switzerland and Belgium as well as in various parts of Ireland. One will tell a story, another will sing or recite a poem, another will play the flute. What links us all is not just our Irishness, but the oral tradition in which we were raised.

We understand the concept of coming to a gathering with your “party piece” tucked up your sleeve. When I invite American friends to dinner and ask them to bring a poem or a song, they struggle with the notion, thinking that a beautiful voice or extraordinary talent is required or that some kind of competition is involved. But we know that abilities vary and the point is to join in. If you have ever attended a traditional Irish music session, you will have observed that individual showmanship is not much appreciated. The *seisiún* is part of a long tradition in which tunes are passed from one musician to another down through the generations. The goal, if there is one, is not to stand out but to fit in to that ancient ritual. My father was a fiddle player who took part in weekly music sessions. When my son was married in Prague in 1999, my father stood up to sing “The Parting Glass” at the reception. He was 82 at the time and his voice was quavering and tremulous. But he felt it his duty, and also his pleasure, to contribute to the occasion. Like most of our parents, he had one foot in the Victorian era where memorization was the primary educational tool. Although it had its limitations, it helped engender a love of poetry, song and recitation that still exists in Ireland today.

Angela Patten





Angela, 15 years old, Dublin 1967.

I grew up in Dublin during the 1950s and 60s and my first literary influence was the sound of my mother's voice. She was born in 1913 and her formal education was brief. She attended school until she was thirteen when she went to work in a greengrocer's shop. But she was a talker and an avid reader. I listened to her and her relatives recite poems, sing songs and spin endless stories about their childhood adventures in what was then Victorian Ireland. Along with passages from Shakespeare and poems by Longfellow and Tennyson, she entertained us with droll recitations of "The Owl and the Pussycat" or acted out Longfellow's sentimental tragedy, "The Wreck of the Hesperus," which seemed completely appropriate since all her family were sailors. We relished the cautionary tale of "Matilda who told such dreadful lies" and was burned to death in a house-fire. One of our favorites was Aunt Kathleen's party-piece, "The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God" and Robert Service's tales of the Yukon and The Frozen North. The radio hummed with serialized soap-operas, sponsored programs and songs. The sound of the church bells and Latin mass were all part of the soundtrack. It was "fair seedtime" for my soul and, to further quote Wordsworth in The Prelude, "I grew up/Foster'd alike by beauty and by fear." The Catholic Church took care of the fear but the beauty came from the feast of words with which I was surrounded. I learned poetry by ear just as my father had learned to play the fiddle in the same way.

Much of my own poetry is shaped by the interaction of memory with the passage of time. I go back to the Thatch Pub which was still thatched in my childhood, to the seaside, to Miss Bunty Fibbs and her School of Irish Dancing, and to the Ragman and the Slopman who came to our door with their horses and carts.

...when I began writing poetry as a non-traditional college-aged student in America, I naturally turned to memory as my source and storytelling as my cultural birthright. I was aware of wanting to evoke the Irish voices I missed, and also to atone in some way for the fact that I had not appreciated them enough in the past. The process of memorization and the later replaying of words is a pleasure, a habit of regurgitation, of chewing on the cud of the past.

In her talk "The Site of Memory," Toni Morrison uses this analogy of water and time:

*"You know, they straightened out the Mississippi River in places to make room for houses & liveable acreage. Occasionally the river floods these places. 'Floods' is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was. Writers are like that... Like water, I remember where I was before I was straightened out."*

For me, the impulse to write was (and is) the impulse to remember—to find my way back to that "original place" and to evoke it for the reader through the craft of poetry although my logical mind knows that, as with a Vermeer painting, it is only the light that remains.

Some literary experts claim that if a man in the Middle Ages read silently, others might have suspected him of being a magician. The accepted way to read was to read aloud. A monk read to his fellows at meals and a reader read a text to scribes who then copied the words into illuminated manuscripts. I loved the notion that a person who could read silently might be suspected of magic. I had always known that reading and books were magical. But although I was an avid reader, it never occurred to me that I might become a writer myself. I studied the great Irish and English poets at school but I don't recall reading anything by a living poet or writer. Like the angels who were sent on special missions from God to man, poets and writers were a different species from the rest of us, and creative writing was not part of the curriculum.

However, when I began writing poetry as a non-traditional college-aged student in America, I naturally turned to memory as my source and storytelling as my cultural birthright. I was aware of wanting to evoke the Irish voices I missed, and also to atone in some way for the fact that I had not appreciated them enough in the past. The process of memorization and the later replaying of words is a pleasure, a habit of regurgitation, of chewing on the cud of the past. Poetry critic Helen Vendler says: "The important thing is to feel companioned, as you go through life, by a host of poems which speak to your experience." I love to revisit Shakespeare's sonnets and Keats' "Ode to Autumn," as well as the poems of Theodore Roethke and others.

Our Friday night Zoom group is called "Healing Words" and no doubt it gave comfort to people during the pandemic and will continue to do so for a long time to come. It has helped me to realize the Irish love of language, wit and word-play has not died out completely. Mark Ulyseas has been connecting writers and readers through *Live Encounters* for years but the technology we discovered during the pandemic may further facilitate our ability to connect across boundaries if we put it to good use.

I would like to thank Mark for his kind invitation to guest edit the August 2021 edition of this remarkable journal, and to all the poets who have contributed to make this edition what it is.

Colette is an award winning poet who resides in Galway in the West of Ireland. She writes in both Irish and English. She has fifteen publications which include a volume of short stories, *Ádh Mór*; as well as an academic study of the blind poet Anthony Raftery, an 18th century bard whose songs and poems are still recited and sung today. She has one volume of English poetry, *Sundial*, which was published by Arlen House Press. She also has two dual language collections of poetry by the same publisher; *Between Curses: Baine Géar*, and *In Castlewood: An Ghaoth Aduaidh*. Her work is on the syllabus in Primary, Secondary and Third Level colleges. Colette's latest collection (bilingual) is titled *Baine Géar: Sour Milk*, which is available in hardback and softback, published by Arlen House, 2016. : Colette is pursuing a PhD in the English department of NUI Galway; she also has a master's degree in modern Irish. Her newly published collection of Irish language poetry and art is entitled *Réabhlóideach* is published by Coiscéim, Dublin, 2020.



## HIGHWAY MEN

This Poet's trail incorporates prizewinning bulls  
from the Cooley peninsula, efforts at a new map  
to stretch from the base of Sliabh Gullion to Feadarna Bog,

(we no longer fear to speak of )  
Highway men who rode this terrain,  
robbed aristocrats to feed the needy,  
written out of history but were Seventeenth Century local heroes,  
many hanged without mercy, let us honour their bones interred in Creggan Graveyard,  
next to the poet McCooey's , other Armagh bards, Ulster O' Neill clan,  
their ancient Kings and patrons.

Centuries later a farmer poet rested under Feadarna Bush,  
picked stones and brown clover for his grave,  
his words resound in the blooms and grasses of hedgerows,  
the flutter of birds in trees and the serene summer skies over Rasan.

Colette Nic Aodha, photography Didier Riva.



## IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

A closeup of friends and falling feathers  
darkness is built brick by brick, history  
and memory keep this house

built with human skin, existence is fragile,  
fish without gills, chairs have no seats  
turrets and hallways manipulate space

pins cut maps, birds come home to nest,  
paper flowers circle the garden, architecture  
and music make archaeology of reminiscence,

Broken records play Warhol's unfinished symphony  
next to the Judgement of Solomon  
which depicts life, death and the dignity of age.



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



Lynn Strongin is a Pulitzer Prize nominee in poetry. A recipient of a National Endowment Creative Writing Grant, nominated twice for Pushcart Prizes, Lynn Born in NYC at the end of the dirty thirties, she grew up in an artistic Jewish home in New York during the war. Earliest studies were in musical composition as a child and at The Manhattan School of Music. Took a BA at Hunter college, MA at Stanford University as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow. Lived in Berkeley during the vibrant sixties where she worked for Denise Lever-tov and took part in many peace demonstrations. Poems in forty anthologies, fifty journals; Poetry, New York Quarterly. Forthcoming work in *Poetry Flash* and *Otoliths*. Canada is her second home. The late Hugh Fox said Strongin is the “most exciting poet writing today.” Danielle Ofri wrote to her; “you tear the veil off that mysterious disease polio.” Strongin’s work has been translated into French and Italian. <https://the-otolith.blogspot.com>



## OSIP BORN IN WARSAW

...to a leather merchant  
& his music teacher wife  
Always had a tender preoccupation with the past.

It was not tender at all  
Of course:  
Akhmatova, husband Gumilev knew.

Nailed into his skull the persecution of a Polish Jew  
While his artist's hands trembled  
Music manuscript in hand  
Vellum light bulb on  
Lilac scent in room, the trodding, the heaviest naily boots coming in snow  
the color of limestone hammered opened

Lynn Strongin



## POETRY IS A PLOW

*Poetry is a plow, which turns over the earth so that the deep layers of time,  
the black earth, come to the surface - Osip Mandelstahm*

Underneath song  
Bleak time rolling, inexorable, burying most of us

In this revolution.  
He writes of “The thread of golden honey” drawing us out of here.  
What terrifies is that it is 1917 & Osip can withdraw into a dreamworld. Dark  
sheep, diamond sparkles.

He saw a time sinking “to the seabed”  
The miserable results of the Russian revolution.  
Yet he plucked one violet to place in Anna’s dark hair.  
Word. Flesh. Bread. He’d have no truck with militiamen  
But never lost faith in the plow, never lost faith in the song incubated in the  
word,

TWO DEGREES APART,  
ELEVEN DAYS FROM WINTER

We cannot shed the fear  
neither with wool nor fox fur.

Heart-shaped face,  
Come near  
Straddling turned-around cathedral-backed chair.

Rising I see the norths star  
Mercury the color of the dented teakettle near

Night  
Silver to blue.  
Hard to believe, we are only two degrees apart  
Yet closer than ever to love’s peak, eleven fays from winter. Deep breath.  
We will get there.

## ZEBRIAH

I SEE THE LIGHT in you  
Believe it can still shine thru.  
In my kicky tortoise shell glasses from the drugstore, and military watch from  
“Citizen’s”

Here is the heart of the world  
“My mother kept us safe like an umbrella does from heat & rain”  
In Somali, Zebriah says.

Bed wetting at nine still?  
Pure innocence. Protect me from wind, from rain: leave grief.  
Collective effervescence returns, yes!  
All suppers are the last supper:  
That is Christ at our elbow, plucking our sleeve, requesting that we stay  
when we’ve work to do, with blessing at last leave.

## WEARING DARK GLASSES BEING BLIND

All your life  
Life against the sky is still good.

The ocean air makes me feel thin.  
What is beyond us is unbearable.  
What you cannot see you cannot cull.

The train going by on the tracks  
The scrub ignited by a thrown spark  
The wildlife just born in the brush killed instantly by a shot spark.  
We find  
Less detail, perhaps less thralldom, being wide-eyed, carless, unblind.



## QUITE A BEAST

Quite a sweetheart  
Used to be a brilliant fighter

My cigarette, my little dolly  
I will jam you in this glass ashtray  
You will be dressed in white

Whirlabout ash  
Boy with a sash  
Help me die.  
Nail to my box,  
Behind closed eyes, I see you in whorls, your deadly locks, burnt flax.

## WHEN THE AIRBORNE LANDING IN HOLLAND

Fail to dislodge the Germans  
How do we survive

Eleven days till  
Winter.  
When that eclipsing joy comes

It tightens breathing  
Ribbs ache  
It is the aftermath  
Tobacco flowers shimmer, shiver in the Oklahoma scrawl  
It is a lessened blessing, but blessing overwhelming, nonetheless.

Robbi Nester is the author of 4 published books of poetry, the most recent being *Narrow Bridge* (Main Street, 2019). She has also edited three anthologies of poetry, including one published this year, *The Plague Papers*, which appeared as a special issue of Poemeleon Poetry Journal, <http://www.poemeleon.me/peruse-the-gallery> Her most recently published poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *Tiferet*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Sheila-Na-Gig*, *North of Oxford*, *Negative Capability*, *Book of Matches*, *MacQueen's Quinterly*, and *Gargoyle*. Her website may be found at <http://www.robbinester.net>.



## BLAST

My parents died at 94, and yet the shock wave rocked  
the quiet chamber of my life, exposing all the weakness  
in its frame and beams. I watched my father die,  
followed his ragged breath for days, a stony path  
twisting up a barren hillside. Four days later,  
I held my mother in a cardboard box, bone  
and ash much heavier than I'd imagined.  
For weeks, I'd think that I should call my father.  
I'd have the same dream every night, waking  
with my heart loud in my ears. I had left  
the gerbils without water, forgot to feed  
the fish for months. I knew what I would  
find, returning to my parents' house,  
the bodies I would have to claim.

Robbi Nester



## IN MEMORY

In another life, my father might have been  
a farmer, tending cows and horses,  
harvesting tomatoes, peaches, fat ears of corn.  
Instead, he worked indoors in factories  
with no windows, drove a truck  
delivering pies or milk on long dark  
winter highways before dawn.

One spring, he handed me a catalog  
asking me to choose some flowers  
for our tiny patch of lawn.  
I pondered photographs of grass,  
as smooth as painted plaster,  
diffident lilies, pansies with their Pekinese  
faces, then chose a rose tree  
with three different color blooms—  
yellow, white, and red. He placed it  
in the center of the yard so every  
summer day there'd be roses  
bursting from each branch—  
not only those three colors, but pink  
and orange, streaked, as though  
some playful painter had been mixing hues.

My father saved the seeds of every fruit,  
dried and planted them—mostly shrubs  
that couldn't bear in our cold climate.  
For all his hope, they seldom yielded  
anything, except a jungle of wild vines.  
Tomatoes nestled in the crabgrass  
and wild garlic, burpless cucumbers,  
and once, a tiny watermelon. The neighbors  
scowled at his manic enthusiasm, insisted  
all this growth drew rats, but every child  
knew where to find a rose, red cockscomb  
sentinels along the hedge. I never miss  
that neighborhood, that house,  
except this wild profusion that spoke  
best of my father's generosity and love.

## CONFRONTATION

In high school, I worked weekends at Martin's Aquarium, an urban zoo selling tropical fish as well as plants and lizards, snakes, and parrots—even a few bedraggled monkeys who made our lives hell with their screaming, throwing scat every time one of us passed the cage. One Sunday morning, I was scooping dead fish from newly-stocked aquariums, filling up a garbage bag with faded neon tetras, stiff six-inch Plecostomus, a whiskered arowana, long as my arm, when I caught a funky whiff of something—not a fish. Next aisle over, where the feeder mice were kept, a tank of gerbils ran squeaky circles on their wheel, guzzled water from the bottle, groomed and fought. Only one stayed still. I took the top off, picked that one up by the tail. Four pink swollen orbs, maggots fat as my big toe, fed on her skinless belly. My mind insisted they were baby gerbils. I'm not squeamish. I've picked up smelly bloodworms by the handful, let caterpillars climb my arms, but this came too close to my own malleable flesh for comfort, thinking only in the abstract about the beneficial cycle of rot and renewal, birth and death. It wasn't just an error sparked by my scant experience of death, but an insight that I still can't shake.

## THE STRANGER

When I was very young, my parents bought a house on the outskirts of the city, a new neighborhood, where everyone was just like us, young Jewish families. They sat outside on summer evenings, eating Good Humor bars and watching everyone walk by. I would have been a tough fit anywhere, the stranger in the crowd, but at five, I didn't know that yet. Later I learned about Elijah, who's always begging at the door, asks to be welcomed in. At every Seder, every synagogue, the empty chair and cup await him. I played this role. It was I who stood outside the red brick row homes, all alike, with their steep front stoops, neat hedges, roses in the yard, watching the other children playing wall-ball, hopscotch, jumping rope. I couldn't understand what made me or my parents different, or why this meant we had to take the back way out, avoid the neighbors' hard eyes, mocking voices. My parents never questioned: it was a test of righteousness. Almost none passed. Now I've lived long enough to play both roles: the stranger and the one who shuts the door.



## REFUGE

When I am stressed or caught up in the world's  
bad news, I ride the train down to the aviary  
at the San Diego Zoo, where Birds of Paradise  
approach my open hand, and nesting  
toucans peer out from their box  
high in a banana tree, broad leaves  
ribbed like feathers in a parrot's wing.  
There are benches where I can be  
anonymous for hours, watching  
hummingbirds delve scarlet bromeliads,  
white ginger lilies, with their spicy scent.  
I read, or listen, watch the birds in their  
small jungle alongside species they would  
never meet in ordinary life—crowned  
pigeons from New Guinea, with their  
orange eyes, blue plumage, stalk the same  
paths as Egyptian Ibis. Other small creatures  
haunt the branches, like a family of pygmy  
marmosets, with tiny perfect hands,  
strangely human faces, or dik dik, mouse  
deer, calmly browsing on the flowers  
and the fruits, almost invisible. An orange  
Cock of the Rock stands before me on the  
railing, bright Bee Eaters whiz by my head.  
Under the waterfall, Roseate Spoonbills feed.  
I always feel at home here, with other bipeds,  
who do not seem to judge me for my want  
of feathers. I'm simply part of their ecology.  
By the time I leave, it's late. I track the nascent  
moon through the wrought iron of the aviary.



©Mark Ulyseas

Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

O'Brien's 6th collection *Stars Burn Regardless* is due from Salmon Poetry this winter. She has won/ been placed in many competitions and is regularly published both on-line and in print. Most recently she was involved in the past UK Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy's project *Write Where We Are Now*. She holds an M.Phil from Trinity College and tutors in poetry/creative writing at University level.



## AGAINST THE GRAIN

We are lightly tethered here  
by gravity and the soles of our two feet,  
shod or not, it is they that connect us  
to the earth, make space, bear our weight.

We could fly off at any moment  
and join the crowded galaxy, millions  
of pinprick of light that fade at dawn,  
we have to imagine them in their absence,  
small chinks that chime with time passing.

Remove your shoes at the edge where earth  
and sea and sky meet, feel the chimera  
of sand, made up of millenia of shells,  
fieldspar, quarts and rock fragments  
under your soles. Grip it with your toes  
make two indents that fade even as  
they form, this is all you will ever own.

Jean O'Brien



## LEAVE TAKING

*(for O.H. and all who fight for the right to die with dignity.)*

My cousin and I talk of poetry and death.  
She is younger than me, could almost be  
my daughter. She lies long-tethered to a bed,  
cannulas and drips like threads keeping  
a trace, binding her here.

Her pale hands free to use the internet,  
to welcome the world past these restraining  
walls, where she has lost the only thing  
we nearly all possess, the will to live.

She wants to retrace the steps that have landed  
her here in such a helpless mess, back to before  
the winnowing wind stripped her to a husk;  
wants to step through the deep dark to a place

where poetry still reigns, and to set  
her unfettered self adrift upon the endless river  
and finish the struggle (*who are we to keep her here?*),  
her lyric tongue already weighted with Charon's obol.

## DAWN LIGHT

The light is up early  
these summer dawns  
oblivious to any quarrel  
with the world.

We linger in bed  
with the blind half drawn  
creating a clean break  
in morning's message,

the blind's furled fabric  
stiff and gray shadows our skin.  
Daylight streams bright  
beneath the gap

a lesson learned daily.  
The radio chorus begins  
to call the hour, let it be enough  
as day turns over.



Active in organizing readings and events with other poets, Elsa Korneti was born in Munich, Germany, but grew up in Thessaloniki, Greece and still lives there. Appropriately, given the long history of cosmopolitanism in Greece's second city, there is a clear glocalism at work in her poetry's interlacing of English and other languages with Greek. Her career has been similarly diverse: studies in finance were followed by work as a journalist; she has published essays, book reviews, translations, short stories, and eight books of poetry. Two poetry collections of her, *A Bouquet of Fishbones* and *The Tin Pearl*, were nominated for the Greek National Poetry Award, and a third, *Regular People with a Plume and a Brindled Tail*, received the George Karter Award from the literary magazine *Porphyras*. Part of her work among 13 books of poetry, essays, fiction has been translated and published in foreign anthologies and literary magazines in ten European languages and in Chinese.

Translated from Greek by Patricia Felisa Barbeito.

## AS OF TODAY

As of today  
You live your life underwater  
In the darkness of the deep  
Struggling to emit  
Your own light  
Swimming  
Like those freakish deep-sea fish  
With that little lantern dangling gutlike  
In front of them  
Always in danger of falling prey  
To divers' disease  
Of having your blood fill with water  
Of becoming  
An air bubble  
Of being extinguished in that immensity  
Rolling around in a  
Colossal  
Cosmic  
Tear

Elsa Korneti



## SCIENCE DEMANDS THAT YOU BE HEARTLESS

Science demands that you be heartless  
Science demands that you be hard as nails  
Throw off every disturbance  
All exuberance  
Do not move  
Come bitter cold  
Come sleet  
Come rain  
Come shine

Hold high  
That head of straw  
Do not wave those twig arms  
Gather your rags  
Draw up that crucified wooden body  
No winged creature will come near you  
Not a single seed-eating invader will you expel  
You've become the kind of scarecrow  
Who no longer scares anything  
Other than  
Himself

## DEAR FRIEND

Dear friend don't ever forget  
That the hordes of humanity  
Go forth with the delicacy  
Of the alligator

And that it is ambition's due  
To overcome ethics

The pillowy caps of mushrooms  
twirl hand in hand with black umbrellas  
A knot is as unpredictable  
as the soundless collision of two cells  
and the cockroach imperturbably leaves her trail  
on yet another artful excursion over the worn and tacky tapestry  
of the Heavens.

That half-baked man immured in the wall  
leads his life punctually under the sleepless eye  
Of the clock  
At midnight he pops out  
Of the hatchway  
Proclaiming his duty  
In the wooden voice  
Of a cuckoo



## ON THE GARBAGE PEAK

After finally climbing to garbage's peak  
only to behold a meaningless and shallow world  
will he wonder about his shattered sight  
about the glittery years spent rubbing shoulders with golden vultures  
gorging on burnished finery, credulous love,  
the taffeta threads of bliss  
This world of his so haughty and so cold  
Keeps filling out like a turkey  
Bedecked with peacock feathers  
A wandering slipshod imitation of beauty with  
A bubble stomach  
Tight as a drum  
Ready to burst at any moment  
And spray an unctuous green  
Over the heads of provisional people  
A true blusterer fears no-one  
Except for the irritation of a soaring baobab tree  
Upside down in the middle of a deserted steppe  
Roots in the air  
Tickling his heels.



Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.





Lynda Tavakoli lives in County Down, Northern Ireland, where, in more normal times, she facilitates an adult creative writing class and works as a tutor for the Seamus Heaney Awards for schools. A poet, fiction writer and freelance journalist, Lynda's writings have been widely published in the UK, Ireland, the US, South America and the Middle East. She is a contributing writer for *The Belfast Telegraph* and *Sluggish O'Toole* and her work has been broadcast on BBC Radio and RTE, (The Poetry Programme). Lynda has been winner of both poetry and short story prizes in Listowel, the Westival International Poetry Prize and runner-up in The Blackwater International Poetry Competition and Roscommon Poetry Competition. Her poems have appeared in The Irish Times and translated into Farsi and Spanish. *The Boiling Point for Jam*, Lynda's debut poetry collection, was published recently by Arlen House. Beyond the world of writing her main occupations are gardening and playing squash (not necessarily in that order).

## DAMAGED

I am  
damaged.

Fucked up, if you want  
to know the truth,  
a lost cause for all  
but the stupid few who  
think they can save  
the world - save me.

And I'm good at hiding it too.  
A nice enough boy, they'll say.  
Reserved, a bit of a loner,  
but polite –  
always polite when  
you met him in the street.

Who knew?

I knew  
when acts of kindness  
really, I mean, really  
pissed me off.

I knew  
when the neighbour's  
dog still yelped when I  
muzzled it with tape.

I knew  
when my mother  
fed me crap for my tea  
and for my own good.

I knew

it was just a matter of time.

Lynda Tavakoli

## THE LETTING

*(Auschwitz/Birkenau)*

There remains an odour of absence  
and a silent keening of ghosts  
that suppurates in weeping walls.  
On stoned pathways the hushed footfall  
of the dead still treads its beat,  
marking time for souls selected  
for their usefulness,  
a finger's point away from  
one more beating heart or none.

In concrete corridors  
the brittle-eyed speak now  
from simple frames - their history,  
a name, the date arrived and date deceased,  
(a day, a month, but rarely more between)  
while unframed faces suffer still in anonymity,  
their ashes fertilized efficiently  
(no wastage here), the debris of those lives  
now earthed beneath a sea  
of fast fermented tears.

I cannot think too much of it,  
for I am chased by thoughts  
of things I did not know nor want to know.  
For the odour of absence  
seeps its disregarded souvenirs  
into our selective memory, while history  
sleeps on in other ghosted walls,  
or hidden corners where is found the letting still.

## SHOOTING PARTY

Sunshine shirks the day  
and out in the thickening light  
their conversation visits me  
like a clattering of plates.  
These birds, a nye of ambered beauty  
struts my lawn with their conspiracy of dames.  
I know them by heart and will let their chatter  
carry into quiet sleep - time enough yet  
to fear for their feathered lives.

For tomorrow will come the hunters  
in their tweeds and their conceit,  
peppering buckshot across my roof  
like bloodied ash and beaters  
will beat death into twenty feet of sky.  
I wonder what those brave men say  
when they go home?  
What a great day's sport -  
the dogs' soft mouths were eager to retrieve.



## Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>

From her skinned and tendered ribs  
detritus sleetches, soft tissue lost  
beneath a century of salted tears.

Only the galvanised survives.  
She feels its tingle on her tarnished hull,  
an acid tongue that licks through  
every orifice and naked bone,  
or seeps from rusticles like  
poisoned pus of weighted time.

Yet on she sleeps, companioned  
by the ghosted souls who wait,  
like her, condemned to history now,

the drowning ship of dreams.



Graphic by Mark Ulyseas.



Dr Beatriz Copello is a well-known reviewer, writer and poet, she is also known for her sense humour. "Her poems are sensuous, evocative and imaginative. Beatriz Copello is one of Australia's foremost poets," wrote Julia Hancock, Ex-Editor of Allan an Unwin and Freelance editor and journalist. Copello's poetry books are *Women Souls and Shadows*, *Meditations at the Edge of a Dream*, *Flowering Roots*, *Under the Gums Long Shade*, and *Lo Irrevocable del Halcon* (In Spanish). Her poetry has been published in literary journals such as Southerly and Australian Women's Book Review and in many other print and Electronic Publications. Fiction books by author are: *A Call to the Stars*, *Forbidden Steps Under the Wisteria* and *Beyond the Moons of August* (Her Doctoral Thesis).



## CONUNDRUM

I could not say when this started  
neither could I say when this will finish,  
it is a sort of a long, long road  
with no beginning and no end.  
It has been like being a seed  
before being a flower and  
sometimes like being a flower  
before being a seed, perhaps  
being the last page of a book  
and at the same time the front cover.  
I was old when I was born  
and I was a child when I visited hell  
Maybe all commenced after I had dinner  
with the Gods and Thor was present,  
he named me Rose, a rose with a few petals  
it was then summer but without the sun  
or beaches or streets or buses full of people.  
It was then that I ...

Beatriz Copello

## THE CARPENTER

**Yesterday**

In a bronze chest  
my wood and nails  
were hidden and protected.  
As fast as possible I left  
in search of my hammer,  
the one with the silver handle  
and the titanium head.  
But before leaving  
I blew the accumulated dust  
and wrote your name on it.

**Today**

Please return to read me  
your poems carved on rocks.  
Perhaps you also are there  
hidden in the coffer.  
No, you are in search  
of my troubled spirit,  
but you won't find it  
because she wonders  
alone in the desert.

**Tomorrow**

Drink my blood  
search in the small lake  
made with my tears  
my mouth is full of sand,  
press yours lips against mine  
give me a nail because  
I have found my hammer.

## FREE AIR AT THE SERVICE STATION

Life hangs like an overripe fig  
suspended on the end of a branch.  
Tremble the children of The Books  
submitted to a perilous life or is it  
a test or perhaps a punishment  
they suffer ...  
have they eaten another fruit?  
Faces covered, over washed hands  
a jab and a rest may bring forgiveness  
to the sinners who transgress.  
Plaster statues give hope to some  
they pray, they kneel, they beg  
because they cannot breathe.  
"My horse for a cylinder of air ..."



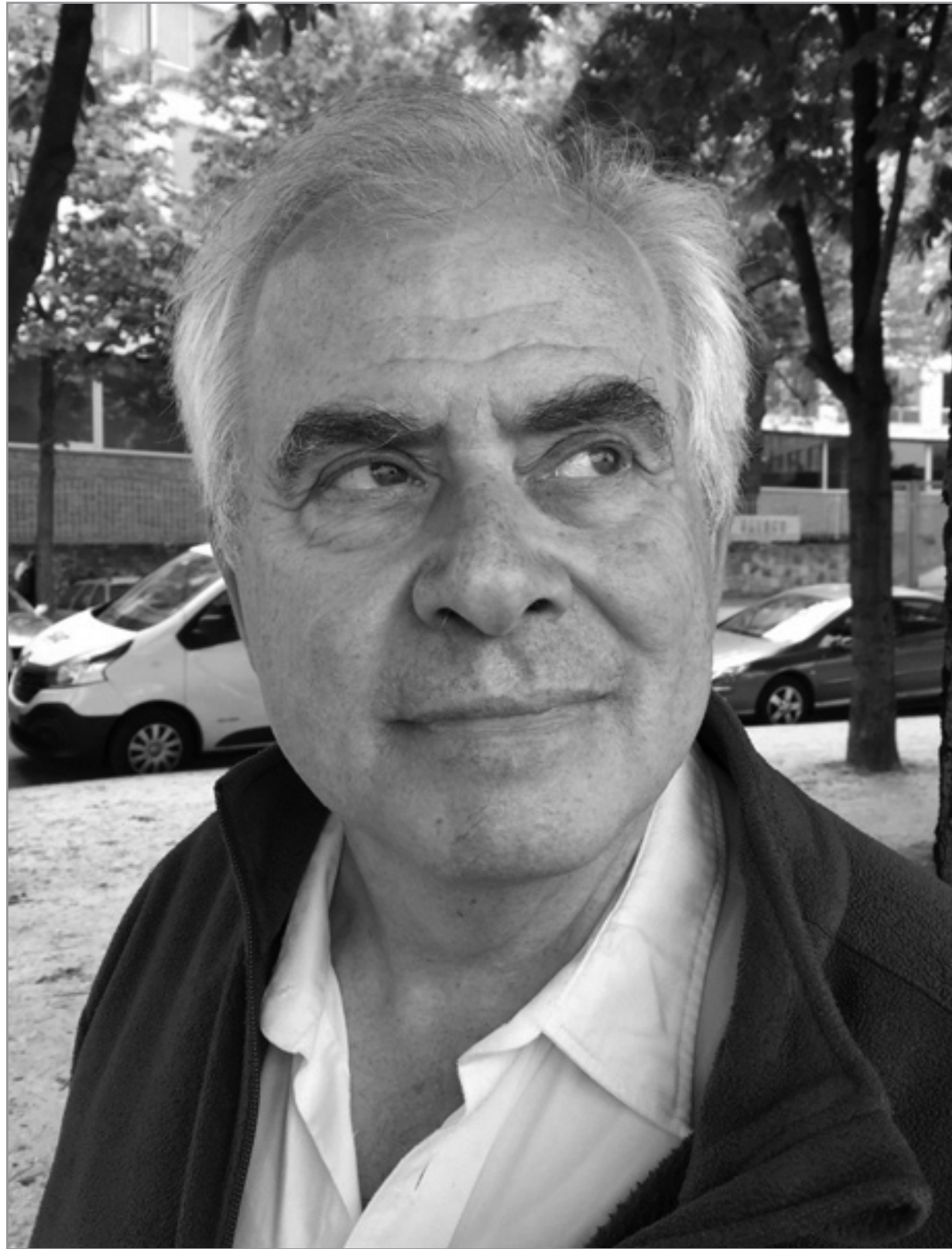
## MALFUNCTION

The faulty china dolls,  
baked from dust and a spark of sapient  
reign in a decaying world.  
A brook sings a monotonous song  
obscure chanting of pebbles rattling and  
at the bottom-fool's gold waiting.  
A trail of dreams all the way to heaven  
a maiden weaves with nylon threads  
a giant net to catch an eagle.  
Soldiers march blindfolded and mute  
to defend a dead future.  
The streets are deserted, at the dinner table  
families sit to a meal of images  
imprisoned in a wooden box.  
Humans play chess with nature  
ticks bursting with blood,  
fungus growing with lust.  
Earthly concern: trips to the moon  
a radar points to the stars,  
joined by a synthetic cord  
while the mind of all minds  
cries at the failures  
of the china dolls.

## A LIFE TOGETHER

We met in winter  
and holding hands  
we shared a reality  
interwoven dreams  
which were like leaves  
that dance in autumn.  
As petals of a red Bromeliad  
we opened the door  
to our minds and hearts  
and we learnt that sombre grey  
is made of black and white.  
But like Uluru we remained  
firm, our feet grounded  
our souls ethereal.  
Today fighting decay  
we raise our glasses  
to our eternal future.

Richard W. Halperin has Irish/U.S. dual nationality and lives in Paris. His most recent collection for Salmon Poetry, Cliffs of Moher, is *Catch Me While You Have the Light*, 2018. *People in a Diary* is listed for 2022. His most recent shorter collection for Lapwing, *Belfast, is Summer Night, 1948*, 2021. His poem 'Snow Falling, Lady Murasaki Watching' is on permanent display at Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo. Readings scheduled in Ireland for 2020 have been deferred to late 2021 or to 2022.



## SCATTERED THINGS, FORMAL THINGS

I look at an old photo sent by a friend:  
An outdoor fête, Rosendale, New York.  
Many friends gathered, some seated on  
The grass, some in chairs, some standing.  
A giant tree shelters everything,  
A clapboard house in the background.  
Blurry afternoon sunlight, precisely  
Photographed, surrounds each person,  
Each object. Not an effect. Not at all  
Soft focus. One can almost touch  
The gauzy summer clothing, brush  
Against a croquet ball, know – as  
Everyone does – what the inside of  
The house looks like. As in all photos,  
Everything is here and not here.  
I take it all in. I am waiting for a bus  
In Paris, as it happens. The photo  
Is in my phone. I hear a bus bell ring  
At a distance, the bus not yet visible.  
The sound yanks me out of the photo.  
Will death be like that? A good photo  
Is like a Rossellini film. Scattered  
Things, formal things, which stick  
In the mind forever. Miss Bergman  
Made a good decision.

Richard W Halperin

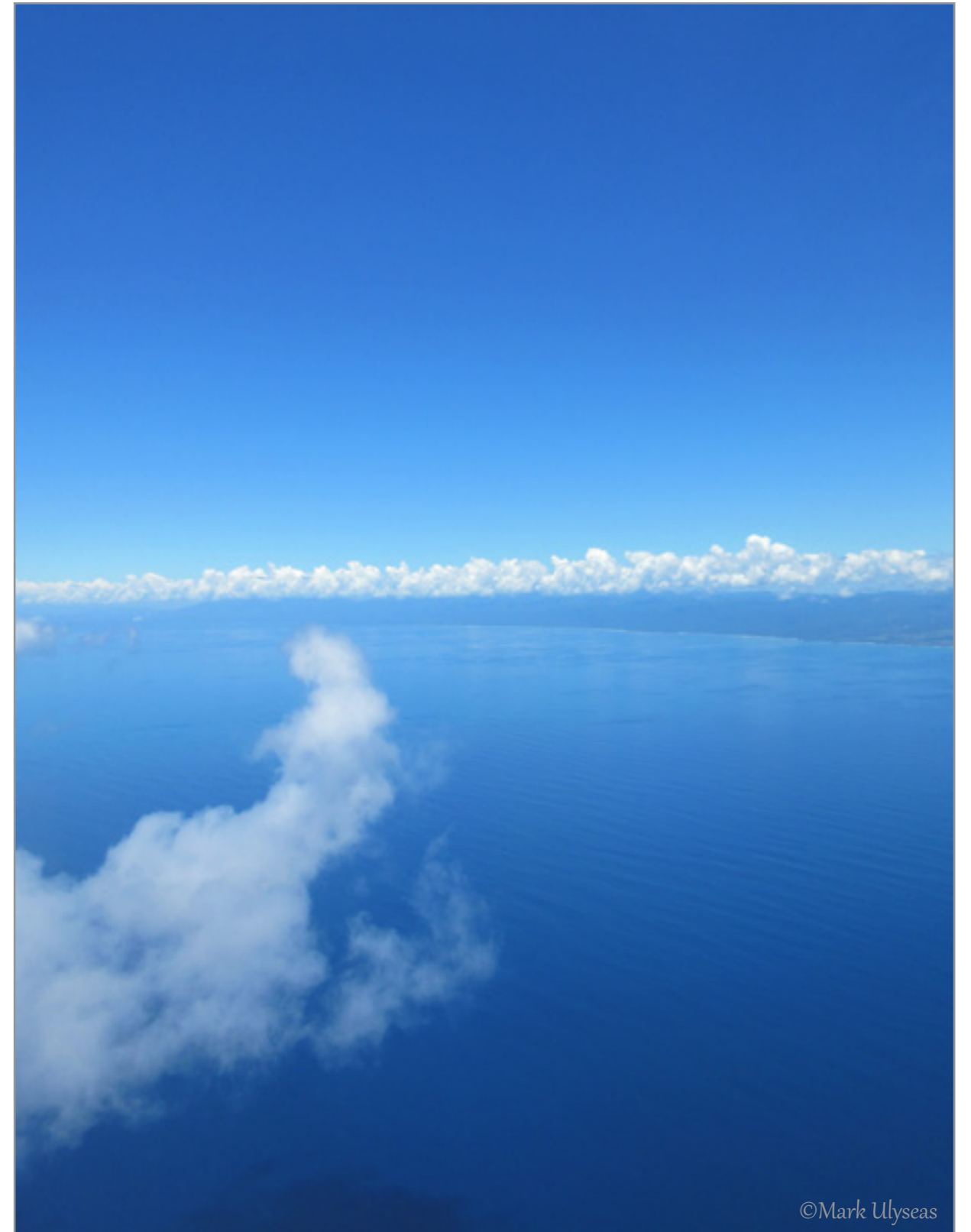
## LIGHT IS WATER

One of the oldest surviving mechanical clocks  
In the world is that of Salisbury Cathedral.  
It has no face, it has no dial, just the iron parts  
Moving. In clocks afterwards, something has  
Been gained and everything has been lost.

July 18th 2021, Place Vauban, eleven o'clock.  
I am having morning coffee on a big café terrace.  
The tops of the trees on the avenue de Breteuil  
Are transfigured in the sunlight. People pass,  
People sit down at tables: couples, friends,  
A few pregnant women in majesty, a man  
With one leg, antique car owners –one can  
See every Sunday here Isotta Fraschinis,  
Fin-tailed Cadillacs, Volkswagen Beetles,  
Peugeots looking like Alain Cuny or  
Delphine Seyrig will step out of them.

A time of peace, the Wandering Rocks wide open.  
A consciousness, depending on your beliefs,  
Of an Invisible Photographer. Photographers  
Change the reality they photograph. Their  
Actions in it stir the waters. (Light is water).  
They are *responsible* for those changes. Yes, they are.

July 18th 2021, Place Vauban, eleven o'clock.  
A street post box is so pure a primary yellow in the light  
That it could be in Oz. Seurat and Dali did their best,  
Their best was the very best, but this is better.



©Mark Ulyseas

Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



Ilhem Issaoui is a Tunisian researcher, poet, and translator. She has been published in many countries including the US, the UK, Canada, and India in print and online. She is in the process of publishing her second poetry collection.



## INDIVISIBLE ATOMS

my father tells the atoms  
to divide and multiply  
and when they do  
and each one moves and migrates  
he damns them; I am to blame  
my mother prays that I am here to stay  
their cracked feet absorb me  
like cracked land absorbed my father  
all the atoms have gone  
and I, I change my age every evening  
memory is the worst of all gifts  
it deceives you like a friend  
my father says the atoms never came back

Ilhem Issaoui

Margaret Kiernan has a background in Public Policy and Social Justice. She writes poetry and short stories. She also paints landscapes in mixed media. She is published in, The Blue Nib Literary Journal, Lothlorien Poetry Journal, Burrow at Old-water-rat publishing Australia, The Galway Review, Poet Head, A New Ulster, Anthologies, and Cultural news magazines. She is listed in The Index of Contemporary Women Poets in Ireland, 2020. She writes with the Thursday Group of poets, at Over -the-Edge, Galway. Is also a member of Ox Mountain poets.



Margaret Kiernan

## AVENGED

Were, love to drift this way, ever stand a chance  
to crowd a space, revert to “the roses are pink”  
your say-sos, again.

Lift the China rose in my heart  
raise the blistered mist  
the satchel you bought her, at that Parisienne salon.

Strip back the bandages, pus around thorns flowing,  
her sneers revealed.  
swim with me  
in redemptions cool milk.

Would I merely watch the shadowed bud?  
snip the petals apart, one by one while you sneak  
back, to the swagger of that tart.

Within my crushed core, anger cuts swathes  
through your breaking fence, un-leashes a feral thing  
most dangerous, sly.

Inflict spells upon you and on her  
a cotton dolly jangles with pins  
juju girl.

Could I un-hook that spiders web, slash the branch  
it rests upon, sack that stinky gossip whiff  
suckle our fable?

Merciless time rides in a sailboat,  
keeps going to the edge  
meets horizon  
stays briefly bright  
dips away out of sight.

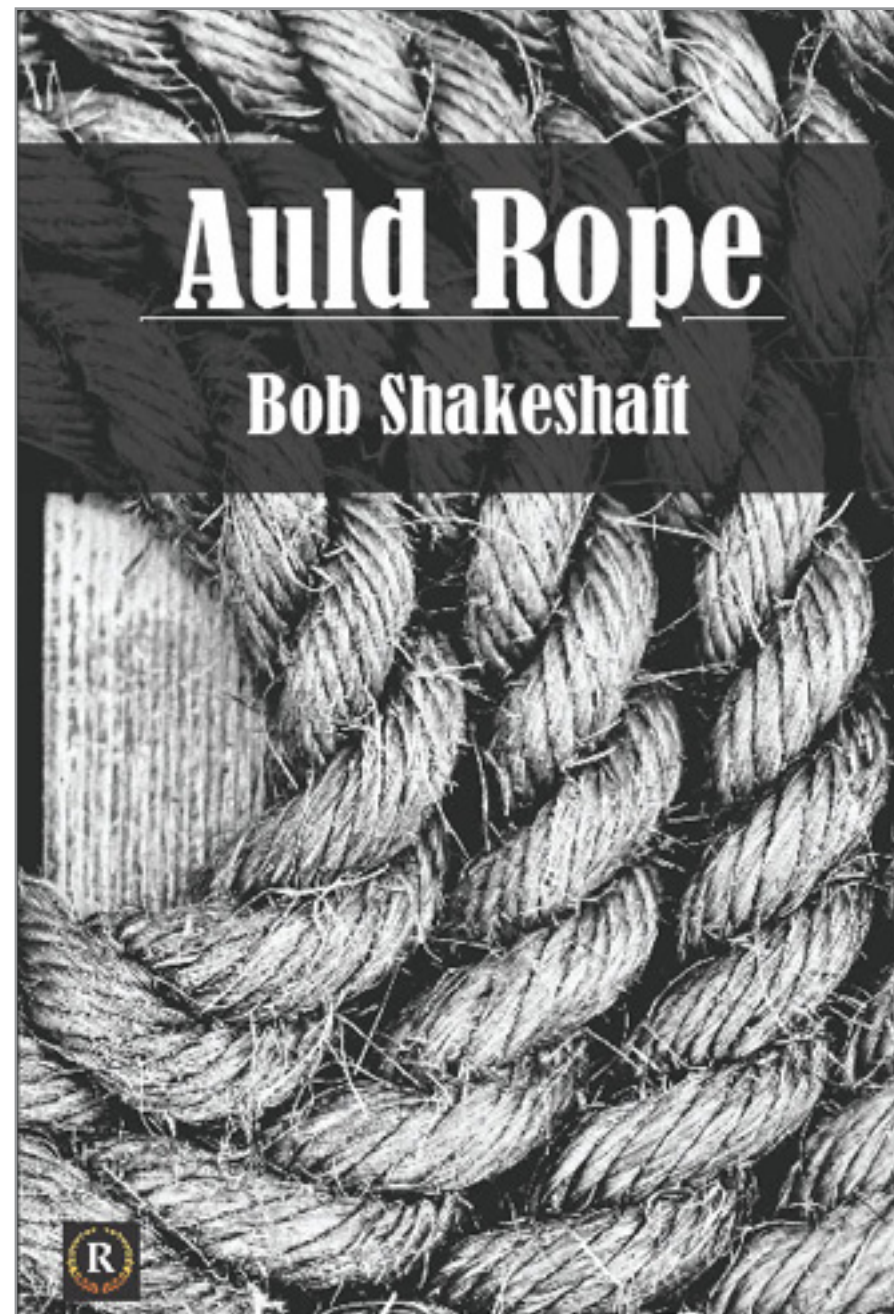




Bob Shakeshaft's poems have appeared in *7 Towers Anthology* 2012/2013. *The Curlew Collection*, *Riposte*, *Agamemnon Dead*, *New Ulster* 40th issue. Bob read his poems on KFM, Liffey Sounds and Dublin South Radio. His poems have appeared in *Live Encounters*. Bob's poem *Dirty laundry* appeared the *New York Literary* magazine 2016.



Dr Arthur Broomfield is a poet and short storywriter, Beckett scholar and occasional lecturer from Ballyfin County Laois. He is the author of seven books including three poetry collections *The Poetry Reading at Semple Stadium* [ Lapwing 2012] *Cold Coffee at Emo Court* [Revival 2016] *The Giants' Footsteps at the Rock of Dunamaise* [Revival 2019] and a study on the works of Samuel Beckett :*The Empty Too : language and philosophy in the works of Samuel Beckett* [Cambridge Scholars' Publishing 2014]. He delivers poetry and short story workshops and is available to mentor writing groups or individual writers and to give lectures on the works of Samuel Beckett and on Surrealist poetry. Dr Broomfield holds BA degrees in English and history from NUI Maynooth, an MA degree in English literature [NUI Maynooth] and a Ph.D in English literature from Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.



The book is available here - <https://limerickwriterscentre.com/product/auld-rope/>

## ARTHUR BROOMFIELD Review of BOB SHAKESHAFT'S *Auld Rope* Published by Revival Press (2021)

*Auld Ropes* Bob Shakeshaft's, overdue, first collection. The work is set in two parts, 'Exteriors' and Interiors'. Most of the poems are located in, or influenced by the area of the city, Linenhall Street., where the poet lived for some time. *Auld Rope*, as the title poem implies, is a trip round 'Old Dublin' that recalls characters and events, often laced with grief or redemption, from an age that is in danger of slipping from the memory of even those born then and will be a reminder of their heritage to the OMG generation.

In 'The Rag 'n Bone Man' the boy trades his father's 'worn, torn suit, or soleless size nine shoes' for a goldfish or two. 'Granny Reilly' sells 'Nuts for the monk-ees, / a ha'penny a bag. / Ask your Ma'n' Da', 'Chance the Ducks', is a lexicon that will be known to only the purest Dubliner [ but which the author kindly translates in his notes, for the rest of us], Shakeshaft paints an authentic picture that is as far from the myth of 'the literary city' as Linenhall Street is from Davy Byrnes.

Loss and grief that feature in *Auld Rope* reflect their intrusion into the life of the not immune from poverty community of Linenhall Street. In 'Endings,' and 'Toddles' the poet mourns the death of young siblings. 'My sister was laid quietly in the dark earth/ while larks sang high above it.' [Endings]. In 'Toddles', one of the best poems in the collection, the father brings the tom-boy-whistling child to Glasnevin Cemetery, on the bar of his bike, to lay flowers on the grave of her brother, Danny.



The girl folds into the father's 'safe-heart-pumping love, he chins my crown/ letting me know all is well.' It's not till the father kisses Danny on the wooden cross over the grave, that we feel his grief, 'Pure, whispered words pour over our lips'. The irony of Father shielding her from the grief through singing 'Danny Boy' in his 'booming voice' may have escaped the child - but not the poet.

'Interiors' is an introspective series of poems that deals with the descent to death of the aged mother; where, if life be 'the flash of a falling star' ['Thoughts'] the poets focus is on the long goodbye of the falling. 'She sits alone in a black, chilled room, / an ash-free grate...she sits, forever lost, absorbing / her last memories of heat ['Austerity']. 'Sunday...vanished like a breath / on a mirror...Ah, death never looked so kind' ['Death in vain']. In 'Stairway', the mother has died, leaving the poet space to reflect on the 'sin' of her out of wedlock pregnancy and the guilt he feels she transferred to blame of him. 'Church guilt, a tormented family / throwing you out...you could not love me' ends with the poignant line 'could we be strangers again?' 'Sunflower' is a touching tribute to the late Sarah Lundberg, who will be long remembered for her contribution to the Irish poetry scene and for her encouragement of emerging poets, 'Do not seek me in the shadows'. The brutality of the Christian Brothers is the subject matter of 'Blind Shame', a poem that speaks of the horror of child rape by one of that order, and in 'Empty', 'No terror stepped out front / and centre. No outstretched hand.

*Auld Rope* will draw Dubliners back to their roots and will fascinate the world of non-Dubliners. Bob Shakeshaft writes in language that is original and unpretentious. It comes from the heart and will surely cause many a flutter in the hearts of true Dubs. His is the unapologetic voice that will ensure the lasting future of a Dublin that is in danger of being forgotten.

Born in Dublin, Bob Shakeshaft now lives in Skerries. A long-time participant on the Dublin open mic scene, he has read at the Inchicore Village Festival, for Seven Towers, and at the *Glor* sessions, among many others.

Bob has also broadcast his poems on KFM Radio, Liffey Sounds, and Dublin South Radio and has read at Over the Edge in Galway and On the Nail in Limerick. He is a member of the Ardgillan Creative Writer's Group and Drogheda Creative Writers Group.



2010 - 2020

11  
YEARS

# Live encounters

POETRY & WRITING

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH  
AUGUST 2021



COVER ARTWORK "ULYSSES ANGEL" BY EMMA BARONE