



From
Glasgow
to
Saturn

Issue 49

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From Glasgow to Saturn

49

Winter 2022

fucked
into lust
for love
nostalgia
and the moon

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A Storyelling.

Ian Farnes

I will lie about the pieces of the story that are missing. Where the whole earth shifted underfoot, the headstone surface dominates. The loam, the gold beneath the bracken cage is stripped in children's gloaming dreams, the liquid tongue lies flat under an arc of hollowed trunk and even when the auger cuts the roots, the whites of spine, the knuckle on the litter, it is evident that what was here needs washed out clean, that what might live here now or grow here now is nearing sleep, forever in the silver birch. The rooks, folded in prayer, will shake the dead leaves from the trees.

Part I

Bible Study Margin Notes

Maria Foley

It's 7:03pm, the window's open.

Sky is pale blue, streaked with
washed out strawberry ice cream clouds
and my cigarette won't light.

I lean out to the telephone wire and

I ask god if it's because I'm a dyke

or if it's because I stole this lighter in Budapest?

And she says no,
it's because I only talk about her when I'm drunk

and that last time we talked,
I got her pronouns wrong.

(fair enough)

Oh, and by the way
the eleventh commandment is serving cunt.

And I say that's no problem, god,
I do it all the time,
with my short hair and septum piercing
bubblegum pink baby tee, glitter glitzy grunge core
thing that I've got going on over here,
cute as a button
if that button had on a t-shirt you could see its button
nipples through

so to be honest not really much like a button at all then,
maybe more like a whore.

It's 7:05pm.
thumb fumbles.
flicks.

Clicks!

(everything in the world is about love
except for love,
which i'm starting to think might just be about mediocre sex.)

Touch flame to filter paper and inhale like you're doing
whatever it is that you do
when you go behind those closed nightclub toilet doors,
and when you exhale, make sure you aim it at the boy
across the street.
it won't reach him, not from here, but me and god,
we both know he deserved it anyway
because we think that his puffer coat is clapped.

I tap ash against the ceramic clay dish,
miss,
and watch as it scatters with the wind, ask god

d'you think that counts as littering?

She says, bitch,
it might.

Well in that case
you'll just have to deal with it, okay,
it's not like I ever claimed to be a fucking saint
and anyway, we both know
that the biggest danger of smoking indoors

is if my landlord is reading this.

sincerity isn't that scary, i suppose.

Leah Sinforiani

Recently, I've been trying to be more honest about things
like telling you actually, I don't like it when you
put three things in the washing machine
and leave the hob on all night; I've been wearing
sincerity like a 75-pound vintage silk dress
that I certainly don't need
and obviously can't afford
considering our energy bill is going to be sky high
Goodbye to the era of plenty and pastiche
Hello to spending every last penny on the
pursuit of Hedonistic Haberdashery
if you die tomorrow what the fuck is the point in having a
super-sonic-investments-account- with the bank of
SelfServingMotherfuckers anyway? Money for a mortgage
on a house I don't want with some beta bitch
wearing brogues I don't need lets
just be honest-
You and I can run away
together to some foreign land of magical realism
and you can bake bread and we can celebrate your
half-birthday like a queen shut down all the roads like
it's 2022 baby we're allowed a little treat of cinaminism
on our 4-pound lattes once
in a while, but it doesn't bode
well with unemployment, I suppose, we'll live in this
house forever and hide in the cracks when the big
bad landlord comes a knocking
to huff and puff and
blow out all the prohibited candles we seem to have
acquired. Really- what I've been trying to say is
I have truly been trying to be more
earnest so when I say I'd like to stay here

with you forever and
melt into the black
leather couch letting the wax pour over
our chapped lips and brush with death over unshaven legs

I mean it.

I wasn't always like this

Claire Reynolds

It's along and winding road, but it's not about the destination, it's about the journey. Don't look back, focus on the road ahead. How many roads must a man walk down? Apparently fucking loads, Bob. Roads with tar, feathers and nails strewn for miles. I'm roadrunner and life is Wyl E coyote; and while that black dog has yet to catch me, it's wearing me down. There has to be some sort of respite from this. Watching out for the TNT and ACME bombs this clown keeps throwing at me has yet again clouded my brain and made me forget the story I wanted to tell you. I really need to tell you, so that if you come up against this yourself you can react in the opposite way that I did. Anger the gods! Stamp and shake the natural order of things. Or rue the day you didn't, and end up like me.

I wasn't always like this. Once upon a time I was clear eyed and the dirt and dank didn't gather in the wrinkles around my eyes. I had hope, I had trust and I had self-esteem. All of those wonderful things they tell you to have, I had in excess, and I tic-tac-toed down the yellow brick road headed for that pot of gold at the end. And then wham, bam, thank you ma'am; I was so intoxicated with life that I was plucked from that pathway and bundled into a dark, dark wood.

The earth was bitter as it entered my mouth. A hand clasped over my face, fingers pinching my nose and making me gasp for breath, the gasping causing the dirt to choke me. I felt as it entered my lungs and then an uppercut to my jaw distracted me from the searing stab below my waist. I felt as if machinery was chewing and gnawing on every bone in my body as he bore down and hurt me over and over. And then, sunlight. Sunlight stung my eyes as his weight lifted from me and his shadow left, and sunlight dried the blood on my face. I screamed my throat raw for a long time before someone found me. They may have thought I was a mating fox, on account of the noise, not my red hair. Foxes scream when they

mate. Just the females. I don't fucking blame them, no one warned them either.

This is the part where I tell you not to do what I did. I wish I'd scratched and bitten to expel him from me because all of that 'lie still and take it' is plain bullshit. They'll still act out their fantasy and your reactions play no part in that. So howl at the fucking moon, my dear.

Things lost: three fingernails, five teeth, a boyfriend, all sense of self, and many fickle friends who shouldn't let the door hit them on the arse on the way out.

The light really did seem so much brighter afterwards. Not in an Instagram filter kind of way, but in that every set of eyeballs on me seemed to reflect the light back at me, spotlight on me. This new light pried and pinched me to test if it hurt enough. So, I crept back into the dark woods with the worms and flies and animal shit, because I knew how I had felt in that place. I knew what occurred in that part of my mind, and no one could contort or undermine what happened because I was still there feeling those things. They might have willed themselves into standing in the woods alongside me, but they were not so deep down in the muck. Not even he knows how it was for me. And he was there. Above me, on me, in me. No one else will ever be inside me like that.

When they catch men who rape and ask them if they did it, they say no. 'No, no, no, no no...' Then sometimes on the very rare occasion it looks like there's enough evidence to convict, they might say 'yes'. As a reward for the yes, they get to stay in prison for less time. But it's good to say 'no, no, no, no, no' first, because then everyone that wants to say you didn't do it will say you only said yes because if you kept saying 'no, no, no, no please God no,' then you'd just have gotten a longer sentence. As a bonus, these warriors for justice might even make a fun podcast to try and prove the rapist's innocence. It's a total hit and girls write to him in prison.

Here's a sneak preview of a bonus edition to the podcast I've been working on in my head. It really digs deep into those elements of the case that got everyone wondering. It's hosted by the personality disorder I've developed, and co-hosted by my PTSD. What a laugh, these gals.

'So, if it wasn't him who broke Kelly's jaw, then who did? Did she do it herself, or are we looking for a different perpetrator? I mean the guy is a photographer and she was seen flirting with him at a wedding weeks before. He's so handsome, like, *why* would he ever need to rape someone?'

'Good point Kelly! Also, if Kelly was *missing* three fingernails, then why were only *two* found at the *alleged* rape site? There's something fishy going on here, Kelly!'

Things gained: genital herpes, dental veneers.

And a fear of the dark.

I do still laugh every day. I laughed the day he got sentenced to five years, but not as hard as I cried when he got released in two. The natural order of things is that men protect their own.

I killed his dog. It was living with his mother. I threw the dog a small steak I'd split to make a pocket, where I packed a paste I concocted of anti-freeze and powdered weed killer. Hours later I watched from my car as his mother walked the dog over to the small green in front of her house. The dog was shaking, almost vibrating as it shit its guts out, but alive. I had to spend about twenty quid on steak over four days until it died. The police came to my door. I told them I only had house plants and lived in a flat, why would I even have weedkiller? Go check to see if I bought any.

'Don't you even care that an innocent dog is dead?'

The female PC. She's a regular saint Francis of Assisi, another bullied moron evolved into a bullying moron with authority. And a taser.

'I do not care that his dog is dead. I am in fact happy that his dog is dead.'

'Well, do you know who killed Binky?'

'Didn't you say it was weedkiller?'

I wished it was his death we were discussing.

You probably think that's terrible, don't you? Killing a dog. It was his dog, though, and if dogs are such great creatures and have such a positive influence on people, then how come wee Binky the Dachshund was able to stand quietly by while he raped me? She was a dumb, complicit bitch and she had to go.

So, do you feel less empathy for me because I killed a dog? A female dog. With a limp. And a heart condition. It would have been a painful death. Look, I really don't care if you have empathy for me or not, shove your empathy.

This is yet another point where you don't do what I do. You don't spend the next ten years waiting for him to rebuild his life before taking your shot. It would have been better if I had just made myself visible enough to kick the legs from under him at every attempt he made at starting to live a normal life.

Gets a job: 'He's a rapist!' Fired.

Gets a girlfriend: 'He's a rapist!' Dumped!

But I wasn't sure that lightning wouldn't strike twice, that I wasn't being watched. So, I waited. Too long. He has a normal life now. He has a job in a supermarket and is living with a pretty woman he met while working there. I've been following them, and I've made a timetable of their day-to-day comings and goings. He seems like the attentive, kind man I chatted with at a wedding on a warm April day. They walk in the park at the weekends. Our park. My mind is on fire every day, and on the days I have to follow him to the park I vomit.

I'm outside his house now, she's going out with the girls, I think; left in a taxi with them a short time ago. Giggling, sequined, smiling. He's alone in the house, he feels safe. He doesn't know I'm waiting. That I have a lighter and some fuel. I could set his whole life on fire. What a powerful feeling. I have the desire and I have opportunity, a powder keg of a combination.

But it feels better to walk away.

That's control.

The Final Words of Mary Stuart

Hannah Grimsbaw

'O Goddis haue of me compassion'

- (Casket Sonnet 1, Attributed to Mary, Queen of Scots)

Please God, have compassion.
Nineteen years late
I forgave her today
For all she has done, for what she shall do.
While they light the torches
We must burn one another
To salvage ourselves.

Please God, forgive me.
I raised an army of words but,
The litany of lies they sang accompanied by
The blasts of the blasphemous trumpets
Made the people dance while I drowned
In the blood of those I love.

Please God, let it end today.
My head must roll.
Let my mind tumble from descendant
to descendant until strength
Is found in my silence
For an uprising against this monstrous violence.

A Body of Water

Ian Farnes

The Monk's pink flesh looked like it had been super-imposed against a green screen of forest. He didn't belong. Three thousand miles from home and he'd never even been out of Scotland before, apart from a coach trip to Newcastle.

The lakeside was dotted with couples swimming in brightly coloured swimming suits. Kate carried a drink to him. There was a kind of bar in a hut at the other side of the car park where a skinny kid sold cold beers from a cool box.

Monk's back was burning: Scottish skin under North American sun. Kate offered to put sunscreen on him, but he thought it a step too far. He liked her but didn't want her to feel the awkwardness in his bones yet. He wanted to talk to her some more. She held out a bottle.

— Is that from here?

She sat down next to him and put the beer on the grass between his feet. He drew his legs together and felt the condensation from the bottle on his insteps.

She looked at him easily. He tried to speak to her in the same way she looked at him.

— In Glasgow, there's a brewery next to the Necropolis, which is a big old cemetery on a hill, and folk say the old Victorian water pipes going to the brewery are full of holes, and the pipes run through the cemetery, so the flavours of the dead end up in the beer... everyone drinks it and they don't even know what they're drinking.

It was a set piece which had worked well before but even as he was rolling it out he thought that life, at its best, was not like that.

- The flavours of the dead? She laughed.

He was relieved to stumble forward with *something*.

- You and I, we're full of flavour. Packed with it. Most of our bitterness, and our sweetness, leaves us when we die, but some of it stays. I say the flavours of the dead, but it's barely there. Only connoisseurs might notice.

There was a space where they just looked at each other and he had to fill it.

- Scottish people have more flavour than most, but lots of people don't taste of anything at all by the time they end up in beer bottles.

- Are we going to end up in beer bottles?

- If the world lasts long enough... but if you died in Glasgow and got put in the old cemetery you'd end up in the beer quicker than most.

She watched him drink. He smiled without showing his teeth. He liked the beer. They drank some more and walked to the pier, a slatted, weathered thing, sat where it ended, legs hung in the water, they would swallow down the rest. There was a barge tied up in the middle of the lake. A young couple were on it. They were kissing, finished kissing, slid into the silver-blue of what surrounded them.

A group of young men arrived at the lakeside, shirtless and wearing shorts in orange, red, and pinks. Kate smiled at them. Their smiles met hers, tilting their heads back, bright eyes and white teeth. One of the men leaned into his friend, a muscled arm curving around a bare back and he said something quick and quiet, mouth on ear, that made the two men laugh.

The laugh made Monk feel a rising bitterness. It settled at his eyes and left a heat at the temples. He swallowed it down.

Still smiling, the young men took turns engaging Kate in phatic communion. They hadn't seen her for a while. Where had she been? England? Scotland. Beautiful. Where would it take her? Ah, yes. Don't be a stranger.

All of them seemed to be made from the same incredible looking skin, all weathered differently, but with a kind of golden complexion.

Monk noticed that there were weeds growing on the lakebed. Was it called a lakebed?

It reminded him of the scene from *The Night of the Hunter*, of the woman's hair under the water. Poor old Charles Laughton. Why weren't they kinder to him? It was a good film. It was a cruel world. Most people don't think things through, he thought.

He'd met Kate at a party in Kirkcaldy: one of the parties in Octavia Street, or Salisbury Street. Someone put "You make me feel (like a natural woman)" on the record player and he was drunk enough to dance and, fuck it all, sing along. She'd joined in, and for the rest of her trip he felt like he got on with her better than anyone outside his too small family. She was exotic in that setting and it should have been his turn now, except that he didn't feel like Fife was an exotic place to come from.

The greyhound bus seemed exotic. He took it from the New York Port Authority bus terminal to Keene, New Hampshire. Kate met him there.

One of Monk's friends from Burntisland had met a girl from New York and Monk's mum had bought her son the plane tickets so he could go watch them be married. Not that his mum believed in marriage. She told Monk's friend to expect sadness, even while remaining hopeful about her own son's chances. She could still get excited about love when talking to her boy. She knew he would plan to meet up with the American girl.

- It'll be a once in a lifetime trip. You have to go.

She said she was saving the money for a rainy day. Monk didn't understand that the money had always been for him. There had been enough rainy days.

It took his mum more than three years to save what she had: working two part-time jobs. She packed in smoking and kept much of the money in a tin.

When Monk got to New York he stayed in Manhattan for the first two days then moved out to Queens where everything was cheaper, eating gyros for breakfast and lunch to see if he could cultivate some mass, give himself some greater substance, some weight.

On the day of the wedding, not knowing the subway system, he missed the ceremony.

The New Hampshire part of the trip was going to make up for it. New York was like a movie set where he was one of the extras in a too big cast. New Hampshire was a chance at something else. The thing he thought he needed. The thing he thought he had been lacking.

This was the nearest he'd been to his father in almost fourteen years. He knew his dad lived by a lake somewhere north of where he was now. Somewhere upstream, he thought. Maybe his father was sitting somewhere to the north with his feet in the water, maybe he was swimming with his new family: Monk's two younger brothers, a younger sister, his father's second wife, all of them going back and forth from their detached house by some other lake in some other woods. His gran told him about it. He didn't know if he would see his father again. He almost hoped that they were happy, that his dad had found the thing he'd gone to look for.

The river passed in front of them; the lake made it look like all was still, but it was moving, had come through a great land mass, was going out to sea.

He was getting lost in it, but felt able to take it all in without speaking, the ends of their feet dangling in the water, she turned to him,

- Do you want to swim?

He felt his heart rise to the surface of his chest and imagined it beating. A blood-filled pulse under membrane and pale pink shell. He thought about the weeds. There was no lifeguard. Other people were swimming. It was quite a large lake and there were limbs and heads emerging and submerging at all kinds of irregular intervals.

She slid in while he was caught up thinking, he watched her go under for a too long moment before she came back, taking air in great gasps. She swam away and he felt the need to follow her until there they were, both swimming out to the wooden deck tied to the lakebed. The water was cool on his shoulders in a body that was finally his.

Part II

Day at the Beach

Margaret Grant

The beach looks inviting enough. Soft waves sizzle on the sand, barely spent, before they are enticed back into a sea dazzling so bright, it almost hurts the eyes to look at it. High above tiny puffs of cloud float like cotton balls on sun loungers. Underneath, Jenny is petrified. Not the heart knocking in the chest kind of petrified but more a slow crawl from the soles of her feet – a deep dread creeping upwards like clinging ivy until it settles in a florid splotch on her chest. *Don't look down* she tells herself, *Just-don't-look-down*.

The towel is wrapped around her like a comforter for a newborn.

“Aw, look, there’s Jenny!” She hears the boys holler from further along the shore front, cracking up as they wolf whistle, egging each other on.

“Oh, fuck off” she yells back in good humour, “Away and play wi’ yourselves.”

Their teenage laughter honks in the air as they move on, eyes locked on a cluster of bikini clad girls from school. Jenny shakes her head and looks around, takes in the families sprawled on picnic rugs and candy-striped towels pulling sandwiches and cans from cool bags; toddlers ineptly flicking sand with plastic spades; everywhere, kids scampering like ants, not a care in the world, their high-pitched screams cutting the air like knives through butter.

“Och, there you are. I’ve been lookin’ for you everywhere.” Rob stands next to her, his hands running along the lip of his trunks, drifting across the overhang of his belly. “Busy, isn’t it?”

Jenny rolls her eyes, tries not to show that she's riled, him standing there, master of the obvious.

“Come on, Jenny, take it off. It'll be fine.”

“For goodness sakes, will you just give me a minute, it's bloody freezin'.”

“Are you havin' a laugh woman, it's 23 degrees.”

“Aye well, it's no 23 degrees in there.” Jenny pulls the blue bucket hat down close to her ears, close to where the blood is surging. “Oh, sod it,” she tuts, unwrapping the towel, letting it drop to her feet, a crumpled plop in the sand.

Bare and exposed the scar pinks just above her swimsuit. The silicone boob rests snug in its pocket. Her mind has rehearsed this moment a thousand times, blown it around like a leaf in an autumn storm. Slowly, her eyes lift to the clammy comfort of Rob's hand clamping around her own.

“You can do this,” he whispers, and they make a run for it.

FIVE SHETLAND SONGS

Jim Harold

(for my mother's forebears)

I

the Voe of Clousta and the crofts of Bonhouse

... from Clousta up the short rise to Bonhouse—

East Bonhouse still a home

West Bonhouse no more

than a ruin—

across tight short grass

and round the Ness to the *Briggs*

passed an abandoned *plantiecrub*, now up and over

Mitchel *Balfour's(?)* Hill

back again

wind

azure sky

cerulean sea

a land of rocks carpeted by sheep-

cropped grass and bog cotton

II

the Sound(s) of Houbansetter ...

where man-handled boulders
splashed into shallow water

shallow waves now gently
lap and suck at the shore

a spinning-wheel
once whispered, but not
now

in this
silence the waves
close over

wind
death blows
on a rusting anvil

III

... a *peat-smoke-blackened fiddle*

hung from a hook

he hit it with a peat iron to see,
might it dance a jig?

or, better still,
sound a melancholy air?

one that
would ripple
forth
its
sadness to seep
like a *spring*
into the listening
landscape

wind

horse-hair

and gut under tension

IV

late summer light ...

lies on the *hill*

rough *pasturage*

and

tumbled rocks

a destitute croft

framed by sky

and the *lagoon's* edge

V

... in the failing light

grey rain-laden clouds shroud the
landward hill tops

in the instant

a soot-grey Arctic

Skua dives again

above the dull
sand and the sea by St.
Ninian's

to force a smaller gull

to disgorge its hard-won
crop of food

down into the grey ashen waters

•••

Lovers on Arran

(after Seamus Heaney)

Sarah Higgins

sharp spray hits my face
throw arms up to meet waves, laugh
as i am knocked backwards
and again as you wince
cold water filling in the spaces
between your fear and this freedom

make you take pictures
for posterity and for instagram
say out loud yes, we are here
in this sea

flash breaks the surf
a rock moving, alive
a! fucking! otter!
my sincere delight matched
only by yours
release salted tears, wonder
if this sea is not in me

later you will cook dinner
then fold into me
leave creases on skin like paper cuts
stinging sweetly with the pain
of a perfect memory receding
with the tide

if i was a worm

Sarah Higgins

'if i was a worm would you still love me?'
if you were a worm i'd run
screaming from the room
looking for you to kill you for me,
but you'd probably scoop you up in a cup
open the window gently
fuck your worm self out of it
to begin a new life in the grass
and i'd love you for that

Radiator Bull

Viola Ragonese

Do not let the crack in the radiator paint turn into a bull.

This is what you tell yourself, in the living room of your old Italian home, as you are staring into the void, the void being in this case an old radiator with cracked paint. There is one crack in the paint that looks exactly like a bull with horns. Dangerous. Bulls are dangerous, radiators are warm and comforting. Stay with the radiator, don't let the crack in the paint turn into a bull, you tell yourself.

Every object in your old Italian home has the propensity to be something other than itself. When you're in Dublin, radiators are radiators, stinky buses are stinky buses, walls are walls. The noises of the city and your busy life make it hard for stories to reach you. Stories can only be heard in silence. And boredom.

However, you come back home, and nothing happens here, time is still. Your dad goes to work, your mum goes out to run some errands and you get the weird feeling that there is no need to fill the silence of the empty house. You sit and stare at the radiator, while the cracks in the radiator paint do their best to lure you into their story.

Do not let the crack in the radiator paint turn into a bull.

Unfortunately for you, there is another crack above that crack (the radiator must be getting old), which is vaguely shaped like a star. You could *maybe* resist the bull alone, but as the plot thickens, you are hooked, and it becomes harder to not listen to the story the bull is trying to tell. You are conflicted: it's tempting to let reality melt away, but it's also terrifying. You have one foot into the world of the bull, one into that of the radiator. You listen to the cacophony produced by each reality, yearning for your undivided attention.

I am a bull with the legs of a gazelle. I am chased by a star. I have no clue what the star would do if she ever reached me. My life is pure adrenaline, which fuels my disproportionately thin legs to carry away my heavy body...

Rain hitting the ceiling. Your neighbour yells at the tv. Your mum is probably going to be back from her errands soon.

The star is scary because she chases me, but most stars stay still, while mine chases me, which makes her special, right? For whatever reason, my star cares about me. I run, she chases...

The wind is rising. The tv yells back at your neighbour. He must be watching the football.

Ours is an infinite chase. She will never reach me because I have gazelle legs. We will run infinitely. There is something romantic about an infinite chase, but what's really interesting is how it all started...

You step up and position both feet firmly into the bull world. Go ahead, you say, I'm listening.

grocery shopping

chris timmins

***silly little fruit iso hot-fat-trans-fag leather
daddy! <3 [t4t]***

lets fall in love!!!! (or at the very least - make out
while looking at art)

i am a half-decent poet and a full-time nuisance,
while you are strong arms to hold me close and
99p daffodils that last for weeks!

it's no secret that i am dreaming about falling in
love in the pasta aisle, our hands both reaching
for the rigatoni - you, with smoked paprika in your
basket (obviously) and me, with tangerines!

teach me how to be a whirligig in the gentle
breeze and i will show you how to be the garden
apple tree, bright red jewels ready for picking!

maybe together we could be pink seaglass,
tender in the sand?

text me!!! <3

BAR SONG

Emma Urbanova

scraping rich, blood-smelling rust
with my bare fingers
the sour, pungent strings
pull back on their own affections

let me begin you
I want to lick you like tequila salt off the back of my palm
lemon and pepper sunrise
all I want is to raspberry feed you
on the counter, face-down
tom collins you to sleep
I want to graze your stubble for hours golden-dazed
hours on end in an unburst liquored bubble
it is not your long gold chain that is
dangling in my face, the initials
unknown
as the redhead girl sings on the backlit podium

I stand close my hands sore and sick with the want of you
with needing to touch you
handsomely swept by the urge
absolut citron vodka poured by its throat

as I love you in a thousand little ways

Language acquisition

Violet Maxwell

my lover teaches me his mother tongue
placing each word on my lips like popping candies
and even though this too will dissolve into time like everything else
i enjoy the way the sounds stack up so neatly
a cacophony of marbles falling down the front of me
spilling into my lap like the world's most mechanical striptease
it's quite a lot like you, this language
it says exactly what it means
there is no mystery
and in loving you i've learned to say things simply

instead of saying
i am a shroud of silk pearly white and fraying at the edges
i now say 'at my most beautiful i still have many loose ends inside me
but i promise to be the softest thing you've ever touched'

your gaze is like open season
like a clear shot on a cloudless day
and instead of saying
'i have a backyard full of knives and my sheets are covered in quicksand'
i say
when i am with you i see only grass and sky
i only feel crisp linens made softer by your breathing next to me
all the nights of painting my face bright with lead and mercury
the mornings of a new door handle, this one heavy
and brass
all the new paths to walk myself home
they burn at the edges and bury themselves somewhere invisible
with you, i exchange hieroglyphs
and telegrams short and pretty
send carrier pigeons that keep our love pinched between their talons
we promise ourselves a different language every day, all of them beautiful

m4m (man for moon)

chris timmins

after Henri Matisse

what if we ate amethyst for dinner tonight,

quartz between our teeth like
strawberry seeds +

what if i only wrote poems about being gay for

the moon,

i already stick the stars together point

by point

'He's known as Chile's greatest poet, but feminists say Pablo Neruda is cancelled'

Lucy Lauder

I sit around and ponder what it means for us that you have what looks like the tesco clubcard fob on your keys in the background on that pub table when I was

flicking past your photos on the sad sunday of the inevitable hangover I planned for us a reimagining of the same sad sunday spent in domestic idle ism take the dog out cook roast potatoes in thyme together it seemed quite likely that we'd end up like this a few bad birthday presents and a silent car journey between us as if you'd learn to hate me eventually my leaving

the bathroom light on and why do you never remember that I can't stand coriander

when it's curry night and we'd fight but we'd carry on like this because we

brushed our teeth side by side on one particular morning at twenty something that made it seem pretty poetic or at least pretty right to be stood here like this

before our foaming minty mouthed counterpart illuminated for us in the mirror to decide that maybe this or something close

to this is what we have both been looking for roaming around the universe for eyes half shut one eye open to love after all laugh as I return to my

headache funny to think we still listen fondly to this bedtime

story lock my phone let's say goodnight.

Part III

compact disc

Lucy Lauder

To anticipate tomorrow together
as we'd anticipate track six of the eva
cassidy album playing half scratched
but still singing softly in the half air
of the first car I ever burnt my fingers
in the cigarette lighter of those hot leather
seats stuck to my little legs in the summer
windows down you had to drive us every
where and

all at once so lucky those
songbirds kept singing like that
never felt
so safe and sad to think that we
should never chance to turn back
there sweet
home is snow to the east now and
yet you
stay circulating
still in your anticipation

of all that came
since surfacing we

light the summer
of once last listening.

Looking for an Echo

Julie Rea

Abel Gardiner, his hands knotty and twisted from arthritis, tried to claw at the mud on either side of him to raise himself up. His left foot was wedged in the grating he noticed too late, and his ankle throbbed. There was a narrow gash on his forehead; the blood tasted warm and syrupy as it trickled over his eye and down his cheek before pooling in the webbed corner of his mouth. He heard Nell, his black and white border collie, yelping nearby. Trembling, he lay back down on the cold, sodden path. The clouds above were white parachute sails. Something wet at his fingertips; Nell licking the palm of his hand. A ringing, like a tuning fork, in his ears, as the sky above burned silver at the edges, a hot white heat, then blackness.

Basswood is Abel's favourite wood to carve and whittle with. Soft, not a lot of grain, easily worked. In the Middle Ages, German sculptors used it to craft intricate and ornate altar pieces. Vikings constructed their shields from it. Abel feels the weight of history as he cups the walnut-coloured wood in his hands, his bone-handled penknife slicing through it like butter. Abel spends many hours like this, the fine light grain as malleable as clay between his fingers, wood shavings gathered in clumps at his feet, before studying the finished model in his hand, checking for any imperfections, then placing it proudly on the living room windowsill beside the array of windmills, clipper ships, bullfinches, and samurai warriors.

The polystyrene cup was empty, and the roof of Abel's mouth was starchy as sandpaper, but the jug on the cabinet beside his bed was too far away to reach. He sat, slightly lopsided, in the hospital bed, a discarded newspaper on his lap. A square of gauze covered his wound, and he weakly gripped the side of the mattress as the room started to spin. A doctor approached and picked up the medical chart at the bottom of his bed. He had five pens in a neat row in his breast pocket (two red, two blue, one black),

“How are you feeling today, Mr Gardiner?” The doctor flipped the pages of the chart backward and forward. Abel had to swallow down two hard lumps of saliva before he could answer.

“My mouth is dry as dirt.” He glanced again at the jug of water. “Is that normal?”

“Oh yes,” the doctor murmured. “You gave yourself quite a concussion, possibly even a small stroke. I want to run more tests before allowing you home, just to keep an eye on you for a few more days, okay? Now, you’re on Warfarin, yes?”

Abel nodded. The doctor marked something down on the chart using one of the blue pens, then hooked it back over the end of the bed. “I’ll come back later Mr Gardiner. Get some rest.” Before the sentence was finished, the doctor had already moved across the room and on to another patient.

Abel uses pine when whittling figurines for his young granddaughter ; Fairies, Angels, Mickey Mouse. It’s soft and easy to carve, but he needs to stop often to clean the sap off his knife. Pine doesn’t hold as well as other woods, but the smell of it reminds Emily of Christmas, so Abel patiently perseveres with the sticky, caramel coloured wood until he has a tiny sculpture for her to put up on the shelf in her room.

A nurse held a carton of orange juice with a straw for Abel to drink from. Nothing quenched his thirst; there were half a dozen empty cartons in the wastepaper basket. The nurse guided the straw back into his mouth just as his wife arrived. The nurse registered the look of alarm in his Nora’s eyes at seeing this.

“Bit of numbness in your hands today, isn’t that right, Abel?”

His eyes were closed, but flickered briefly at the mention of his name, before sealing shut again. The nurse crumpled the carton and gently squeezed Nora’s elbow as she passed.

“He’s a little tired today, but nothing to worry about.”

Nora sat down stiffly on the blue plastic chair, as the nurse quietly pulled the threadbare curtain all the way around the bed.

Abel always buys his wood from a local lumber yard. There are arts and craft shops nearby, easier to get to, but they’re bland and sterile in comparison to the heady smell of the timber yard. For Abel, wood is life; a living, breathing thing. The yard is pungent

with aroma - dense tang of musky oak, sweet bite of balmy cedar, the mouth-watering scent of maraschino cherries from the stalk of a laurel tree - and as Abel would leave, his nostrils and lungs were filled with sawdust; his leather bag brimming with tenderly selected cuts of wood.

Abel was sitting in his favourite chair, peering out of the window. The brightly coloured banner tacked on the wall opposite said “Welcome Home”. Nell, Abel’s border collie, hovered cautiously in the corner of the room. Nora was making ham sandwiches and vol au vents in the kitchen, a tight fixed grin on her face. Abel looked at the unfamiliar faces of the people in the living room smiling at him. He felt like a tourist in an airport terminus, unsure of how he got to be there, or even where he’s going, but, trusting that they must be waiting there with him for a reason, he smiled back politely.

The first thing Abel had ever whittled was a small spear, carved from a twig, when he was nine years old and camping with his father. Using his father’s bone-handled penknife, Abel had taken the blade and hacked a large chunk off the twig. His father took the blade from him and chiselled at the frail bark until he’d forged a delicate spear.

“Listen to the wood, Abel,” he said, lighting a cigarette, passing over another branch to his son. “They all have a story they want to tell. You just have to want to hear it.”

Abel spent the rest of the weekend practicing; the marks where the knife nicked his skin were worn like trophies. By the time they left, Abel finally had his spear, made by his own hands. He put it in his jacket pocket to show his mother when they got home.

All Abel could smell when they returned was his father’s tobacco, the dense sooty fog of the campfire and the pungent balm of the trees which still clung to all his clothes. The grime of sap and rind clung underneath his fingernails for days.

A line of dirty glasses was stacked on the worktop beside the sink. Eloise gathered the empty paper plates and napkins, before shoving them into a black bin liner. Nora sat at the kitchen table, a dim halo above her from the overhead light, slowly twisting her wedding band around her finger.

“Can I tell you about a dream I had a few nights ago?”

“What’s that, Mum?”

“My dream, shall I tell you?”

Eloise nodded and pulled up a chair beside her mother.

“It was so strange, this dream. Your dad was lying in a pond, or a lake, something like that, his woolly hat on, winter coat, and boots. He was alive, breathing; he was just...very still on the water. I was on the bank, in my nightdress, it was steep and slippery, and I was trying to grab him. I kept grasping for the hem of his trousers, but he was always just out of reach.”

Nora cleared her throat, smoothing down the frill apron over her dress.

“And then I stopped. I remember it so clearly; I stopped trying to pull him in. I just stood there, on the muddied slope, calmly watching as your father floated away”.

Eloise reached for her mother’s hand. “It’s still him, Mum. He’s still here.”

Nora’s pale reflection was a waxy apparition on the darkened kitchen window behind her.

In a drawer, in their bedroom, wrapped in muslin cloth is the thin volume of photographs from their wedding day; a small sliver of bark tucked in between its pages. Abel had taken Nora to a forest thick with bluebells, and, under a canopy of vaulted trees, proposed by carving a church steeple on the trunk of a felled conifer. They’d stayed until dusk, clouds like stringy candyfloss and, before leaving, Nora had roughly torn a slim shard of sapling, to keep as a reminder.

On the coffee table beside Abel lay, untouched, a rich honey coloured flank of wood chopped from a flame maple; his homecoming present, a bone-handled penknife placed expectantly upon it. Nell was curled under his feet, as Abel stared, unblinking, at the television screen, his hands placed on his lap, a feeble tremor in his fingers. Nora was telling herself that his arthritis was playing up today, bad, worse than it’s ever been, and that tomorrow he would probably decide to pick up the wood and work on it.

Tomorrow.

Drift

Jackie Taylor

she is seahorse
barely attached to the rungs of the barstool
swaying in out
into other people's conversations

the card presented
with love on your birthday, xxx
as if it holds the answer,
a coax of blush roses, musty eucalyptus
& honesty, hand-tied, xxx

my kiss misses her cheek
she screams, sea-eagle
I don't know you
the pub chatter hangs like ink in water
someone plays the soft chair shuffle
*(it's only—
—take no notice
she sleeps in—
—the room upstairs)*

and the room upstairs is as it was the last time
faux-fur coats on broad-shouldered hangers
covering the bay windows, denying the tides
you always took your Father's side

as we did the last time, and the time before
we eat cod and chips in a gloomy choke
of old skin-dust and static
is this why you raised me to breathe out before diving?

She is old selkie who has forgotten the sea.
Her drift is in out
past shifting dunes and my stranded stories.

She is seal pup who has nothing yet to forget.
She holds her face up
and with the spit-wet, salt-wet
corner of my tissue

I wipe flakes of fish from her lips
translucent
xxx

Steeple

Catriona Sutherland

In steepled, sewn haste
Lies the art of miss commune
You lead with ribboned thread, paint a blurred sky to trap
our fickle dread to a careful balanced cross, tacked onto a
fridge, hiding star.
Sitting at the point, it means to wait in thawing flower beds
'a point is not a turn,' *wandering curve*, but balding sockets
echo chambers for pressed goodbyes, our horizon of darting eyes,
daydreams punctured in the merry go-round of window to window.

'a rift,' *fear-perverted jag*, a fate conceived in self-written haste,
That now, takes, everything to stitch and weave away from.
Gospel, lost to segmented orange politics, a posturing heron
to our testament truth.

Sitting at a point, it means to wait?

'a point is not a turn' *lost curve* — a line, that
no longer trips and ties

The drift

To drift

Lurching conflict, find our exposure, mirage of choral eyes,
become tempered to the curve of the ground, our interval
between steps falling, tonal, to the grass
rather than the flat paving stones of city streets — rift that
points and pricks, gentle cadence of connected contours:
mountainous peaks
through slow-patterned time, I wish you framed our sky.
'Steeple, please decide'
Your outline shadows citted spaces, a cadence to arms
'fated to private our chaos'

To drift

The drift

'Catch'—*crafted truth*, not a skin-sewn fabrication that
needs a lifetime of dispute,

'Refute!' out the threads —Granulated tissue pulls away
Just lie back
in patient delay, and let the steeple wave back your scar
To drift

The drift

Just lie back, in time crafted hand, clasp over,
'seal, stressed, and last goodbye'— *oxygen mask*
Fitted with a worn elastic band, "I—"

Steepled whispers
Sigh, inhale the hurried cloud,
The tip-toe of spiralled brown, turning in an echo of yesterday

once proud now patients
taught to be patient
grasping in empty demand

Your Reaching 'steeple you whisper' a state of threat
Clasped in chained remand
To drift

the drift

To escape the risk of steepled stitches in a hospital bed - He was now an epileptic with electrodes in his head. He spoke to God in a cloud, and said, "Pull me to chaos, indulge in a drink, for in your sterile kingdom, I am drugged, in a blissful tug: *'that isn't mine'*"
And in his languid mind of once upon a time,
wind began to howl, careful crafted features, our God turning foul,

to drift

the drift

cradled head, bandaged in horizons darting unease. Pupils
exult in the cry of

sewn —stitched illusion
dialect of distance
shackle crafted out of
confusion

To a hospital bed
Unlikely melody : *'heart trace scatter as leaves'*
just slightly out of pace to either rhythm or arrhythmia.

the drift

to drift

Wipe a circle in the condensation
let the Godling see
ripped thread, we fight the feared, dreaded daze of
beautified indolence.

To drift-

It means to wait- Or does it?
Mean to admit to a rift,
Steepled crime, you will not encircle, make a crown of our skyline
Nor pierce, pull in your fabricated bliss, the wandering rebounding arrows
of our searching inner eye.

Death is a lost coin

Chin Li

For Edwin Morgan (1920 – 2010)

Death is a lost coin in my pocket — I could feel
it pressing on me; but when I put my hand inside,
it was nowhere to be found, until one day
I took the garment out of the washing machine
and the coin suddenly rolled out of the pocket,
cold and angry, staring me in the eye.

Death is my shadow in the midday sun —
I can't quite see it but it will soon lengthen,
for my face is cracked, my eyes dim, my arthritic hands
clumsy when buttoning my shirt. Could I slough off wrinkles,
even grow a second skin, while learning again to be kind?

Craze for the Second Life waxes and wanes.
How could an online avatar offer the perfection
an offline self never finds?
Do I want to write my life in digital codes or live in blockchains?
No, there's no escape; no hope of eternal spring.
Only memories of a life in the flesh once full of laughter
and blue sky, where summer wasn't a pipe dream
but a plate of strawberries on a table in the back garden,
with words & songs & dancing on the lawn
celebrating the wonder of being women and men.

But I do fear the imminence of my threescore and ten:
I know my lost coin will re-appear — perhaps it has never left.
And yet there are still suitcases to unpack, old letters to read through,
stories to collect. Moving east from Glasgow west was my first act,
swapping the Kilpatrick Hills for the Pentlands. "Tell them stories!"
That was the confident, child-like voice I heard.
As I let Sebald run Saturnine rings round me, I keep in mind
the meaning of *gekündigt* and study the history of the Fens.
Regrets I have more than a few, I admit, but they don't matter
because there are news reports every December evening

like a series of horror movies, reminding me of unspeakable carnage in faraway and not-so-faraway lands.

When the day comes when I can't walk,
I'll surely still attempt to shuffle through my front door
out onto busy streets,
and cast my shadow against desolate walls.
As the long dark winter comes and goes,
and my lost coin lurking at every corner,
I'll keep my past in my purse like a precious stone,
lest I mislay it somewhere unawares.
And when my time comes, I'll follow Lyra's footsteps,
through the land of the dead ("Tell them stories!"),
out of the only window into my second life, into the airy world
of clouds and trees and grass, of sleet and snow and storm.

So let the Edinburgh rain wash away the fear!

The Cleaner's Tale

Allan Gaw

You try getting blood out of marble! I'm telling you it's a thankless task. You can scrub until your fingers are red raw and the stain still won't lift. I've tried my special mixture of olive oil, ashes and urine and even that won't shift it. Not that anyone around here is going to listen to me. They're hardly interested in my troubles. They don't want excuses these days—cutbacks you see. We're down to three cleaners now. This time last year we had four and the year before that there were five of us and an apprentice. And don't get me started on the pay. This place is going to the dogs.

But the thing that really gets my goat is that I just cleaned in here yesterday. And that statue has some right fiddly bits to get the dust out of, never mind blood splashes. Why did they have to go and do their business there of all places? Why couldn't they have done it outside proper, in the street? You'd hardly notice some more blood and guts outs there. No respect, no respect at all for the working man. I mean the blood is everywhere. Look at the state of it, right up the plinth and in all the cracks of the floor. It's a disgrace.

There was a bunch of them apparently. Hardly a fair fight. They're looking for them now, but the city's a big place with lots of places to hide, if they're even bothering to lie low, that is. Not that I'd know you understand. I've never had to hide, but I hear things, people talk. They said he wasn't carrying a weapon, just a pen. A little stylus. What is it they say? 'The pen is mightier than the sword.' Yeah, right, tell that to my scrubbing brush.

You would think a man like that would have had bodyguards, but whatever happened they got him and got him good. There's so much blood though. Look, you can see where they were slipping in it. And they've even walked it all the way over here. Look, shoe prints all the way down the steps. No consideration, I tell you. I mean what were they thinking? Not who's going to clean it all up, I bet.

I quite liked him, you know. Not that I can really say I knew him. I don't suppose anybody really knows a man like that. But he was polite the two times our paths crossed. Well, perhaps not exactly polite. I mean he didn't say anything to me, nothing like that. But he didn't spit on me or kick me out of the way, the way some of them in here do. That Antony's a right stuck-up bastard. And he makes one hell of a mess. Vomiting all over the place. And the gods alone must know what he drinks because you can't get those stains out either. No, the old man had a bit of class about him. He did have a thing about his hair though, or I should say lack of it. Fond of the comb over that one. Funny that. I mean that he should be so vain. I'm not sure anybody really cares if a man his age is going bald. It's to be expected—it's the normal course of things. What happened to him was probably the normal course of things as well. Some said he was getting too big for his boots. Not me, though, I never said that. I'm just a cleaner, what do I know?

Everyone like him has enemies, I expect. There's a lot of rivalry in here, I can tell you. They're always shooting their mouths off at each other. That Cicero's a vicious little bugger when he gets going. Real clever clogs as well, but he never shuts up when he's given the floor. I tell you, he could bore for Rome that one. But that said he does have one redeeming feature—he hates that Antony's guts. So, we're on the same side there. And to my knowledge old Cicero's never once vomited on the Senate floor, so that's him got two gold stars in my book.

You know, I'm quite done in. I think I'll just sit here on this step for a minute to catch my breath. This scrubbing really takes it out of you. I suppose it's the shock of it all as well. I really can't get over it. I mean of all the places to knife someone, would you do it on a floor of white marble. It doesn't bear thinking about. It's expensive for one thing. But, of course, all the senators here are loaded. They wouldn't think twice about what something costs. Living in their own little world, the lot of them. But come election time, they're suddenly your best friend. They'd promise you the stars if they thought it would buy your vote. And they splash their own money around then too. Got two tickets to the arena last time. Took the wife. She was quite taken by one of those big German

gladiators. I said to her, ‘Darling what’s he got that I haven’t?’ And I won’t tell you what she said. It wasn’t that lady-like. I mean, they’re showmen, all thighs and biceps, but I’d like to see one of them trying to scrub this marble. Then we’d see how they coped with some proper work.

It’s a pity about the statue though. I always liked that one. Old Pompey was a good laugh when he was here and the statue’s not a bad likeness. They made him taller, of course, and thinner the way they do, and more athletic, but that’s only to be expected. And come to think of it, he didn’t have that much hair. In fact, now that I get a chance to look at it properly it hardly looks like him at all. I’m usually just cleaning it and sweeping up around it. Not today though.

I’m going to have to take my scrubbing brush to old Pompey. I mean, look, the blood’s all up his left leg, and you can hardly read the inscription on the plinth it’s such a mess. Funny when you think about it though. They weren’t exactly best pals when they were both alive. Old Pompey got topped in the war—lost his head in Egypt, if I remember rightly. They say old baldy was quite cut up about it, but Pompey gets the last laugh, doesn’t he? I mean he gets to watch him really get cut up. No, I know I shouldn’t laugh, but in this job, you’ve got to see the funny side.

Oh, would you believe it? The blood goes all the way round the back of the plinth. How am I going to get in there to scrub? I mean, who puts a statue this close to a wall? Not anybody that has to clean it, that’s for sure. Wait a minute, what’s this? A stylus! And a good one too by the looks of it. Here let me get it out into the light and wipe some of this blood off of it. Aw, that’s nice, isn’t it? It’s engraved. ‘All my love, Calpurnia.’ She’s the wife, or at least she was until the Egyptian came along.

I saw her here once you know, the one they call Cleopatra. It was quite a fuss when she rolled into town. Not as much of a looker as you might think. Lovely voice though. Didn’t speak a word of Latin, but her Greek was really quite sexy. I said to the wife when I got home that night, ‘Darling, that Queen of the Nile isn’t half as beautiful as you, my love.’ Didn’t work though. She’ll be off back to her pyramids sharpish after this I expect. I don’t suppose we need to worry about her. I’m sure

she'll find some other Roman to get her claws into, but I can't see it ending well for her.

I'll just look after this stylus. Finders, keepers, you understand. And besides it might be worth something one day. Got to think of the future because there's not much of a pension plan in this job. Now, perhaps if I use a mop, I can get out the worst of it from round the back of old Pompey. There, that's working a treat. Making a right mess of the mop though. And would you believe it, now it's snagged on something. I'll have to get my hand in, if I can. You know, they should pay me danger money for this job. I could be about to get my hand bitten off by a rat. Mind you, it doesn't feel like a rat. Now, what else do we have here? Got it and that's just typical, isn't it? I don't know, you'd think if they were going around assassinating folk they'd at least pick up after themselves. The blood's bad enough without me having to collect their litter as well. It's a bit bloodstained but it is nice quality paper.

You know, you can tell a lot about someone from the paper they use. Cicero always uses these lovely thick creamy scrolls. Terrible penmanship, but he's got that nice lad as his secretary that follows him around everywhere and writes down everything he says. He's not allowed in the chamber, of course—only the senators and the cleaners are allowed that privilege—so he has to stand outside listening and believe me it can be a long stand and the boy needs a lot of paper. I was looking over his shoulder the other day, and I tell you I couldn't make head nor tail of what he was scribbling. They didn't look like any Latin words I've ever read. Another one that uses nice paper is that Brutus. Good family you see, so it stands to reason he'll be using good paper. Don't know where he is today. He's usually about, but I suppose he's such a supporter of old baldy—like a son some say—that he's probably out searching the streets for the gang that did it.

Anyway, let's see what this little scroll has to say. Sometimes the senators make up dirty poems about each other, so you never know, it might be a juicy little one. 'Fellow Senators, on this auspicious day, I, Gaius Julius Caesar, blah, blah, blah do hereby declare on my oath, blah, blah, as Father of the Fatherland, Censor and Dictator for Life and Citizen

of Rome...’ —he did like his titles, I’ll say that for him— ‘...my solemn adoption of Mark Antony as my sole heir and successor...’ and blah, blah, blah. They never use ten words when they can use a hundred in this place. And with the price of paper that all adds up.

I suppose it was the old man’s speech he was going to give. Can’t see that it matters now though. And, anyway, if that Mark Antony were to get his feet any further under the table in here, who knows how much more vomit I’d be having to mop up. No, I think I’ll just keep this. Good bit of paper—quality. Might be worth a sesterce or two. Need to get the blood off it though. Think I’ll just look after it as well and keep it safe in my inside pocket here. Don’t expect anybody will miss it. I mean what difference would it make in the long run. They’re all the same, aren’t they? It’s hardly going to change history.

About the Contributors

Ian Farnes first left education at 15 to work in his local shipyard, then worked in construction and demolition and in factories and call-centres before gaining entry to the University of Glasgow via their access programme. He has had work published in Gutter, thi wurd, The Common Breath, Spelt and Razur Cuts and has work due to be published in Broken Sleep's forthcoming anthology, The Last Song: Words for Frightened Rabbit.

Maria Foley is currently a 4th English Literature student at the University of Glasgow. She has been published in previous issues of From Glasgow to Saturn and can usually be found wearing a miniskirt even in the dead of winter.

Allan Gaw lives and works in Scotland. He is a pathologist by training and a writer by inclination. Born in Glasgow, he worked for many years at Glasgow University. He has also worked in the NHS and universities in England, Northern Ireland and the US. He writes short stories, historical crime fiction, poetry and experimental novels. In 2022, he won the UK Classical Association Creative Writing Competition and the International Alpine Fellowship Writing Prize. Read more of his writing on his website: <https://researchet.wordpress.com/>

Margaret Grant lives in Inverclyde. She is happy to finally have time to write, having worked in the social housing sector as a Housing Manager for most of her career. She enjoys writing poetry (is a huge fan of Mary Oliver) but is also focussing on short stories and longer pieces of work. This is supported by study and a couple of writing groups. She finds much of her inspiration from exploring the beaches and estates around Inverclyde and North Ayrshire, and enjoys Pilates and going to the cinema to chill.

Hannah Grimshaw is a third year Scottish Literature student at the University of Glasgow. She has previously published a short story in 'From Glasgow to Saturn' and hopes to publish many more during her remaining time at university. She is obsessed with the current Scottish literary scene and hopes to follow in the footsteps of the wonderful Scottish women writing fiction today.

Jim Harold is a Glasgow-based artist and writer. His work focuses on the qualities of marginal, hinterland and border landscapes. He has been exhibited (including works made with Susan Brind) in the UK, Europe and Scandinavia. His writings have been published in: *Without Day and The Order of Things* (Pocketbooks 2000 and 2001); *Saving the Image: Art after Film* (2003); *East-West Art*, Beijing Conference Publication (2015). Those written with Susan Brind have appeared in: *Burning Sands*, Vol. V (2016); *Curious Arts* No. 6 (2013); *Northern Light: Landscape, Photography and Evocations of the North* (2018); and *Armarolla*, Issue V (2020).

Sarah Higgins graduated from the University of Glasgow in 2012 with a degree in politics. She works in advocacy for survivors of sexual violence with a bit of mental health nursing on the side. She mostly collects her thoughts through poetry and creative non-fiction.

Lucy Lauder (she/her) is a fourth year English Literature/Scottish Literature student at the University of Glasgow. A lover of words and sounds, her work has previously been published in *Horizon Magazine* and *From Glasgow to Saturn*. When not writing, Lucy splits her time evenly between hot yoga classes, buying overpriced coffee and walking around.

Chin Li, born and brought up in Hong Kong and now living in Scotland, has published short fiction, poetry and other work in *Big Fiction Magazine*, *Confluence*, *Glasgow Review of Books*, *Gnommero*, *Gutter*, *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *Litro*, *MAP*, *Southword* and *Visual Verse*, and has turned some writings into audio pieces, the most recent of which are three audio short stories broadcast by the Glasgow-based art radio station

Radiophrenia in May 2019, November 2020 and February 2022 respectively. Chin Li worked as an NHS clinical psychologist for many years before turning to writing full-time in 2015.

Violet Maxwell is a fourth year History of Art student who can often be found telling someone who doesn't care about the glory of a New Jersey diner (the length of the menus? awe inspiring.) She loves cats, Frank O'Hara, and spends her weekends working in an art gallery.

Viola Ragonese looks for surreal flavours every time she bites reality. She has graduated in philosophy from the University of Glasgow in 2021, she has recently completed her MLitt at the University of St Andrews, and she currently lives in Dublin.

Julie Rea won The Scottish Book Trust Next Chapter Award and was mentored by the writer, Janice Galloway. She has been shortlisted in many competitions, including The Bath Short Story Award, Cambridge Short Story Prize and The Grindstone Literary Short Story Award. Her fiction has been widely published in literary journals and anthologies, including 'Gutter', 'New Writing Scotland' and 'thi wurd'. She has worked with several organisations including Edinburgh International Book Festival, Primadonna Festival and Book Week Scotland, and was nominated for The Pushcart Prize. Julie has completed a short story collection and is currently working on her first novel.

Claire Reynolds is studying for her MLitt in Creative Writing at the university. She almost exclusively writes prose but is hopeful that (maybe) one day her poetry will see the light of day as it's actually not that bad. Her short story *It's not up there with the biggies* was published in Issue 26 of Gutter magazine & she is currently working on submitting more short prose to get her work out there. Claire is also working on a collection of dark, dreech and really quite spooky short stories set in Glasgow through the ages.

Leah Sinforiani is a fourth year English Literature and Film student at Glasgow University. She has been published in Joyride and Qmunicate. When she isn't writing she's busy developing her frontal lobe and preaching about her love for Zadie Smith.

Catriona Sutherland is a medical student at Glasgow University and seeks to use language as a way to heal, whether that is in stress or physical pain, rather than a way to distance with jargon. She often links imagery of the Scottish highlands to tease out the conflicting relationships that life can bring.

Jackie Taylor lives and works in rural Cornwall. Her work has appeared most recently in Mslexia, and her short story collection Strange Waters was published by Arachne Press in 2021. She is currently a distance learner on the Creative Writing MLitt programme at the University of Glasgow.

chris timmins is a queer poet & visual artist. His work focuses on bodies, joy, glitter, fruit and, most importantly, the cowboy emoji. He is currently a Creative Writing Masters student. You can find his work at @plantbot/@plantbotart on instagram.

Emma Urbanova is a writer living in between Slovakia and Glasgow.

About the Editors

Emma Jokinen recently graduated from a philosophy MA at the University of Glasgow. She now works in scientific publishing and writes under her pen name Emma Medrano in her spare time. Her debut novel will be published by Penguin Michael Joseph in 2024.

Rebecca Kane is a Scottish poet and recent graduate of the University of Glasgow with a Masters in Creative Writing. Her poem *Bloodletting* is soon to be included in the upcoming issue of *The Poetry Review*.

Lillian Salvatore is a writer from Glasgow. She is the co-founding editor of BROTH zine and she eats a lot of soup.

James Taylor is a master's student at the University of Glasgow. He's spending his final years at university helping out the editors of *From Glasgow to Saturn* with social media and administrative bits and pieces. His time spent away from the Google Drive is often dedicated to writing, and more than often a comfotingly large pile of books.

The editors would like to extend their thanks to Adrian Streete and the English Literature department at Glasgow University for their support on this issue.

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