



From  
Glasgow  
to  
Saturn

Issue  
47.



# Letter From The Editors

Dear Reader,

In the recent past much writing has been concerned with a gathering unease towards public spaces, widespread desire for connection in the midst of isolation, and a contemplation of where our roots lie. When assembling Issue 47 of *From Glasgow to Saturn* we quickly realized that this introspection, although not displaced, has made room for an increasingly outward facing world view. A number of the writers presented here contemplate the gradual reintroduction to social life with sharply comedic and absurdist outcomes. Take, for example, Lillian Salvatore's 'Dinner on Thursday?' where the simmering erotic tension of a restaurant date spills over into sensory derangement and the confused characters seemingly unable to comprehend what is edible and what is not. Or in a short story by Aimee MacDonald entitled 'The Horsefly', the stuffy backdrop of a museum provides the unlikely stage for a fabulously gruesome metamorphic blood-sucking ritual.

The writers' relationship with nature similarly represents a shift. It has become commonplace to find writers reconnecting with the great outdoors, yet here a number of writers took inspiration from the natural world's treacherous and formidable energy. James Taylor's 'Driftwood' is a virtuoso display of puns, descriptive brushstrokes, and word-play, that mirrors the restless manner in which water violently uproots and remodels landscape. And in a joyous take on this untamable energy, Ruthie Kennedy's 'Pink Mould' shows the unlikely beauty of fluorescent mould as it takes on a strange and unapologetic life of its own. The attitude towards the fungus fluctuates between jealousy and

inspiration to eventually become part of the incipient force welling within the speaker in the poem's ecstatic final act.

In the journal's second half we witness a sombering tone which is perhaps well-suited for an issue launched in December. And in the darkened contour of the season, memory and strange pasts rise up to meet us. 'The Winter of my Life' by Hannah Grimshaw depicts the battle of a mind to locate certainty in its past as mental faculties terminally dwindle. What is left is a skewed and fractured version of reality that creatively offsets the reader's desire for scrupulous narrative resolve, allowing us to sample the frustrations that plague the speaker's twilight years.

Elsewhere, the pervasive mystery of Cailean McBride's 'Moonshot' shows the interplay between family history and mortality in a poem that exchanges the weightlessness of space for the fecundity of earth. McBride reminds us that though it is human to find solace in our origins, attempts to claim ownership over experience often leaves us blinking at a past grown unrecognizably alien. Similarly, the speaker in Shantha Chinniah's 'The Living Land' attempts to process loss by hiking in their family's ancestral homeland. With some of the most skillful storytelling this volume has to offer, this enjoyable fish out of water story gradually turns chilly as the stranded speaker vies for shelter in an unknown wilderness. As the story unravels, it becomes unclear whether the ebbing light or the forces unleashed by memory provide the most immediate threat to the grieving speaker's survival.

Chance for renewal is frequently glimpsed in this anthology but its seductive quality can offer us false hope during times of transition. A piece which walks hand in hand with the future and has, in nuanced ways, transition at its core is Maddy Robinson's 'La Copla'. Flash fiction throws together national and private mourning, sibling love, gender

fluidity and a summer that you can just reach out and touch. Its concern is with collective memory, as the speaker recalls how a nation mourned the death of a celebrated songstress, and how it can bind a people together but also make the possibility for future change more difficult. Here celebrity's ability to turn a personal decision into a political one is depicted alongside the exhilarating possibilities of the body as it eschews the limits of gender binary.

*'The borders we sketch and fail to traverse...'*, writes Robinson, and this is where Issue 47 lies. On the borders. On the threshold as a society prepares to be reacquainted with itself, on the precipice with the inner self about to leap upon the unsuspecting world, in the hazy lines of Autumn, chiming with memory. We'd like to thank all the contributors to Issue 47 of From Glasgow to Saturn, and invite you now to join us on the borders.

Sincerely,

Grace Borland Sinclair | Hannah George | Niamh Gordon | Asta  
Kinch | Liam Welsh

co-editors



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# Summer Dress

*Rebecca Kane*

You called me over to chat about the old days  
it had not been so long that it was awkward, but it was long  
enough to be an obligation  
we sat on stubborn chairs and  
recited the social rituals  
before you started discussing Italian vinaigrettes  
and kissing boys on granite tops

once our mugs tapped hollow  
I brought up the fire

I felt you shift as I recalled how  
you, soaked in sadness, carried me to  
the wet grass  
and how I rolled around while you stamped at  
the edges of my summer dress and shouted

out!  
out!  
out!

afterwards, when the jokes had landed,  
I held your moon-heavy hand and assured you  
that the stains would wash out

when I finished

you didn't bother to say goodbye  
the veneer of politeness was shattered anyways  
I wouldn't have noticed if you spoke  
I was too busy thinking about the burnt blue gingham and just  
how flammable I had been that summer

# morning glories

*Kate Rogan*

my shoulders open, and i think,

*this must be*

*how the sun draws the flowers with it  
each day across the sky.*

under clouds of softened linen  
and sheets of morning light,  
your fingertips are writing  
a poem for me –

half asleep, gently.

the murmur of your motions  
brushing listless over skin  
coax my breath to

slow, sigh, and

i'm blooming.

so sweetly,  
so quietly.

i think,

*i would follow you  
past any horizon.*

*i think,  
not even roots  
could keep me.*

# La Copla (Virginia + Elliot)

*Maddy Robinson*

*“I will tell you about la copla. La copla is to gather those ugly wet ropes of love that you chuck about the place, tie them to your back and carry them port to port.”*

- Virginia “La Virgi” Paje

There is a bar ahead. I lend him a fiver for tobacco and as I stand with my back to the road, the sound of striking palms and Virginia’s crooked cry come swelling from a car stereo

*Tu piensas que no te quiero  
Y eso mismo pienso yo...*

I think about the grainy interview where she shrugs and smirks and says that smoking is fine and our lungs can repair themselves anyway. Almost certainly untrue but nobody watching cares, just to imagine the body’s potential is exhilarating.

We walk along the esplanade. My hair curls slowly, wilting ferns in the salt humidity, and I ask how he likes the beard. He brushes his knuckles under his chin and says so long as what’s on top doesn’t start falling out then he’s delighted.

I’d like to buy some roller blades. The sky is peach yellow and I tap a rhythm along the dotted line that separates us from the skaters. Why don’t you get some? he says. Imagine, amiga, black-frilled and burning

flamenca, the borders we sketch and fail to traverse. Bulerías by the silk sea,

*ayyiy*

*ayay ii*  
*ihí ayi iyay*  
*iiy*

*ay de mí.*

They said you could strike a match on her voice. Run your thumbs over it, even.

He coughs suddenly. The silver rings in his ear wink against the dark of his buzzcut and I recount the moment in the documentary when she's bouncing her godchild on her lap, waxing lyrical about the custom of piercing baby girls' ears. She arches her magnificent eyebrows, furiously trying to make us see that there's no problem, you can just take them out when you're older. Just like a name, she says, I changed my name, *ya está*, no harm done.

His name is short like the stud in the gun and smoke tumbles from his lips. He looks at me and remarks that a puncture you'll never remember is probably the least of the damage.

There is another bar ahead. There always is. The waiter is perspiring and waving us over onto white plastic chairs. Bottle caps chink against the floor. I once met a girl who made them into earrings, Newky Brown and Red Stripe gently grazing her lower jaw. The ringlets in her hair were so tight it could have been a perm.

We sit down. You and I are orphans, he says. Maybe, I say, but orphans that have inherited fortunes. Cheers to that. We talk about last week's party after the demo. Someone in leather trousers and a silver wig took to the karaoke to sing La Virgi's biggest hit, a copla I think. Not before he'd left, though, his nose to the ear of a raven-eyed activist whose name I don't remember.

Inside the bar the air is barely moved by the ceiling fan. Older men sip sherry and lean on the steel counter, buttons straining on their immaculate shirts, white hairs sprouting from their hands and chests. I think about the phrase 'olive-skinned' and how these people look more like they were dug up from the local clay, like the olive trees had grown from them. There's a heavy, savoury smell. Behind the bar, a lightly sweating leg of jamón rests, shackled at the ankle, it's flesh and fat half-exposed.

In the ladies' the door to the toilet barely fits the frame, and I'm forced to contort my limbs to hold it shut and piss at the same time, a weird semi-squat. On the cubicle wall a sticker says: "If I don't sin then Jesus died for nothing!".

(When the news of her death reached the headlines, the country went into a state of national mourning. They have a saying, colloquially, if something shocking or emotional happens, you can shake your head and compare it to Virginia's wake - *es la vela de La Virgi.*)

I step out from the semi darkness of the bar to the scent of jasmine and shellfish clashing on the breeze. He beckons me to the table anxiously. You'll never guess, he says, presenting me with his phone.

*I feel lucky to be writing this. To be here. To have arrived at this place in my life.*

Elliot Page has come out to the vast horizon of the internet, to the world. My hand finds his shoulder.

*To be writing this. The corners of his eyes are glittering sea spray. To be here.*



# Pink Mould

*Ruthie Kennedy*

in the plush pre summer

I squat down to look at the pink mould.

the most beautiful invasion

politely tinting my bathroom

so clean so polished

soooo nice

I text you that a lot:

soooo nice

Julia says:

*I used to spend so much time alone.*

pink mould I think should smell of rose petals

and too I think it should sparkle

I have the vocabulary of a much less

english literature graduate.

forgive me

and now imagine a desert of pink mould:

you and I riding up and down the dunes

in our golden bathtub...

*you're always putting red and pink together, you say*  
as if it's a crime.

I can't feel the sun anymore!  
I miss my friends.

*you are so concise, says one*

this is something else  
I just blurt it out  
the hesitation poisons what follows  
  what you were holding back.

pink mould is lounging around looking gorgeous.

*Oh This? she says. Just Happened.*

jeez.

so angry when I'm alone  
  I used to spend so much time

pink mould is all Me Me Me  
  and she says *byeeee*

goes down the drain into the nether world

where the sky is smeared all microsoft blurple

and the bubblegum clouds are furred with plaque

and I'm sinking my teeth into the orthodontist's pink mould  
fleshy dough

it's the same sensation

as when I bit your arm in my sleep

cool rubber embrace

and the wrong flavour.

I lie dripping like a sink as the pink rubber fingers  
climb in my mouth, clean cardboard cutout of a man  
screwing and unscrewing, clipping off excesses

I drool along with the radio while he stops time in my mouth.

the passage of molars grinds to a halt

and on the way out, pink blossoms falling on my head...

mould in the middle ages made miracles:

the blood of christ dripping like jam,

jesus breadcrumbing the priests with posthumous party tricks

water is wine is blood is mould

so we celebrate! so we dine!

just another millennium with no saviour

but his text says *on my way*

I want dipped

in pink mould like a thumb

in liquid wax

the cool rubber touch

all ready to crack

*la vie en moissure rose*

at the end of the day  
the clouds roll back  
the tape measure waves  
and I surge like a cardiac event  
down university avenue.  
I haven't danced like this for years  
carousing, feet biting the brand new pavement,  
brand new students in the  
brand new learning hub  
but I'm full of old magic tonight,  
ancient teenage stuff,  
the child breaking bread with the adult,  
joy multiplying and I could  
entertain 5000 students.  
my heart is a megaphone,  
the good words crowding in my mouth.  
you're going to leave behind  
some problem for someone,  
that's a given,  
but so what, even sea glass  
was someone's problem once.  
sea glass! which is beloved  
of quiet children everywhere.  
the ages polished like teeth,  
sparkling like a bathroom.



feathered things peering from  
the rotting I - tinder wood, otherwise,  
alight afternoon monotony.

Gut throats and ink fingers trail  
over and again the brailled emollient  
grains that dune every spined line.  
Here it bleeds, beached in the meaning  
of the waters intentions.

# Untitled

*Maddy Robinson*

In the future where I become a midwife  
I will stand by the stately wives, o noble wives,  
my rich-gendered guttersnipe siblings  
while they stare up sweaty and fluttering  
woozy along the vital lines,  
fingertips and warm  
tautness bruising something membranous, plush  
and stronger than I have ever felt.

(it must be like staring through your eyelids at the sun,  
threatening yourself with blindness)

For this poem is a nearly-life and  
we ease it out together.

# The Winter of my Life

*Hannab Grimshaw*

Johnny's in trouble again. He's been banging that stick against the wall.  
Disturbs the residents, they say. Ha. Aye, Johnny's the problem here.

'Are you all right today, Mary?' one of them asks.

'Naw.' There's no point in lying anymore.

'Well, I have some news to cheer you up. You'll never guess who is coming to visit you,' she chirps, in a sickeningly sweet voice.

I know who will be visiting me. It's only ever her.

'Who?' I play along.

'Your Isabell.'

Aye, that's her.

The one with the tea comes round next. Her eyes match the cool silver of the trolley which she pushes roughly, tea sloshing around. She shoves a cup of lukewarm tea into my hand. I'm not allowed it hot.

'Ye having a piece of cake, or no?' I shake my head. My stomach churns at the cloying smell of the cakes and her cheap perfume. I take a sip of my tea. Tea doesnae do much for me. I've always loved my coffee. Just plain black coffee. I used to have it every morning with my scone.

Mind you, my Lizzy used to laugh at that.

*'You're meant to have tea with a scone, Ma.'*

*'Well I like ma coffee and it's no as if the Queen's gonnae strut doon to this end of Glesga and greet aboot it.'*



I'm no allowed coffee anymore.

They give me a paper dated a week ago. Takes that long for it to get round all the residents. I turn to the crossword. These days they're saying the crossword's good for the mind and all that. Memory and stuff. My Lizzy told me when she was in a few weeks ago. If I finish one, they might realise that I'm no like them. I'm no meant to be in here.

*'Have you got any names in mind?' the nurse whispers as she delicately hands me the bundle in her arms. I squeeze my eyes shut, willing the tears to stop. This is the moment I have to leave him behind. For us. This wee lassie needs a mother. Not a wreck of a woman. I force my eyes to open. My gaze is drawn to her head. A frenzy of chocolate ringlets. How can someone so little have so much hair? I caress her cheeks. Little, soft plump apples. How can someone so tiny be so perfect?*

*'Elizabeth. He had liked the name Elizabeth.'*

I huddle into my jumper. It's so cold in here, the ice won't be able to thaw.

I get two words in my crossword by feeding time. The noise of the blender is like the chime of a school lunch bell. A few who still have their wits about them hobble to the dining room but most remain still, enchanted by the pattern of the carpet. It's sad that they get so captivated in the navy blue and grey swirls with inconsistent yellow dots thrown in here and there. A grey string is under my foot. It goes all the way from my peach slippers to the leg of Johnny's chair. It ends at the section to the left Johnny's chair which I look at before I have time to realise what I've done. I looked at the face. It grimaces at me.

Immediately, I follow the pattern of silver back down. I can't help but sneak a look again. It's scowling. For that, I'll make sure to trample on that bit of carpet next time I'm up.

'Mary dear, come on. Time for dinner,' one of them says. Everyone has left. 'That's it, come on. You don't want to be too late now, remember your girl is coming to see you in an hour.'

Aw aye, I don't want to miss my girl.

They take me to the place I sleep for the visit. It's too late to have it in the common room. The window wheezes as the draft invades this place.

'Right, we better get you to the toilet then.'

'I dinnae need the toilet.'

'We are not having a repeat of last time, Mary,' she declares.

'Whit?'

'That's enough Mary. It's very nice of your girl coming all the way in this weather so just try and make this as easy as possible.'

I get up. There isnae any point arguing with them. I cannae risk them no letting me see my lassie.

'Lizzy?'

*'Hi Ma.'* She sits down across from me placing the blue bag on the table between us. She offers no explanation, instead she offers me a bottle of Irn-Bru. I accept it with a shaky hand.

*'Lizzy, what have you done my darling?'* The pop of a tin of shortbread is the only response I get. *'Lizzy, don't ignore your mother.'*

*'It was just getting a bit out of control Ma,' she snaps.*

*'Right, it's just you've always had gorgeous locks my love. That was what your father gave you. You just startled me a bit. I couldnae even*

*recognise you. They'll grow back my dear, don't worry.'* Lizzy scrapes her bare branch of a hand across her smooth head. Her cheeks are void of colour.

*'Look, I brought the paper for you Ma. Let's see if we can get any of this crossword done.'*

*'I don't want to do a crossword. When have I ever liked doing the bloody crossword?'*

She's twenty minutes late. We only get an hour. It's no like my Lizzy being late. They said the weather is bad though. I open the moth-eaten curtains. I cannae see much. It's just a haze of white falling from the black sky.

A knock. I pull my eyes away from the settling snow.

'Here she is,' one of them says. A woman with raven black hair enters this place. She takes off her shiny black coat, shaking off the drops of snow, which match the colour of her skin. She gives me a toothy grin, some of her crimson lipstick on her teeth.

'Sorry mum, I know I'm half an hour late. I got caught up in work and the roads are bad.'

Mum. This isnae my Lizzy.

'Where's Elizabeth?'

The strange woman whispers something to one of them and I focus my eyes back outside. The frenzy has calmed now, inches of snow stuck firmly to the ground. Everything is too still. I hear the door close.

'It's me, Isabell. How are you doing today, Mum? Did you see the snow?'

'Don't call me that. You're no my Lizzy.'

'Mum, can you not remember what happened to Lizzy?'

A lump forms in my throat. Panic begins to set in.  
I've lost her again.

I stare through the dark window, a withered tree staring back at me.

# Days Spent Alphabetising

*Lucy Lauder*

Folding like giving up  
or folding like tucking tiny corners of the whole tired thing inwards  
towards itself  
to face all the tiny tired  
corners of itself  
and still see nothing  
know nothing  
nothing in the compressed seat  
of never knowing  
smaller? yes smaller  
something about the sides all folded over  
feels smaller and so  
compact  
tiny? yes tiny tired? yes tired  
so tiny and tired and so compact  
all inwards facing  
face intact.

# List Poem

*Beag Horn*

Listing buildings

Listing hips

Listing limericks

Listing ships

List me nimble

List me quick

List me over the candlestick

Six thistle-sifters

Sifting thistle drifts

Nifty thistle pickers

Listing nips and pricks

We exist within the list

Live the list you're with

I was first on the last list

But I am last on this list

Dislike the list you're listed in?

Switch to a civiller list

Your kiss is on my list

List me in the morning

Then go on, leave me listless

List me, beneath the milky twilight

List me, Dr List-List

You're on my to-do list

I disclosed my did-it list

I've lost my to-don't list

You dissed my list of quips

I list therefore I am

I am list

# on taking a virtual visit

*Carolyn Hashimoto*

to a gallery  
where the walls are not white but  
a strange set of primary colours blue and yellow and  
I can't breathe in here it's claustrophobic

I want to take my arm back because it doesn't belong here  
I want to take *your* hand  
not this one made of stone  
not that one made from metal

I want a hand that  
gets cold in the winter  
warm in the summer  
a hand that sweats and carries germs

a hand that I can no longer hold  
nor anyone and  
the sign says do not touch the displays but

what if every other Thursday  
we could walk into the museum and be invited  
to touch and caress  
stroke and hold the works of art

we are so precious  
about precious things but  
what if all our art just fell  
apart

# The Horsefly

*Aimee MacDonald*

In his picture, he is peeking out from behind a pair of gold rimmed aviators. I think he is winking, or squinting in the sunlight. It is captioned 'living' and I think: thank god he isn't dead I guess. I don't want to meet him but I arrange to anyway. My fingers have lives of their own on the keyboard.

We arrange to meet at a gallery. I spend the half hour before hunched over the toilet throwing up. But I'm not nervous. I go on dates all the time and tend to leave whenever I want. Walking to the gallery, a feeling of vague disgust settles on me like an extra layer of skin. I pick at it, ponder it, scan the foyer for the nearest toilet, breathe easier when I see the sign.

He is waiting on a wooden bench near the door and he is not looking at any of the paintings. He is on his phone, the screen turned to full brightness, illuminating his smooth face in the dim.

Then he looks up and sees me. He smiles and his teeth are too white. You look nice, is the first thing he says and I think, did I ask? Thanks, I say.

He is wearing too-tight jeans and a crisp white shirt with sunglasses hanging from one of the buttonholes and silly leather shoes with big buckles and his hair looks like it would be hard to the touch.



He motions for me to sit down next to him, as though he isn't really fussed at all about the artwork. I've only been to this gallery once before, when I was really young, I say.

Oh, really, no way, seriously. He says all of these things, one after the other, same empty smile and counterfeit face. I've been here loads of times, actually.

Want to show me around, then? I'm not being flirty, but it comes out that way and I hate that it does. He smirks at me and says: how about we get a drink instead? I heard there's a pretty sweet rooftop bar.

His skin is so unblemished. No, I say. I mean, yes, of course I want a drink but I want to see the art first.

His eyes are bright blue and he rolls them to the back of his head in mock frustration. Or maybe real frustration, I don't know. Then he gets up and slaps his thighs and the sound is like plastic on plastic and he exclaims – still mocking, I think – oh fine then, if we must. Follow me.

And I do.

We enter a room of pale marble sculptures. They are Roman copies of Greek originals and the busts are mounted on ornate wood with curly gold handwriting. Aphrodite, one says, a nondescript head. Aphrodite would look more human than that, I say. He says: if that really was Aphrodite, she would have a nice body, don't you think?

The next room houses Northern European Renaissance carvings. All dark wood and scenes of poor tortured people like Christ and his mother. Crimson and blue and green and brown and black and I ponder: was there even a Renaissance in Northern Europe? Are we still medieval? My date looks at Christ and says: what a way to go, eh.

We walk through a room of sixteenth century Italian sculptures and the men and women are beautiful and delicate and their veins pop out of their soft hands and they all have small breasts but the men don't have penises because the Victorians hacked them off with chisels. My date doesn't say anything about the penises.

Up some stairs and everything is white. White, white, white. The hallway tapers out into a big bright room and in the centre is a postmodern painting inspired by *The Tempest*. It is blue and the little plaque below calls it vivid and violent but I think it looks so soft and I think I can see the waves moving, and suddenly I feel sick again.

It is only my date and me and *The Tempest* in the room and suddenly he is holding me around the shoulders and he says: you are so pale, do you feel okay?

Yes, yes, and I am on the floor now and it feels sickly and soft, just like the painting. I think, I say, I think I am just so tired of doing this, you know. And he is beside me leaning in too close and he smells sweet and he says, I know, I know, I understand completely, but I'm not sure he does. I say: I go on dates quite a lot and I don't even like it I just go. And he gets closer still and his shiny nose is almost touching mine and I hate

the feeling of his hands on my arms and he says: I get it, I get it, do you still want to go for that drink?

There are stories about people who turn into animals – birds and cows and grotesque, vengeful sea creatures – and their stories are here in this gallery. These stories are ancient, but they are hidden in the medieval gargoyles and contorted wooden face of a Mary in pain, too. It is fitting, I think, as all of my skins split at the seams, it is fitting that here is the place I have finally had enough.

There is no blood because there never was any. Instead, there are human guts and then fuzzy dark skin and my eyes burst into bulbs cut with lines that fracture my vision and I see my date reflected one hundred times over in the back of my head. My arms fall away as though unzipped, revealing my six long thin legs like black lines drawn in pen and my big clear wings that tuck in neatly against my spine. I also have a bite, and I don't feel sick anymore.

He is on the floor now, that man that I met, and if this was a story, perhaps he would say: you have undergone a metamorphosis. You were a human woman, a human woman and my date, and now you are a big fly. But instead, predictably and I suppose understandably, he screams for a second, clutching his chest, before his eyes roll to the back of his head.

I drink until I have had my fill, all the while thinking: I don't think I will go on a date again, honestly, but I will most certainly make the effort to come back here. Through it all, *The Tempest* rages on. I try not to get it dirty, because there is no red on the surface of the sea.

After, because I have time to kill, I return to the classical room and hover beside bodiless Aphrodite, staring into her vacant eyes and seeing them in my own, a million, million times.

# Dinner on Thursday?

*Lillian Salvatore*

talk to me

and let's eat mangoes over candlelight

slurp

at the juices on my hand

and let me lick bitter

lemons off of the floor

do you want me to pour

salt water in your eyes?

!!!mummy!!! it hurts!!! !!!it hurts!!!

am I crying or did he wipe the mouth

from the corners of my gravy?

the tendons look nice he says

you look more like a person than when we fucked

last week and he strokes

at the raw fleshy bit inside my cheek

like fish guts flapping in the air

on tables with knives and barbed wire

I cut at the skin and the flaky pastry

is flaky ooh very nice! and you are enjoying

your meal? it's dry and I can't cut

round the stone it's thick

the muscle is yellow but I like it better

when it's orange juice and the bits

get stuck in your teeth hey gimme a smileeeeeeee

I open my mouth and sniff out the flame

the max welts into a gummy bear

on the table and he gnaws

at it for dessert

To/  
The First Brother

*Morgan Evans*

Another Shiraz I didn't drink  
by the sink and  
seven cans loitering, pre-recycling bin, and  
the backdoor and the upstairs hallways and all our bedrooms smell like  
~~grass again~~  
skunk again.

Like herbs and BO and that

S F  
I E  
N E  
K L  
I I  
N N  
G G

that

someone-I-love-is-a-fucking-disappointment  
FEELING.

The dope is his but the wine is theirs, usually.  
She does this when I'm  
not around to judge. Let's them  
BOND  
~~liquored up~~  
bottled up.

And I'm all for bonding –  
!!!I'm not jealous!!!  
Mothers are for sharing, I've known this since we were

four (Me) and  
nine (Him) –  
but why can't she let him bully her  
into watching nature/car/vegan/murder documentaries  
sober?

It's easier to ignore insobriety drunk.

I sigh as I walk past the sink  
for the second time tonight –  
huffing because it's Tuesday. For.  
Crying. Out. Loud –  
and reluctantly remember  
Christmas Night and  
Birthday Parties and  
A Karaoke Bar in Glasgow almost two years ago now and  
Last Saturday,  
thinking/saying

If you can't beat 'em...

and getting      puke-drunk  
                     dizzy-drunk  
                     scream-sing-drunk  
                     admissions-drunk  
                     wine-drunk  
                     whine-drunk              like  
                     I-wanna-go-hooooommme-drunk  
so I wouldn't have to watch him getting              drunker.

# Reception

*Kerry Byrne*

lined up, rucksacked backs  
a caterpillar of too-tight-shoes-ribboned-pigtails-gel-spiked-crowns  
sleep coddling eye-corners, paste minting mouths  
a small hand grips an  
amputated bear,  
fur matted, red-rusty  
a bell rings  
door opens  
framing Miss  
a wide smile, teeth  
to playground parents  
lips brush cheeks, tops of heads  
a wave or two  
some rush to work  
all rush to leave

the class never look back, walk  
in silence  
to the cloakroom  
strip away bags and coats and shoes and ties  
empty pockets  
into  
plastic  
traysslingshotsappleknivesstickswithbladesplucked-  
snailshells-cracked-beetle-back-spicked-cleanspines-stolen-beaks-and-milk-teeth  
yesterday, a fantail



eyes

POPPED

hot-tangerine scales blackening

Miss has seen it all

death is in their DNA

disarmed

they line up

shoulders hunched

fists opening-closing-opening-closing

one grunts, low

then another

louder

she needs to hurry, taps

the hard ridges

of her vest

*Good morning Rainbows!*

a broken caterpillar of bare hands and feet

crawls to the carpet

hands clawed, wild-eyed

the jostle for space bloodless                      for now

dry mouthed, Miss hands out cushions

children rock back and forth and back and forth

(Ben is biting his wrist)

and back and forth and back and

(Olive snap-snap-snaps her teeth)

forth and back and forth

(Jack P. *ROARS*)

and back and forth and back and  
Miss  
counts down from five

with all dark eyes on her  
she shakes the tambourine  
they press their faces  
into cushions on their knees

feathers can't contain  
the unnatural sound  
unfurling  
from their chests  
its muscle stoves in  
silence, its muscle stoves in  
Mi

# The Late Shift

*Paul Flynn*

The late-night shift calls for tremendous Splendour,  
An opulent exploration through the Rainbow Pastilles,  
A flow state in glowing focus- me, weighing manifold  
Stars of dripping light in my taut slender fingers  
While inside my veins runs hooved dressage,  
Clomping the cobbled streets of Conquered Futures  
In perfect rhythmic beat- I delight at the sound-  
That mystical force heard only in the recesses of:

**The Stimulated Brain.**

I cut my finger and watch the blood drip drop  
To white panelled flooring:  
A slow crimson ooze that tessellates  
In dollar shaped friends.

# On Home

*Cristina Fernandez Valls*

Moving home by kite –  
foreigner across the clouds  
migrating to Mars.

Road of ghosts. Silver  
light drives me away from home.  
To another star.

On the third crater  
of the moon, a girl speaks  
like me. She's silent.

# After Bodywork, with Sea and Floral Curtains

*Siobhan Mulligan*

i.

I knot dates and deadlines into shoulders: around the spine, clove with a half hitch. bowline tied around ankles. moorings to hold as I weave my own sails. the wind will not move me, but something like a breeze hums between my ears. eyes closed, static tingle. wax coating my tongue. this crown of bees, their organ work song to my tapping keys.

ii.

“take a deep breath in, then out. now three more times.”

iii.

she does not cut but unthread, therapist’s careful pull of my nylon through its own loop. tendons stretch, loosen, matted kelp uncombed by her tide. drifting, I remember the sickbed: childhood nausea, blankets pulled to chin. diet of flat coke and sesame crackers. the slow lolling wave of fever thought. if only I could slide and lay dormant under the duvet, imagine the splash of sea over skin, sleep off this seasick mind.

iv.

who could rest with such spreadsheet symphony in their ears?

v.

my own salt will be freedom and fumigation. scour my face and drown my crown, from eyes to chin to loosened chest. turn my tendons from anchors to open chords. for me, no song but the lavender joy of

morning, the purr of sun. let bees come to my palms and leave with legs  
pollen-furred; I will not smear their honey around my ears. I will sow  
mayapple and sundrop. I will be flowerbed, not hive.

# would you like to rate and review your trip?

*Siobhan Mulligan*

*Cape Town / Stad Kaapstad / IsiXepo saseKapa*

I.

waves of houses, of shantytowns, carry me  
bobbing, in my local father's  
rental car, past flotsam of  
hawkers and hitchhikers, past  
maids in blue dresses walking to work, past  
children in white shirts, Sunday school-bound, past  
men in kippot, past women in hijab,  
and us barreling through, spinning down  
the mountain to the city below,  
to dinner or brunch or grandma's house,  
and I cannot un-notice

the shroud of fields, folded,  
laid to rest just off the road.  
barren of houses and  
too bare to be wild.

II.

a mosque rests there like a  
ribcage, like echoes of the  
heart rattling, resounding inside

the muezzin's empty minaret.  
a chapel with plenty  
of pasture stretches steeple-first  
towards God.

men's houses were made of  
straw, of sticks. God's:  
bricks.

### III.

a pamphlet, government-issued,  
circa 1966: 'you will have  
new houses,  
better houses,  
and your neighbors will look like you.  
all your neighbors will look like you.'

### IV.

my father, the tour guide:

to your right, district six, once  
mixed cultures 'til it was shucked,  
like an oyster, like meat from  
shell, like skin from  
whale, like people from  
homes, now receding in the rearview.



I hear there is talk of rebuilding.  
I hear there is always talk of rebuilding.

slap brick and plaster  
on the bone, healed crooked.  
splash your canteen to end  
the fifty-year drought:  
no Sunday school, no soccer  
in the street, no shebeens, no  
crime, no washing  
on the line, no  
neighborhood,  
no neighbors.

# Moonshot

*Cailean McBride*

Breath that you can hear, can feel.  
Like sand sliding in an hourglass throat;  
a proxy for soundless boots on spectral dust,  
as you bounce beneath that pitiless black  
and the Cyclops stare of that one blue eye.  
Or like the laboured breathing of a dying father  
50 years from now.

But right now there is only  
the push of a slick, matted, white egg,  
gasping into an alien cold. Bewildered as  
yielding water gives way to angry earth;  
(fish into flesh) and fingers barely worth the name  
flail in the freezing air, shattering it with a cry.

And a grandmother's diary scrawls:

*I. Am. Born.*

*Rained later.*

# The Living Land

*Shantha Chinniah*

Should he do it now? He'd been trying to ignore the pain but the blister had burst and he could feel the firm cushion of his boot rubbing and digging into the raw sore. He scanned the now smudged, soggy map and decided he'd better tend to his foot at the next semi-sheltered spot he came upon. There didn't seem to be any populated areas nearby.

The intrepid feeling he'd had at the start of the walk had been replaced by a squinting, miserable doggedness, but he was also revelling in feeling sorry for himself. He'd not been up north since family holidays when he was young, when he'd firmly regarded any exploration of the wild moorland and hills as the most backward of torture practices. He now wished he'd asked his mother more about their family connections to the area but she'd been such a self-contained person it had made him feel awkward to pry.

He risked the rain dripping off his hood into his face to look up at the mountains. The fog was coming in at a rate, obscuring more of the peaks every time he checked. For the first time since he set out he began to be concerned about the remoteness, the surprise patches of bogland, and whether he'd finish the walk before it got dark. Worried, limping and feeling rather foolish, he spotted what could be the skeleton of an old croft house over on a patch of higher ground. From where he stood, it looked about a fifteen minute walk away. No roof so hardly the world's best shelter, but at least he could sit on the stones and try and put a plaster on. Plus, he thought he had some free wrapped biscuits from the hotel squirreled away in his backpack somewhere.

The rich maroon, deep green and lime-beige of the moorland was transformed into all-pervading grey, as the sea of fog claimed the land.

If anything, this added to the melancholy charge of the huge space. He felt, more than he'd allowed himself to for a long time, a cold loneliness deep in himself. He'd decided on this trip partly to satisfy a wish to express his isolation in a dramatic, concrete way, to show people how there was nothing keeping him tied down anymore. Uprooted. Returning to the ancestral homeland for some soul searching had a pleasing romantic shine to it too. He could visualise the inspirational selfie with earnest hashtags he might have posted had he been twenty years younger and more confident about not being laughed at.

But he was scared now out here, really, with no other people. The solitude didn't feel freeing, he was too used to hearing the clatter of existence; the sirens, chatter and rumbles of motors creating a drone of constant interference in his thoughts. As he gingerly picked his way over the tufted grasses and wildflowers, the wind, which was making the inside of his ears sting, started to sound like it had the noise of conversation in it. Great, going mad in a godforsaken wilderness. Result.

The younger woman, with her free hand, helped her friend's skirts miss the worst of the mud and they both laughed, the sound carried quickly away by the wind.

He stopped. It had been so vivid that the air and his head still pulsed with it. This was not good. He could see his hand shaking as he raised it to wipe the sweat off the bristles on his top lip. Crazy reenactors or something? But where had they come from, and gone to? No, definitely a hallucination. When he moved his arms he noticed the sickening smell of his own sweat even under his fleece and waterproof. Right, priority was to get back to civilisation. Watch TV in bed in the hotel, wee drinkie, maybe pick up some chips on the way back. Get away

from whatever his head was trying to do to him out here. Finding yourself is most decidedly overrated.

Instead of fog, there had been clear bright sun and flowering heather all around the women, but the shape of the land was very similar, he could see the spot where they had been. The older one had looked a bit like his mum, not really, her face was more square, but it had the same determined brows and hollow cheeks. Don't feed the monster, think about something else. He'd need to go and see a Toffees game soon when he went back. He'd given up his season ticket last year but he missed the half-time pies and the raucousness of the stands. Good, it all looked normal. Even foggier, but normal. Now that the ruins were closer he could see there was not one croft but a small cluster, most on lower ground that had been hidden from view.

Wait, was one still intact? He hadn't noticed at first but whilst most of the crofts were in different states of reclamation by nature, there was one that had smoke coming out, with a full roof and weathered-wood door. He tried to speed up but he was hobbling a lot from the pain of his seeping blister. He bent down to pull his wool sock up and fold the top over for more layers between his skin and the boot. His head was spinning now, hopefully he did have the biscuits with him, the sugar would help. As he straightened up, the crofts looked like how they were before. No, how they were, full stop. Derelict, roofless, long un-lived-in. He couldn't believe it but it was now taking all his effort not to burst into tears. He tried taking a few really deep breaths like they'd taught him in counselling: in through the nose, out through the mouth, in through the nose, out through the mouth.

It would be just typical if he became one of those poor sods who lost it in the cold and was found with all his clothes off. Right. Right. Sort foot out, get back to civilisation, or at least somewhere with real people

and signal. In-out, in-out. The air was now full of moisture as the mist settled its territory. He kept his eyes to the ground and hauled himself up to the closest wall, grabbing the clammy, moss-furred rock. He sat down and only realised how tense and aching his body was as it began to relax slightly. He scabbled through the backpack, removing some neglected family binoculars and an umbrella to have more room to root around inside. Packet of plasters, phew. And biscuits! Definitely not in one piece but that was hardly surprising.

He bit the corner of the packet with his teeth and emptied the crumbs and lumps into his mouth, some falling to nestle in the neck of his fleece. Half-consciously he was trying to block out anything but the most mundane. The mist helped keep his vision focused on his possessions by obscuring much of the landscape, although it unnerved him when he couldn't see the route he'd taken to get here. The wind now sounded like a musical whistle. He untied the laces on the boot and tried to ease it off, but on the way the cushion dug more into the open sore and he drew his breath in through his teeth against the pain. Grim; it didn't look great. Not knowing what to do, he put some spit on his finger and gently tried to ease the fluff out the bleeding bits.

New one's come to far croft. Bit of a weakling, probably a griper. Looks a bit like Rhona did when she was a lassie. He'll do for now. Been precious few around recently. They'll be wanting me tae send him back to them. Their need's the greater need.

As he picked one of the big plasters from the pack, he could hear a whistling melody in the wind and it was familiar to him. He suddenly had a memory of his mother, by the sink peeling potatoes humming this tune as he played his Gameboy at the kitchen table after school. It was such a simple, lilting melody but it started to bring colours into his mind as he focused on it. Not the colours he usually associated with her,

but browns and greys, which started to swirl into forms in front of his open eyes, mutating into a dim shelter. She was whistling to a small child. It looked like one of the women from before but older and a lot thinner, her mouth puckered like a sunburst and her wrist not much wider than the child's. He gulped painfully as the moisture left his mouth but they didn't seem to notice him. The mist on the move was visible through the walls, through her. Where he should be. In-out, in-out, focus on the plaster. With the sound still filling his consciousness it took all his effort to concentrate on his ankle and put the plaster on. He squeezed his eyes shut after placing it and used his finger to press it in. He held onto the plastic backs from the plaster, with the pads of his fingertips pressed tightly against his palm.

The melody mixed with the wind and the sound of his blood pumping. He coughed bile on the ground, stood up and opened his eyes. He was back, he was back. There were only stubs of the walls that had just enclosed him. He grabbed his bag, dropping his rubbish on the floor and ran out of the remains of the house. He took deep gulps of the cold fog, wheezing and sobbing. His mind was buffeted with panic as he ran, stumbling forward. The crofts started to change again, most were slowly reforming but the one in front of him was already fully standing, forbiddingly solid. He let out short yelps as an old woman opened the door and smiled widely, looking straight into his eyes. As she walked towards him with her hand out, he desperately looked around and saw the shadow of the mist he'd left, with the backs of the plasters he'd dropped picked up by the wind. He frantically tried to get to and grab them as her hand closed on his arm.

The two small pieces of plastic flew higher into the air as the wind stripped through the deserted hillside. The clouded landscape contorted and moved with the force, creating spectres in the fog.

13-00

ml

Rare Wood

September, 1945.





Untitled  
*Stephen Nelson*

Asemic calligraphy, ink brush on found paper, 2021.

## About the Contributors

With a backdrop of sky-filled waters and endless horizons, Kerry Byrne (she/her) lives and writes in the Cambridgeshire fens. Her writing has been published by *Pidgeonholes*, *Bandit Fiction*, *Selcouth Station* and *streetcake magazine*. She is currently a Creative Writing MLitt student at the University of Glasgow. Twitter: @kerry\_\_byrne.

**Shantha Chinniah** (she/they) is a current Creative Writing MLitt student at the University of Glasgow. She has previously studied history and this remains an area of interest in her work. Shantha has worked in a number of industries, including at Guinness World Records for many years and continues to love learning new things. She also enjoys drawing cartoons, illustrating and singing.

Morgan Evans is a confident writer of prose, a cautious writer of poetry and a curious writer of everything in between. Though she admittedly has a fondness for the cheesiest fantasy, dystopia and romance novels, she's more invested in writing about character and emotion than in any particular genre. Writing is her primary interest, and her ultimate goal in life is to write someone's favourite book. Her secondary interests include playing obscure board games and spending time with loved ones.

**Cristina Fernandez Valls** is a writer and a childcare practitioner. She lives in Scotland with her family and multiple pets. Cristina holds a Literature degree by the University of Highlands and Islands and a Masters degree in Architecture by the University Polytechnique of

Madrid. She is currently completing a Masters in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow.

Paul Flynn is a Creative Writing Masters student at the University of Glasgow. He is from Dublin, Ireland.

Hannah Grimshaw is a second-year English and Scottish Literature student at the University of Glasgow. Her work has never been published before but she hopes this is the first step in a journey which will put her on a similar path to the Scottish women writers she knows and loves today.

Carolyn Hashimoto (she/her) recently completed the MLitt in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. Her first poetry collection *Cow* will be published by Osmosis Press in 2022, and her debut pamphlet *The Chips Are Down Here in Lockdown* was published by orangeapplepress in 2021. Other work has appeared in *Gutter*, *3AM*, *Perverse*, *-algia*, *BlueHouse Journal* and *Tentacular*. She is the founder and editor of *Skirting Around* – an online journal which explores the politics and emotions of women’s clothing through writing and art. Based in Dumfries and Galloway during lockdown, she became a little bit obsessed with cows.

Beag Horn lives on the South Ayrshire coast, where nature provides much inspiration for her poetry. She is a professional actor and also works at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on the Front of House team. During a long period of furlough in 2020-21, Beag completed her MLitt in Creative Writing and has since spent most of her time on her writing practice. In August 2021, Beag home-produced a series of 23

daily poetry podcasts for Edinburgh's PBH Free Fringe Festival; most of these episodes are still available on her Soundcloud account.

**Rebecca Kane** (she/her) is a 21-year-old Scottish poet. She has recently graduated from the University of Glasgow and achieved a degree in English Literature and History of Art. She is currently continuing her education at Glasgow and is completing a Masters in Creative Writing. She has appeared in publications such as *Glasgow University Magazine*, *Small Leaf Press* and *Dark Animals: Wild Pressed Young Poets' Anthology*. Her writing explores in-between social interaction, aspects of mental health/ illness and the uncanny.

**Ruthie Kennedy** is a poet and short fiction writer based in Glasgow. In 2020 she published her debut poetry pamphlet *Room to Swing a Cat* (Orange Apple Press) as well as a collaborative art/poetry pamphlet with artist Jessie Whiteley titled *Sound of two black hoodies swallowing each other in the rain*. She also writes and performs with pop band King Wine.

**Lucy Lauder** (she/her) is a third-year Scottish Literature/English Literature student at the University of Glasgow who is submitting her work for publication for the very first time. Lucy has spent much of her summer in Glasgow's Botanic Gardens writing short pieces of self-awareness poetry which she hopes some may resonate with in their repetitive and alliterative state of dubiety.

**Aimee MacDonald** (she/her) is a fourth-year English Literature student at the University of Glasgow who spends the majority of her free time reading and writing poetry and short stories. She enjoys feminist

retellings of ancient myths and creepy fairy tales, and often draws these classical and historical interests into her own work. She is currently working on a short story collection. She has been published in *GUM*, *Prickly Pear Magazine*, *The Madrigal Press* and *Delicate Rébellion*. She posts her poetry (as well as many, many book reviews) on her Instagram blog, @aimswrites.

Cailean McBride is a poet, writer and journalist from Scotland. They graduated with their DFA in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow in 2020.

Siobhan Mulligan is a writer, artist, and DFA student in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests include postcolonial urban fantasy, YA/NA fiction, and the Southern Gothic. Her poetry has been published in *New Writing Scotland*, *CALYX*, and *The New Southern Fugitives*. She is a former editor of *From Glasgow to Saturn* and holds an MLitt in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, she now lives in Glasgow with some potted plants and her novel-in-progress, which she hopes will soon gain sentience and edit itself.

Stephen Nelson (he/him) is a galactic wizard and feline Buddha who just happens to live in Central Scotland with a cat called Amma. He has been publishing poetry and prose and exhibiting vispo internationally for a number of years. His last book was a Xerolage of visual poetry called *Arcturian Punctuation* (Xexoxial Editions). Previous books include *Lunar Poems for New Religions* (KFS Press) and *Thorn Corners* (erbacce). He loves Brazilian coffee and listening to the deep, resonant

tones of the rudra veena. See his asemic writing on Instagram @afterlights70.

**Maddy Robinson** is a freelance translator and writer, and is currently studying for an MLitt in Comparative Literature at Glasgow University. Her past lives involved working as a nursery assistant in Uzbekistan, a fishwife in Finnieston and a marketing lackey at a publishers in Madrid.

**Kate Rogan** (she/her) is a student studying for her MLitt in Creative Writing. She has been writing for 10+ years and enjoys poetry, prose, and fantasy fiction. Her primary interests include people, their relationships with each other and themselves, and how those relationships influence each other. If you're interested in her other work, you can find her on Wattpad.com under 'kateroganwrites'.

**Lillian Salvatore** is a fourth-year Scottish and English Literature student at the University of Glasgow. She writes poetry and prose and loves all things strange and sinister, and is the Editorial Director of *Glasgow University Magazine*. She'll talk to you about Mary, Queen of Scots until her head falls off, and is genuinely really happy to hear about that dream you had last night.

**James Taylor** (he/him) is a fourth-year English Literature student at the University of Glasgow, who enjoys writing poetry and prose. Other than napping and buying armfuls of books he will postpone reading for a shameful amount of time, he can be found in the jumpers section of any given shop and being an editor for *Glasgow University Magazine*.

## About the Editors

Grace Borland Sinclair (she/her) is a first-year SGSAAH PhD student working between Scottish Literature and the Centre for Fantasy and the Fantastic at the University of Glasgow. Her research specialises in Scottish feminist speculative fiction from the late-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century. She is particularly passionate about the intersection of writing and activism, and the power of the feminist imagination. She enjoys punk rock and red wine.

Hannah George (she/her) is a fourth-year English Literature student at the University of Glasgow who likes to read and write poetry that explores the intersections between literature and geography. She is also the creative writing editor at *Glasgow University Magazine* and enjoys wild swimming, hillwalking, and making zines.

Niamh Gordon (she/her) is a writer from Manchester, and a PhD student on the DEA Creative Writing programme at the University of Glasgow. She has an MA in Prose Fiction from UEA, and her writing has been published by *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *Return Trip*, *Still Point Journal*, and *The Polyphony*. Her creative-critical research explores how grief impacts on narrative time, looking specifically at bereavement by suicide. She likes running, cooking, and pubs.

Asta Kinch (she/her) is a Danish poet. She has a joint Honours degree from UofG in English Literature and Theology & Religious Studies and is currently completing the MLitt in Creative Writing. She's fascinated with the Bible and other fat texts and you can find her work in *Disobedient Magazine*, *ZARF*, and *GUM*, as well as in Issue 45 of this

journal and on the Instagram profile @fat\_bible. She'd like to use this platform to remind you to wear sunscreen daily!

**Liam Welsh** (he/him) is a poet and MLitt student of Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. He is a long suffering observer of form in poetry, interested in subjects such as landscape, memory, and personal connection. In his spare time he enjoys watching football, being psychologically demeaned in his attempts to learn Russian grammar, and, well, doing this sort of thing.

**Hannah Magee** (social media intern) (she/her) is a postgraduate research student in the Scot Lit department at GU. Her research largely consists of comparing literary masculinities in the contemporary fictions of Scotland and Ireland. She enjoys reading, painting, crocheting, drinking copious amounts of iced coffee and spending too much money on espresso martinis.



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Front and back cover designed by *Hannah Magee*.

