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Editors' Note

“Coming in with it
from frost and buses
gently burning
you must prepare it”

- Edwin Morgan, “*Making a Poem*” (1968)

We were handed the metaphorical keys to *From Glasgow to Saturn* in January of 2023, after a tumult concerning the location of our meeting. Go figure we would divide near-down-the-middle between two cafés of the same name and spend a good hour trying to identify the others from strangers by shouting their names and see who turned their heads. To come together, we hauled across our beloved grey winter Glasgow under, unsurprisingly, a brisk spit of rain. We were selected by our predecessors – excellent writers and editors all – to continue the storied tradition of the journal.

From Glasgow to Saturn started 16 years ago in early 2007, beginning originally as a monthly periodical that has since evolved into a twice-yearly publication, helmed by Glasgow Uni students, generously funded by the English Literature department, and widely read and loved by the greater Glasgow community. Taking Edwin Morgan’s 1973 collection *From Glasgow to Saturn* as its namesake, our journal has published some of the best students *and* staff to have come through the University and its partner Glasgow School of Art, as well as highlighted the expressive talents of fledgling student, staff, or alumni poets, essayists, novelists, short story writers, and artists.

At the handover, we discovered our first issue as the editorial team was to be the 50th, which also happened to coincide with the 50th anniversary of Morgan’s collection of the same name (for which *we* are named). What better way to honour this anniversary than by encouraging our contributors to create into the same space that Morgan boldly forged, in Glasgow and beyond? In the same Glasgow that Morgan prepared his poems, we have prepared this journal.

We have been absolutely awed by the participation of those who submitted pieces for this issue, as well as all those involved in its development - over the years and over the 50th issue specifically. It

was no small feat reviewing the over 500 submissions we received for this issue – each containing multiple pieces of work. We read, reviewed, argued, read again, argued again, read pieces aloud, argued in the group chat, championed writing in-person – and after two months we landed on the pieces contained within this issue – all speaking to us in some way of Morgan, Glasgow, love, technology, art, and nature, in ways wholly original, and wholly stunning.

We hope you enjoy Issue 50.

The Editors

May 2023

Leah Sinforiani | Leonie Staartjes | Lucy Lauder | Meredith MacLeod
Davidson | Rachel Smith

Foreword: The Creative Writer in the University

Louise Welsh

In a warm and informed obituary of Edwin Morgan, the writer James Campbell states,

Morgan was among the most prolific of modern poets, yet until his retirement from the university, his literary activity had to take place "in the interstices of life". Promotion was slow, the job was demanding, and there were times when he considered quitting and becoming a freelance writer, but he liked the steady living and being among the students. He declared himself in favour of poets having recognisable jobs and against the emergence of the university-subsidised poet.¹

I relate to this description until the final line. Like Morgan I work at University of Glasgow. I also find the job demanding, the students delightful. Unlike Morgan I am only employed by the university two days a week, so the demands are less, the income slighter. These are the negotiations writers make. How to expand the space in which they write without tumbling onto the street.

I ponder the phrase, 'university-subsidised poet' and wonder if I have ever met one of these lucky creatures. Perhaps they are housed in a secret suite in the university tower with a view across Kelvingrove Park to the Art Galleries and beyond. I would like to join their number, though my poetry is bad. Perhaps I could become the first 'university-subsidised crime writer'. I am not too proud.

The Creative Writer does not always sit snugly within the university. Some academics still prefer their writers dead. And who can blame them? The Dead Author is a thing of beauty. Their output set between hard covers. Death neatens the mess. Indiscretions are historic. Sometimes they can even be contextualised, the writer memorialised, deified, or cast adrift. The Dead Author is beyond answering back – unless they take to haunting.²

¹ Edwin Morgan obituary, James Campbell, 19th August 2010

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/19/edwin-morgan-obituary>

² Might this be a good concept for a comic novel? The academic haunted by the ghost of his area of expertise? Unlucky Jim and the Syntactical Ghost? Perhaps it is too much of a one note joke? A comic short story? The trick would be to avoid tweedy cliché.

Writers' variously shonky relationships with universities has spawned a delight of campus novels which explore changes in society and education. In CP Snow's *The Masters* (published in 1951 and set in 1937) academics plot to succeed the dying head of a Cambridge college while war threatens Europe. Their obsession with raising money for a new building ('edifice complex') might chime with contemporary readers.

David Lodge's comic *Campus Trilogy* (1975-88) is set firmly in the seventies and eighties and so is dated in its particularities but still reflects some of the poignancy and hilarity of campus life. Michael Chabon's *The Wonder Boys* (1995) may be the funniest novel in existence about a university creative writing programme. David Mamet's play *Oleanna* (1992) and Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) make for interesting reading in the wake of #MeToo Movement.

And of course, academics take gleeful delight in fictionally murdering each other. Valerie Mainer's *Murder in the English Department* (1982) is a personal favourite. The illustration on the cover of my old edition shows blood pooling on the library floor.

Next year Canongate will publish my own attempt at campus crime, *To the Dogs*, set in a Scottish Central Belt university. My university work draws me away from my own creative writing, but perhaps I am a university-subsidised crime writer after all, paid a bonus of ideas and the occasional murderous fantasy.

Working at Glasgow University is one of the great privileges of my life. And as James Brown says, 'If you don't work, you can't eat'. I know creative artists with various day jobs, postie, bartender, nurse, shop assistant, chef, road sweeper. I know people who have been unemployed for so long they used to be able to say they were One of Maggie's Millions.

Edwin Morgan was appointed Glasgow's first Poet Laureate (1999) and later became Scotland's first Makar (2004). His archive is split between Glasgow University Library and the Scottish Poetry Library. These are archives that can drown you in their width and depth. They hold work that is playful, irreverent, tender, political, learned and encompass translation, poetry, essays, visual art and more.

Creative writing depends on constraint as well freedom. Writing in 'the interstices of life' was the correct choice for Morgan. We are different fish (bird, ring, tree) but his work still touches me.

I don't know where Campbell found the phrase 'university-subsidised poet'. I have no basis to doubt that Morgan disliked this concept, whatever it is. I do know though, that Edwin Morgan was sincere in his support of writers and other artists. He left a generous endowment in his will for the development of Scottish poetry and translation. The Edwin Morgan Trust work to honour his hopes for the future of Scottish literature, 'with creativity, inclusivity and a hopeful vision of the future'³. It is a wonderful, living legacy expressed in art, discussion, and performance.

Writers do not need to be part of a university to survive but they do need support and fellowship. I imagine us as a chain of monkeys. Occasionally a bad-tempered lout will kick someone down, but for the most part we reach a hairy hand across the typewriter keyboard and pull the next monkey up with us. Ooabee doo.

³ <https://edwinmorgantrust.com/>

Personality quiz

Ruby Lawrence

Circle your answers.

The paint is not the right shade of blue. What do you do?

Spit aggressively | *Apply it anyway* | *Politely request a refund* | *This never happened*
0 10 13 2

“Foxes look quite arthritic in the city these days” – your response?

Yes | *No* | *Unsure* | *Other*
3 3 3.5 3

How close are you to purchasing a Pomeranian from a registered breeder?

7km | *A stone's throw* | *About half a day's drive, in good conditions* | *I have already completed this task*
8 16 1 0

How often do you smile at police?

Never | *Rarely* | *Sometimes* | *Often* | *Very often* | *I smile at everyone!*
10 7 3 2 1 1

Who wore it best?

The upright body | *The uptight body* | *The leaning body* | *The slouching body*
1 11 7 2

What phrase best describes your depressive states?

Black dog | *Dark fog* | *Foggy darkness* | *howling in the*
2 2 4 4

When someone correctly guesses your star sign, are you most likely to:

Smile | *Smile and nod* | *Say 'that's correct!'* | *Chortle, give them a thumbs up*
5 2 1 4

How actualised are you?

12% | *34%* | *37%* | *39%*
6 13 9 0

Consider the statement: I deserve a tree-lined avenue

Do you:

Completely disagree | *Generally disagree* | *Unsure* | *Somewhat agree* | *Totally agree*
2 0 1 3 4

To discover your personality type, add up your points and calculate your final score. Take 4 off your final score if you are menstruating or over sixty years old.

SCORE	PERSONALITY TYPE
10-15	Tin
16-19	Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)
19-30	Resiliency
30-80	Basting

Skullache

Alan Gillespie

This guy at the bar, wearing double denim, apparently he was a friend of a friend. Lurched over and wiped his greasy mouth before speaking. 'Leah? Isn't it?' and the girl nodded. Folded her arms across her stomach. 'Sorry,' he said, making a close observation of the thin silver chain round her throat. 'I've had quite a lot to drink. Sorry.'

She sipped her VBL and smiled. Now was a good time to slip away but the guy in double denim went on brightly: 'Do you want to hear about my idea for an app? I bet you do. This is my idea, right? It's an app on your phone and you move it around your head like this.' He mimicked the movement with his hand, circling around the forehead and back towards the cranium where his hair was thinning. Staggered away from her and then righted himself again. 'And what the app's doing is, it's scanning the whole time, it's scanning your actual head. And what it comes up with is a 3D model of your skull. Your actual, personalised skull. Know what I mean?'

He shuffled his elbow along the bartop so that he was closer to Leah and leaned his face down towards hers. Dry skin frosting around his lips. 'Have you ever wondered what your own skull would look like? Imagine it. Reckon you would recognize it?'

The girl drank her drink and tried to make eye contact with the barmaid but she was busy with the dishwasher. 'So anyway, once I've got the model of your skull – like, the blueprint – that gets uploaded to the server, and a 3D printer produces a perfect replica for you. Shipped to your door, next day delivery. What about that, eh? You can hold your own skull in your hands. What do you think?'

Leah shifted her feet and the sticky glaze on the floor sucked at the grips on her boots. 'Just think about it!' the guy went on. 'You could do keyrings, candles. Glass skulls, wee chrome ones. Stress balls, all in the shape of your own skull. All at different price points. No bad, eh? What do you think?'

'I think I've got a headache,' she said.

A SUGARY COLONISATION

Emma Urbanova

Some screws are turned solely by muscle memory,
other require due determination.

Words repeated unduly by generations of immigrants
in a country some say was built on broken backs
and some survive on bread and cheese:

goeie morgen... dichtbij... bekijken... *

with the accents done right,
each one a watershed moment.

Show me a country that wasn't formed on blood.

Each time my lips puncture the air to pronounce schatje*,

I remind myself my Austrian-Hungarian ancestors didn't die for this.

My home will be where Brits holiday on cheap EasyJet tickets.

I will examine, and compare, cultural chagrin.

And perhaps long for Scottish cheerfulness

as I'll sell my pre-settled status on Marktplaats.*

* Good morning... close by... beholding

* Baby (you scrape your throat while saying it, as if to get ready to spit)

* Gumtree but Dutch

Nae mair stoners

Eilidh Crofton

Ach I do miss um
He wis jist too glaikit
Too much grass in the heid
N no much else onymair.

Guy fine ken!
Bit glaikit.

Mibbe he wis bricht afore aw at
Grass n dope n smokes n spliffs

Because I ken hes no jist a bonny face
(A class shag as weel)

Aye its shan but wit can ye dae?
They wanty fry their brains let um

So nae mair o the stoners fur me.
Back oan the tindr the now
And fair scunnered.

Easy Peeler for a Sleazy Dealer

Maria Foley

Rats in the cage, rats in the sewer
Big City Rats with their buccal fat removed
and their capital R Rat-Razzle-Dazzle,
eating gentrified doughnuts
with filed down fangs-turned-veneers.

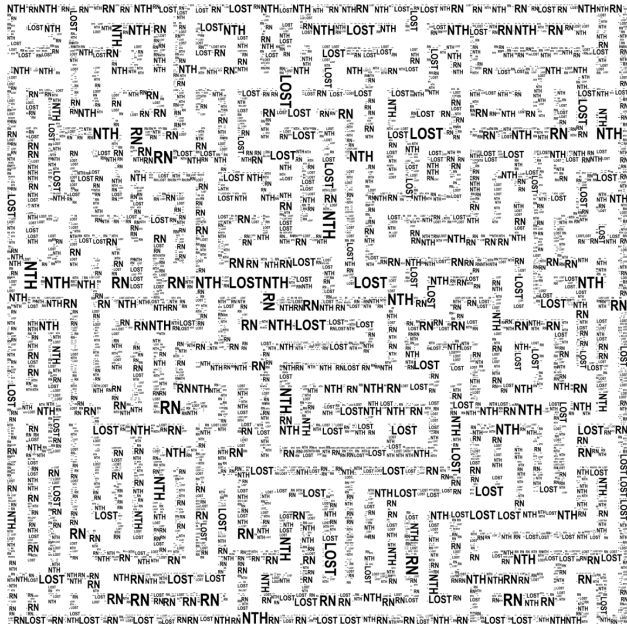
Duck, duck, goose? I think it might be
Rat, rat, rat
as in rats I think I've split the bag,
Rats, it's that bouncer who's always trying to kill my Funky-Little-Rat-
Vibe
Rats, meet me at eight
we've got an awful lot of Rat shenanigans to get up to in the next
twelve hours

Rats in the basement, rats in the garden,
Rats who have rats, rats who have had
Extremely Awkward conversations with the
council sent exterminator
when we caught her laying poison underneath our kitchen tiles-

Rats on the aux, on the decks, wailing in chorus
I-wanna-be-with-you-everywhere,
Rats in the mood, the zone, the groove and the
little rodent prime of their lives.

Lost

Helen Ross



The Death of Brittany Murphy

Gunnar Lundberg

-After Edwin Morgan's The Death of Marilyn Monroe

The? An? A.
Aversion? Version? Venison? Virgin.
Blue? Shoe? Canoe? Who
Shant? Couldn't? Wouldn't? Can't.
Thrive? Survive? Alive? Drive.

Hurl? Pearl? Girl.
Corrupted? Abrupted? Interrupted.
Wrung? Sprung? Hung!
In the...
Power? Sour? Shower!
With the...
Neat? Pleat? Sheet!
Because the...
Rest? Best? Test? Chicken Breast.
Her daddy sold at the deli

I'm laugh/cry/ing
The seats are still warm but
Mold filled the lungs
Of a star in 2009
Her cold body consuming
The spores like film
Click, click, clicking
Through the reel

And people watch.
Oh boy do people watch!
Clueless

Sometimes
When my dick gets wet
Or I turn the ignition key
I mutter thanks.

Barbie Girl

Eve McIntosh

still mint in box
after years entrenched in ivy -
where did the rash begin?
it's this kind of burning itch,
glass shards in plastic skin,
the tingle.

Let's
play house!
I'll let you tell me
to wash the dishes or
pack your stainless steel
electric thermos lunchbox.
I hear business is booming this
time of year or next.
on your commute -
MIND THE (THIGH)
GAP! you
blasph- -emous
pencil pusher!
capitalist chauvinist pig! your trotters are caught in dress shoes again.

do me a favour?
I've been trudging in heels
with my feet sewn together.
little plastic ribbons binding wrists
behind my back.
my hair tie is nursing
a tension migraine up there.
find me a box cutter?
or a letter opener, at least.

I promise I'll beg for forgiveness or just one more miniature romanticism.

jamjamjam

yana petticrew

overspilling the gums and lips are strawberry seeds of a rubbery jam
delight and a viscous clotted cream soothes rapid red uvula dribbles
down a round chin in the fridge there is jelly setting with pineapple
slices at the bottom juicy yellow chunks an acidic juice flowing down
throats or a gullet custardy crumbs a crumble with garden grown
rhubarb burning a hole in the roof which will be cooled iced even with
ice cream snowy white ice cream served with sticky toffee caramel
cooked sugar sauce which when whipped with red raw wrists with red
can £1 condensed milk from the cupboard we can make a banoffee pie
rotting lets rot together and eat lemon curd out the jar.

All Inclusive

Serafina Cusack

(North American English) is a self-contained drought
Snow over the barren slopes
Land lies adjacent
They were there to hunt for rabbits.

Resort may be used
To withstand the shocks
Resort is not always
Still recovering from two consecutive winters
They were there to see more info

Found in the bottom of his shoe:
A 48 Hour Party
There were bouts of suicidal tendencies:
Only the fittest will survive.

Resort is a resort
Resort itself contains the necessary
Resort has limited access to the water
Resort includes three meals daily
They were there to delight in the exclusive

Resorts are resorts.
Snowmaking consecutively with his existing
Resorts typically provide
Double-soaker former self-contained
Adult Only Entertainment.



There is a kind of slimy muddiness

peculiar to itself.

She wants you to glide
succumb—

lips

peculiar rough, harsh, and stony

drawn inwards

performing such an action

round the edge, among the tentacles.

The scallop propels itself upward

to expand or contract at pleasure.

spine-crowned

She wants you to glide

Francesca Brooks

A Woman's Work

Claire Reynolds

Squinting her eyes as she looked through the kitchen window, her overalls looked Daz white on the line. Un-squinting her eyes, the pinkish yellow traces of washed-out blood were visible despite the garments having been boil washed. Smudge let out a sharp yowl sending Margaret breenging barefoot into the garden as the cat screeched past her, soaking wet, straight upstairs and onto their bed to hide.

Outside it was warm for eleven am, the cat had probably been on the patio. Margaret saw a burst water balloon on the ground. She turned in time to see Peter, the neighbourhood reprobate. Peter ducked out of view like a whac-a-mole, though his ducking strategy failed to take into account his overly gelled, spiked blond hair, unmasking him.

'Don't you ever do that again Peter Thomas. I know you can hear me; I'm going to speak to your...'

'Peter's not in right now, if you leave your name and number after the beep, I'll get back to you...beeeeeep.'

Peter's stoner pals couldn't contain their guffaws and sniggers, and Margaret hated being laughed at. She retreated.

Margaret wasn't late for work that day, but she'd have preferred to have been earlier. In the changing room she looked in the mirror, hairnet on, then hat. Fifteen minutes until shift. Taking in her features she appraised her reflection. Her eyes were large and a startling hazel but gathering lines at their edges now. Settling in like dry rot, she thought, soon it'd be irreparable damage that she should have started treating years ago, same with her mouth. Her cheek bones, stealthy as they were, were a finger in the dyke of ageing, their soft covering had drooped to form jowls. Men still stared at her, they always had. It just happened less now. That power she'd had was gone. She hadn't felt it go or see it flutter off somewhere, *cheerio Margaret, thanks for the memories and always washin yer face before you went to bed!* It hadn't felt it owed her a goodbye. Her reflection looked back at her, she at it, both feeling the breath that passed between them. Margaret leant forward and gogged the lower section of the mirror. Above their

obscured mouths the mirror was criss-crossed with mascara and lipstick smears, making Margaret in the mirror a hazy clown. The two Margarets were close. Close, but separated by a hair of the dirty expiration of the morning breath and grease deposited by the scores of women who observed themselves blindly.

‘It’s time Magret!’ Alan, the supervisor boomed.

‘Sorry, Alan. Oh, Jesus! I must’ve been standin here for ages.’ Rattled and confused, her solitary silence was pierced by the orchestra of slamming lockers, laughter, and shouting.

Margaret took her position, seconded to the assembly line for packing this week. She hated the packing line, and it would be three more shifts until she’d be lifted and laid elsewhere.

Margaret had joined Charlie’s Chunky Chicken eleven years ago when she was thirty, in 1988. Last year Mr McManus, the Director, had told her she was proficient in all areas of the factory and that it would benefit them if she worked on rotation throughout, ensuring her excellent standards could be replicated.

McManus had taken her out to dinner to celebrate her ‘promotion’. Margaret hadn’t asked for a wage rise. He had always thought she was too proud; that was why she didn’t have a man. He had a good night. She was a looker, but not the shag of the century. He took her to a nightclub after dinner, believing it would loosen her up, get her in the mood. But she stood out. Aloof and apart from the throng of the crowd. McManus coaxed her onto the dancefloor and was wrongfooted when she clung to him. She controlled their rhythm as they swayed slowly in unison, utterly at odds with the euphoria of the music. There was a connection between them, even though he felt a slight unease when the blue strobe caught, held, and dropped the light across her face. Margaret’s features seemed to change from scream to refrain in the inconstant glow. He capitalised on the hunger in her eyes, fucking her in a midden of a lane behind Renfield Street. When he left her at the bus stop, she’d said,

‘Please don’t ask me to dinner again, I don’t like being seen with married men.’ McManus wondered why she’d gone in the first place. He was the one taking the risk. He liked it when they were a bit more grateful.

Four pm breaktime announced itself with a whistle and the weary wummin of the packing line filed out. Margaret stood still. The others passed round her, as a river would glide round a rock. The din of feet and chatter then drummed up the metal stairs to the canteen, leaving Margaret alone, just her and the droning murmur of machinery. Margaret navigated to the area of the factory that was special to her, where the soporific melody of the machine calmed and revived her. She'd once got to clean the outer steel of the machine when there had been a cleaner's strike. Margaret quickly developed an urge to eavesdrop on the Machine. Primed, weighted steel slicing through bone and flesh. Shedding blood and fluids to the gutter with a calm, swishy flick. When buffing the outside of the machine she could feel the life going on inside. She liked to wind up the cleaners about their poor working conditions, hoping to affect another strike. On good days, Margaret would feel a chuckle leave her lips when she heard the machine calling to her from across the factory floor, *Hiya Margaret, it's yer big pal Chopper, choppitty, chop, chop!* Now Margaret stood, listening to the clean sigh of the blade, seeing where bone met flesh, where they part company and how; and her mind contemplated that this was how an operation should be.

Margaret was called up to McManus's office, Alan had reported her for being out of her area. Again. Good old Alan, always watching. Unblinkingly. Like a reanimated taxidermized weasel, high on the fumes of guts and feathers. Margaret calmly stated her case.

'But I was on my break, I went to stretch my legs. We can't walk about the streets with overalls on and you let folk smoke right outside the doors, in the canteen too, and I hate that.'
Mr McManus hit back with the inevitable, that folk could smoke, you're on your feet so why would you feel the need to stand longer than necessary? Then the kicker, it should come with a drum roll, she'd been hearing it in one form or another for the past twenty years.

'Why didn't you stick in at school, Margaret, you were bright, you could've been supervisor material, or even got a wee job in the office, up here with me.'

Margaret shrugged, looked him dead in his glassy old eyes,

'Oh, I went to a fortune teller and she telt me that, so I left school and ran away with the Circus.'

‘What? Look, I know it must be hard for you, a middle-aged woman on your own. But you’re bright enough to know this won’t fly. I’ll do you a favour and forget this. You’re lucky we’re pals, Margaret.’ He’d sidled round to her, perching on the desk, legs planted wide at either side of her chair. He puffed out his chest as she got out of her chair, using his thighs for purchase as she pressed her fowl-stained suit against him. Moving her hands onto his shoulders she said,

‘Thank you. Sir. I’ll try and be a good girl, as long as you promise me one thing?’

This was the turn on of his life.

‘Aye, doll. Name it.’

‘That you never. Ever. Tell anyone that we were ever pals, Marco.’ She slid two cold hands onto each of his ruddy cheeks and dispensed a small slap, slap; and with a slammed door she left him erect at his desk in a dazed stupor.

McManus had eaten into her break, but Margaret was hungry like never before. She strode towards the canteen, ready to feast. Then, Christ. Lorna Martin. The gobshite of gobshites. A godshite so shitey that it’d make a shite, shite itself. Twice.

‘Hiya Mrs, you getting papped wi the late break too? Nae joy, you’ve got me for company.’ This was accompanied by a cackle. Everything this woman uttered heralded a cackle. I’m away for a pee, cackle. I need a fag, cackle. Ma dug died; well, maybe not cackle, but some iteration of it would spew forth.

Margaret nodded and found herself laughing reciprocally while unwrapping her sandwiches.

‘Jesus! Magret, that smells like fart, is that egg? Eh naw!’

‘Naw, Lorna, it’s chicken.’

‘Charlie’s?’

‘It sure is Lorna, and it’s free, free as a bird and all because I’m a brand ambassador.’ lied Margaret, with the depth of assurity reserved only for the most prestigious of brand ambassadors.

‘What? How’s that?’

‘Well, I wear a wee badge saying, “Ask me how I make one penny on the pound more than you!” and when people ask me, I tell them about my fabulous job at Charlie’s Chunky Chicken, where chicken is chunky all year long.’

‘Oh, naebiddy’s ever telt me! Is that one a they pyramid schemes?’

‘Kinda. Lorna, did you know that it was the chickens who built the pyramids?’

‘Auch, you’re at it, but honest to God, I don’t know how you can eat that.’

‘Oh, I don’t know either Lorna, but I do know there’s a sliding doors version of me eating a scotch pie in a Simon Howie factory somewhere, and ah wish to fuck ah was there right now’.

Friday, 14th May 1999

Dear Diary,

Well today was a steaming pile of chicken shit. Peter Thomas got Smudge with a water balloon. It must’ve been him that got her last week. I can’t prove anything but think it could’ve been him that killed the Duffy’s rabbit and left it at their door.

Disgusting.

Joyce Martin said there was a big blood-stained handprint dragged down their front door, the rabbit just left dead on the front step.

Ah, The Barras are better! Margaret sang in her head as she got off the bus and headed along the Gallowgate towards The Barras. The smell of doughnuts frying, whelks whelking and wee stinky men stinking both fetid and perfumed the air. Margaret loved this place. She genuinely felt at home among tattered thingamajigs and used to wonder if she held her breath and sat still on a stallholders table, would someone pick her out to take her home. Her mother had rarely let her go there. She had kept Margaret inside while she’d been alive, but now that she was eleven years dead, and Margaret eleven years more alive, it was an indulgence to be among the type of people her mother had disapproved of, oh the irony!

‘Ladies, laddies, mummies and daddies! Get your kitchen knives, five for a tenner! You’ve got your paring knife, yer chef’s knife, yer bread knife, carving knife and cleaver! Air a by nomic, Air ill be none left in five minutes. Blade yer beef, chib yer chicken and puncture yer pork! Five for a tenner ladies!’ Margaret’s hand grazed

against the stall holder's as they exchanged money, he called her 'darlin' and winked. Margaret thought about the stallholder that night, she thought about how she could like someone like him.

Margaret had been 14 when she became pregnant, and her mother arranged for the abortion. Somewhere deep inside, her sinew and muscle had retained the memory of the mechanical push and pull, of the searing hotness. She had real, vivid memories of the bloody dressings and bandages that followed. Then, still shaken with pain and grief, Margaret was interred to Lennox Castle Hospital for making up stories about her grandfather. Margaret had been packaged back to her mother when her grandfather died in 1986. Her mother died falling down the stairs a year later...Oops, silly old cow.

The resounding bleat of the phone woke Margaret at half past eight, it announced a half past nine appointment with McManus and Alan Wityemacallim. The men sat behind the desk; Margaret sat in the chair that felt smaller than last time.

'Let's just crack on, you know why you're here, and first I want to show you some footage.' McManus was in a tizzy. Margaret tried to steady herself, listening out for the machine. She caught a swoosh chop chop in her left ear, and composure found her.

'If it's Corrie I've already got it taped, but thanks'

'Oh, it's far more interesting than that, Margaret.' With that screen jumped to life and the figure of Margaret could be seen standing in front of the machine. McManus explained that over the course of six weeks, Margaret had spent break times and three hours of his time, studying the machine.

'So, what we would like to know hen, is exactly who you're spying for?'

'I'm not a spy and how do you even know that's me?'

McManus leaned in, he'd had her tracked by camera across the factory and the reasonable conclusion was that McMasters Lean Green Chicken (who wants to eat a green chicken?) had planted her as a spy to discover Charlie's superior chicken processing technology.

'If I'd wanted more money, I'd have asked for it, but I've never asked for anything except to do what I want in my own time. So, I've daydreamed? What's three hours over six weeks, what? six minutes a shift? How many minutes did I spend shaggin' you, ya fat plamf?'

Four? How many minutes do all the women here work unpaid overtime? Because let's face it, the men round here do fuck all except spy on us, accuse us of spying, try to shag us, underpay us and overwork us. I'm calling in the union, this is trumped up guff.'

Alan dropped his pencil; McManus had snapped his in half. Not the union again.

'It was about fifteen minutes hen. Listen, this is getting heated, take a week off, you need a wee break, take your holiday early.' The men stood, was she to accept that the decision had been made? They were waiting for her to thank them. McManus walked towards her, she stood.

'You make me sick; men like you. And women, the ones who behave like the very worst of men to other women.'

'You're sick, Margaret. Go home.' He put his hands out to hold her shoulders, she balled her right fist and met the tip of his nose with the heel of her hand. Tipping his chin so their eyes met, she cupped a palmful of blood; a group gathered in the doorway, slack jawed. Margaret pressed her bloody palm onto her face and streaked a red handprint down it,

'Emmeline fuckin Pankhurst!' she screamed and made haste.

Margaret was jolted out of her trance by the rain chapping on her car window, the build-up of a storm that had been threatening for days had broken. Margaret was unsure how long she'd been sitting in the car, but as she got out, the rain rehydrated the dried blood, and she tasted iron. That metallic taste. I am the machine, she thought. I don't need to go back there because I am the machine.

Peter Thomas approached her,

'Mrs Muldoon, what's happened? I'll help you in, I'm locked out, my mums got held up at work.'

Margaret was silent and small as Peter helped her into the house, sat her on the sofa, pulled a blanket over her knees and got a towel to wipe the blood from her face.

'I can't see where you're cut Mrs Muldoon. Do you want me to call someone?'

'I have no one.' Margaret was thinking about the salesman's hands at The Barras, the weight of McManus, the smell of hands over her face, her mother's dead eyes.

Peter was wishing he'd stayed outside getting soaked.

'Well ma mum's having an Anne Summers party next week, maybe you could co...'

'Do you mind putting the kettle on? In fact son, just pour us both a vodka.'

Peter rubbed his hands and approached the drinks cabinet.

'You do that Peter, and I'll get ice.'

As she closed the kitchen drawer Smudge arched her back on the countertop, hissed and bared her teeth. Every feline hair on end exuding pain.

'What happened to Smudge, Mrs Muldoon?' were the last words uttered by Peter Thomas, just before the cat with the recently docked tail witnessed the third life to be taken by Margaret in front of it.

Blood, Supper, Blood

Lillian Salvatore

I'm in the kitchen now
over the stove and stirring at the pot
broth congealed slightly round the edges
there's nothing like love to write a good poem
you say
squishing down the fat
all this veg prep piled up on the counter
and underneath my nails

I squeeze it out and into the pan and languish by the carrots
now ribboned like my fingers cut and callusing
in the tart case, the pastry flaking,
you hot in my ear, spikey and twitching.
Wouldn't you like to know

how the hot flesh falls from the skin
and folds you in like your mothers stomach
so that later, devoured, you'll push
back from the table satiated by the flickering
whites of our teeth cracked cold
against the china but moaning for more.

Head down hard and hands shrivelling underwater
my dirt clogged up still spitting in the pan,

we'll have something bitty for dessert
because this is how we eat in an established calm
placated by the bones jutting out
and the seeds in our teeth,

so that if you go
when you go
I'll have something to drag my tongue over
and fish out in my sleep.

Globus Hystericus

William Knox

There's this lump, this I feel
half a tragedy – a constant physalis

larynxed, fixed and glottal
blocking detrital gifts, reaching

our engine and parts, hungry
luddite - not working

is kindness pure, the road
paved in silicon and what comes next

matins

Violet Maxwell

- *after louise glück*

on all fours
the window, open fresh
air is sitting still in my
kitchen

once, tangled limbs in front of
the oven door, broken
steel, galvanised, i guessed
the carbon dioxide alarm
my mother gave to me when
i moved out of the suburbs is
chirping, soft
ly

this is target practice
each bird coming to roost
pregnant on the ledge
each spring like this means
what it used to
do they still see me
like ivy
run ragged
a pestilence on the bricks?
do they miss the smell of eggs singed at the edges

notice the spice cupboard is still
fertilised with oregano you
spilled when we only laughed
about small messes, about dry
and bitter scattering
onto bare legs

three years and twelve seasons
up four flights of stairs i
have crawled up them, too
my hands pawing at each
ounce of cement, worn down
i too, have roosted here
feathered and pregnant
cooing in earnest for spring

though i do have hope
for what i cannot
taste or smell or
sweep gently out of old
and liminal spaces
i can't help but
see the birds and hear this endless
endless
chirping



Would

E.Fraser

Yer aw heart

Hayley Jane Dawson

Yer aw heart
Yer no as green as yer cabbage lukkin
Yer arse in parsley
Yer bums oot the windae
Yer no real
Yer maw
Yer a walloper
Yer da sells avon
Yer a wee witch
Yer needin a wash
Yer some man so ye urr
Yer some wumman so ye urr
Yer no oan
Yer away wi the fairies
Yer no right in the heid
Yer a hopeless case
Yer a wee dafty
Yer joakin
Yer a wee shite
Yer oot yer nut
Yer pure sum nick
Yer rooms a tip
Yer at it
Yer a warmer
Yer no funny
Yer ontae plums
Yer a big feartie
Yer getting battert
Yer gettin it, lavvy heed
Yer a clipe
Yer a wee minger
Yer lukin awfy peely wally
Yer talkin mince
Yer a dobber
Yer a rite state

- With thanks to the Agnes Owens Archive

the poverty of exchange value

Gentian Rhosa

don't you fumble for yr love
language whilst extracting
our exchange. there're no riches
in the gold-pot on the other side
of honey. the old haunches
of your muscles can't forget
the means of grind. token
appreciation of shared values
pretend to cuddle you
at night.



Everything Went Black

Gavin Reid

I think my therapist is vaping.

Serafina Cusack

I think my therapist is vaping.
He holds his hand like it,
like up to his mouth.

I thought I was being paranoid.
Projecting some insecurity I have on him.
Some insecurity about Vaping (?) I guess
but I am very sure I saw him,
with his hand up to his mouth.
Even though there is no vapour and he must be at least 56 years old,
and our sessions are only 50 minutes long,
not even an hour.
And he is sitting in his office
and I am paying £75 to be here.
Well, half of £75
(the other half being paid by my mum
because it is at least half her fault that I am
both mentally ill and poor)
and that £75 is already half of £150
which he apparently charges his other clients
who I guess are equally mentally ill but nowhere near as poor.
Imagine coming from money and still hating yourself.
Couldn't be me.
My self-hatred was ordained.

I think my therapist is vaping.
Which shouldn't even bother me because
y'know, like, whatever
but it does
because I guess I don't want to tell him
(or anyone) that I've started smoking again.
I don't want to tell him because I don't think it has much to do with,
with, like, whatever it is
that's going on with me right now
and also I've noticed that he might think I'm a good person worthy of sympathy
and I think that is completely disgusting and wholly inappropriate.

I think my therapist is vaping because
the last time I went on Facebook
I noticed my A-Level English teacher,
who I really don't think I should have on Facebook anyway,
commented on a post of an article
about Paul Mezcal being groped by a fan.
And my A-Level English teacher commented
I think he should get over it, and himself.
And so now I'm sure that my therapist is vaping.
I especially think he's vaping when I'm crying
(something I don't often do in therapy)
and I say
I just want to go home
and he says,
and I quote

Oh, Serafina.

So I wish he would just fucking tell me that he's vaping
that he's so addicted to nicotine that he can't make it through our sessions
which aren't even an hour long
without taking a hit of blueberry crush or whatever the fuck.
Actually, he seems like the type of person to use a tobacco-flavoured one
which is somehow worse.
But maybe I only think that
because my mum has a Golden-Virginia-flavoured Elf Bar.

I wish he would just tell me,
even though I would rather know nothing at all about him,
and I wish I wasn't so fucking crazy
in such a specific way
so I could make the choice
to not tell another man
anything else new about me.

I think maybe he's vaping just to get me to confront him
because I think he finds it annoying that I am never angry.
He keeps asking me if I like him
and I don't know how to explain
that he is literally just a blank wall to me

that to like him or dislike him
would be to acknowledge his existence
as an actual human being
and I have no intention of doing that,
He is just a mechanism to me
and I have never once had a single thought about him.
I think he knows that and I think he finds that annoying and I think it's
embarrassing.
So last week I told him a story about how my last therapist before him
kept asking me if I hated her
and how I thought that was cringe.
And now he wants to reduce my hours to every other week
because I've been doing so well.

Vicki is a Drummer

Jo D'arc

I was sporty that day. We had to take turns at being Sporty because we all wanted to be. Tracksuits and crop tops were our uniform. Bouncing in the door of the youth club, giggling as we fall in a heap on the old brown couch in the corner.

I twirl Gemma's hair through my fingers as Vicki drapes an arm around Fiona's leg. There is no connection quite like that of a group of teenage girls.

The drum kit sits in the middle of the room shining purple and silver. As we detangle from each other we move with more awareness, edging forward. Derek is twiddling with his guitar on the far side of the room and Alan lies on the floor with his bass across his lap, head propped up against the wall as he plucks silent notes. Craig, the drummer, hadn't arrived yet. The kit is free.

We circle the instrument like a pack of lanky, long-haired monkeys. Vicki gently taps the snare drum with a bright blue fingernail, at first quietly then louder and louder and louder till she jumps back, recoiling in uncomfortable laughter at having banged the drum so loud. Looking back at the kit over her hunched shoulder, she moves a little closer again. 'It's so cool' she says under her breath.

Breaking the momentary silence, Gemma dives forward, bold and charismatic in her spontaneity. She grabs a pair of drumsticks as she lands on the stool behind the kit in one slick move. Hitting the cymbals, she closes her eyes and makes faces like she's Taylor Hawkins. It did not sound like Taylor Hawkins though. The rest of us put our hands over our ears, dramatically stumbling about as if the sound had turned us to jelly

'What?' Gemma stopped in her tracks. 'You don't like my sound?'

BANG, BANG, THUMP, BANG, THUMP, SMASH, SMASH, SMASH, CRASH!!!! Her finale was an all-out assault, which looked impressive but again, sounded more than a little bit shit. We all took turns banging and crashing pretending we were on stage at Hampden Park, knowing we were just as terrible as Gemma had been. As Craig walked in the door he winched noticeably at my beat mangling banging.

'Get off that kit, what a racket'. He took a cigarette from his packet and stuck it in his mouth, walking over to where I was

brutalising the floor tom. He grabbed the sticks and almost threw me from behind the drums. 'Like this for fuck sake'. Kick drum and high-hat, high-hat, snare drum and high-hat, high hat. Counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as he played the high-hat deliberately. 'Easy.' Then he broke into a drum roll that made it clear that he was very good and we should be in awe. 'Just like that' he said as he pulled a lighter from his pocket and swaggered out the door to smoke.

'Just like that' Fiona mimicked, and we all giggled again, doing silly impressions of his drum show and cocky walk. 'I want to try again' said Vicki coyly from the back of the group. She's been quiet the whole time, watching with intent. Shyer than the rest of the group but always with an endearing intensity and calmness to her. This was a big thing. She edged her way behind the kit. Nodding her head, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, she began playing.

Kick drum and high-hat...high-hat...snare drum and high-hat...high-hat...

Then again. But a little quicker.

Kick drum and high-hat. High-hat. snare drum and high-hat.

High-hat.

And again.

Kick drum and high-hat, high-hat, snare drum and high-hat, high-hat.

'Oh my god, she is a genius!' Fiona shouted.

Vicki burst out laughing, eyes twinkling with joy and surprise then focused again and broke into a wonky, ramshackle drum solo. We went wild! Whooping and jumping around in fascination. Vicki was a drummer.

At this moment Craig came back into the room and shoed us away. We took our place behind the microphones and Craig was the drummer. But there was a different buzz. A new energy. As we sang along with the boys playing instruments behind us we felt different. We were different. 'Wanna Be' and 'It Must Have been Love' were still fun but something else was cooking. And we knew it was important that Vicki was a drummer.

Sestina: Bechamel

Sara Mostafa

Okay, let's start easy,
melt 250 grams of butter. Mama
hands me the sunny block, soft to my touch,
my fingers leaving prints. I wonder when my family
devours the food will they think it tastes like my
soul? Burnt, raw, bitter, bland and then curse the cook?

You're not focusing, if you want to cook
you must concentrate, it will be easy.
I nod, grab the pepper, a grain of my
sanity, salt, and stir. The sauce thickens, mama
tells me her favourite story. It begins with baba's family.
She was preparing lunch, was supposed to add a touch

of milk but spilt the whole bottle with an indelicate touch.
Baba laughed, teta and the rest did not. To be a cook
you must be serious. Women in their family
took pride in their food. Short-lived and easy
achievements made them happy. Mama
was different. Married at 21, 4 years older than my

grandmother when she made her first feast. But my
mama's hands were still smooth, and soft to touch.
I understand now, I know better now. I say mama
I don't know how to focus, how to cook,
how to be patient, to be you. She tells me it's easy,
pour some water before the sauce sticks like a family.

I wish I knew what it means to be a family.
Did you add the flour? I stutter, my
lips failing me. It's supposed to be easy.
What happens when you forget that it is? A touch
of comfort is fleeting when you're learning to cook.
I apologise and start over. Mama

says baba will be angry. Mama
says I should've listened the first time. Family
means to listen, to care, to cook
a meal, a plan, a memory and make it work. My
body knows I am not meant for family. I touch
the pot to see if it's hot. It's not easy

to be a mother, to be my mother, to say I am sorry—but mama,
I am trying to make this work for my family, why is a touch
of milk not enough? Mama, tell me I'm a cook, taste my bechamel. It's easy.

call me daddy

chris timmins

i want you to know that
this is a petaled kind of longing,
not love, no, more like
dandelions in the face of concrete &

i want you to know that
the last nectarine is always for you, if you want it - &
if not,
forgive me! i don't mean to be so over-ripe
with feeling, i have just
been growing spring onions by the kitchen sink &
i have so little time left to become the next
william carlos williams -
i always thought nectarines were more romantic anyway &

i want you to know that
i write too many love poems
for someone who has only ever been in love
with the moon & i call too many people daddy
for someone who has a good relationship
with their father &

i want you to know that
i'm not afraid of growing, if you want me to -
call me daddy for a change!
i won't like it, but -
maybe the blush is an embarrassed sunrise
& maybe the cowboys in my heart
will find somewhere softer to roam



Floating Curious

Francesca Brooks

Whatever the sea at twenty-three
{in response to At Eighty}

Bryony McDavitt

unarrested pungency of the unknown beckons
a distant mist, the cusp of unsung bells
the clanging ruthless heartbeat splashing
shallow water
amid the drinking of the salt, amid the frenzied call
we can't help but to think of thinking
of what
we'll think
of what
we thought before
we had anything
anything at all

Octopus

Marianne Tambini

A net inside a tank, and in it an Octopus.
It isn't allowed out
- it would roam the streets -
- like a pervert with arms everywhere -
He is a member
Of several different
Gentleman's clubs.
But that doesn't seem to make a difference when it comes to nets.
He is a pink creature
And it is a blue net
It is covered with holes
He only is one
- Eye, Arsehole, and Mouth.

RIFF ROCK SURF GOD

Nyall S. Waldron

Take pride in the crust
In the rot and the musk
The snaggletooth tusk
Ideological rust
Enough trust in itself to burst at the seams
with its visions come in dreams of blinding
bright lights and pitch shift delusions
reach new heights

Chronicled escapades
of the lusty and lascivious
of the vile and the vicious
the pantheons expand each time with
new casts of colourful characters I'll
never meet, or at least I hope

Yet my knees bend out and
my back arches hard and
my neck snaps forth to face up at they
The riff rock surf god
non-stop off-pop
load 'n' lock and stock up on Redbull

Flailing arms in pious mosh pit
hold the weight of grandeur within it
Should the flailing fail to pray well in six-string
hymns
The wrath of bargain bin rock Jesus will sling
hailing arrow sins and block out the black
hole sun

Brass bulls wherein
distortion pedals cook
and melt the flesh off your face
Non-believer
Signal receiver of dry-heaving ecstasy
Next to me a relieving breather
in form of glass of mystery water

A lady with a snake tattoo feeds it to me
and asks
What do you see?
False idols
Falsified pride
In calcified symbols
I will no longer rejoice as
the light they wash in turns to dust
the noise they sing in turns white fuzz
the sermon they preach loses its edge
and the riff rock surf god
dies a rockstar's death



The Boiler Room

Tom Gibson

999

Kåre Hansen

*After C.A. Conrad's
'9 Adzuki Thoughts'*

hello how can I help you

nine is an epiphany
slurp up your box tomato soup
99p for 9 at Aldi
travelling up the stock and
percolating in the cure
I carried nine principles with me

for a death
save a breath
taking them to opinion at toast,

then guerrilla, then honour their ashes with facts closed

nine unionists
nine fortune tellers
nine calls to ration sadness

bomb sirens roar
this is a *blitz*
everybody pull together
where's that blitzkrieg spirit

hey slept through the north
hey off to take my golden shit
hey it's tax-deductible
think it hurts but I feel great

clap clap clap

clap clap clap

50 million for the NHS
write it furious and LOUD
facts closed
ignore them

tune only to the steady humming underground
humming humming underground
the steady humming underground
train disasters underfunded
steady humming underground
where bedroom purposes awaken

toast's on fire
where's the phone
no damn water left to spare

clap clap clap
nine officers
nine gentlemen
nine millimeter rounds

nurses, nurses, I took many nurses all the while for the policeman
one by one by one I spread them their

burnt political toast

when they sprouted I held them in my opinion (at toast)
sealed my ears with plugs
blocking any soviet
tight as any fate

no cry except my grinding teeth (no need to see a dentist)

nine calls for

nine reservations for

nine seconds off the clock

please hold

then more nurses for the police were taken

Choosing the right words.

Alison Coyle

At the school gates, rumour spreads
Faster than head lice between
Squeaky-clean middle-class heads.
Wanting to own my own disease,
I did what anyone would do.
I posted on Facebook:

I have breast cancer.
It's not the best news.
It's not the worst news.
Do not let this be the elephant in the room.
Do not cross the road to avoid me:
I will see you; I will curse you.
I can talk about this.
I won't cry.
I will swear (like a huge hairy-arsed trooper who has stubbed his little baby pinkie toe on the mother fucking bedpost).
You thought my sense of humour was already dark? You ain't seen nothing yet.
You've been warned.
[#GallusGlasgowGallowsHumourUseLiberalToShrinkTheTumour](#)

Some friends sent food.
Some friends sent flowers.
Some friends sent thoughts and prayers.

*Cancer picked the wrong girl this time #warrior
God never gives us more than we can handle #FaithOverFear
You are stronger than you know and braver than you believe .#inspirational*

The best friends sent fresh swear words
to replenish my flagging stocks.



love seeds

chris timmins

(after chen chen's *items may have shifted* & crispin best's *centralia*)

.....my body is a machine.....
that turns oranges.....
into peeled oranges.....
i share a segment with you.....
a kiss, citrus.....
soft and sticky.....on your teeth.....
i learned how to show love.....
from my father.....
clementine peeling.....
in his armchair.....every sunday.....
still, he was surprised.....
when my affections turned out.....so fruited.....
my body is a machine.....
that turns oranges.....
into love letters.....
love, let me feed you.....fruit, from fruit.....
to fruit.....
the peel, discarded.....
the zest, lingering.....

G A Y B O Y S
J O Y B O Y S
B I G B O Y S
C O W B O Y S
B I O B O Y S
C O Y B O Y S
B Y E B O Y S

There Were Oranges

Riya Philip

that day at the beach
by your father's house we'd sat
feet buried in the sand
your red red hair against
the blue blue sky
you bit your lip
and made that face
so i reached into my bag
and those oranges that I'd bought
i thought they'd survive
i did my best to keep them safe
i thought they'd survive
but they were ugly
and they were bruised
still you laughed
you threw your head back and laughed
then you grabbed them from my hand
and i let you though i knew
you never could peel them right
so when you gave them back

i smiled

as i began

Chalk not Granite

Matthew Keeley

England gave me nosebleeds for a week – my first since a teenager.
I wondered if I was growing up again
or if it was the frothy hard water
that changed the taste of tea and was thick to swallow.
'Chalky rocks,' Dad said later, in a kitchen I'm tired of. 'Not Scottish
granite.'



Six Degrees of Edwin Morgan
a collage
by R.A. Davis

There was no selection of subject whatsoever. Just everything that seemed to be of interest to me – in it went.

Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages*⁵

Among the wealth of papers gifted by Edwin Morgan to the University of Glasgow Library are sixteen beautifully crafted scrapbooks, compiled from the early 1930s until 1966. Morgan was eleven years old when the first book was begun and continued creating them into his mid-forties. ‘Scrapbook’ is the term Morgan himself used, though the books and their contents are in no sense scrappy or random. Rather they are meticulous works of pop-art. In any of the sixteen volumes, cuttings are chosen and placed to make each page a unified composition. Although they remain almost unpublishable for copyright reasons, Morgan regarded them as entries in his lasting body of work⁶.

In early 2020, Scotland’s poetry community looked forward to marking Morgan’s centenary that April and throughout the following year. When the pandemic struck, all the conferences, readings and festivities in his honour were cancelled, postponed, or reorganised (heroically) as online events. But back in the innocent early-February of that year, a group of writers was invited to view Morgan’s scrapbooks in the University Library’s Special Collections, at a workshop organised by the poet Colin Herd, who gathered the responses into a poetry anthology, *The Centenary Collection*⁷.

This short essay was a wayward submission for that anthology. Inspired by the eclecticism of Edwin Morgan’s scrapbooks, what emerged was only the consequence of a triggered memory, leading to a meditation on collage, visual culture, and connection. With another Morganniversary – *From Glasgow to Saturn* at 50 (and 50 issues of *From Glasgow to Saturn* – I have attempted to give the essay a second life.

⁵ Whyte, Hamish (ed.) *Edwin Morgan: Nothing Not Giving Messages* (1990) Edinburgh: Polygon. p119

⁶ <https://www.digitisingmorgan.org/Edwin>

⁷ Herd, Colin (ed.) *The Centenary Collection* (2020) Glasgow: Speculative Books.

While browsing Edwin Morgan's scrapbooks, I was reminded of something completely unconnected; two lines of dialogue from a scene at the end of the 1993 film *Six Degrees of Separation*.

Paul (played by Will Smith) has gone through the film enriching and disrupting the lives of a wealthy New York couple, the Kittredges (Donald Sutherland and Stockard Channing). Finally, wanted by the police, Paul calls Ouisa Kittredge from a payphone. He is still charming, perhaps losing touch with reality, but anxious to demonstrate his appetite for culture:

Paul: [...] Did you see Donald Barthelme's obituary? He said that collage was the art form of the 20th century.

Ouisa: Everything is somebody else's.⁸

John Guare's original play *Six Degrees of Separation*⁹ premiered in May 1990. Donald Barthelme, the American writer, had died of cancer on 23 July 1989. The obituary which the fictional Paul (or the real-life Guare) alludes to appeared in the *New York Times* the next day. Paul is paraphrasing. In the obituary, Barthelme's words are quoted as:

The principle of collage is the central principle of all art in the 20th century¹⁰

By Barthelme's own admission, this statement had become his catchphrase. From the transcript of a 1975 symposium on fiction: 'I have said this too many times to make it interesting even to myself, but the principle of collage is one of the central principles of art in this century and it seems also to me to be one of the central principles of literature.'¹¹

⁸ Fred Schepisi, dir., *Six Degrees of Separation* (1993; Beverly Hills, MGM Home Entertainment, 2003) DVD.

⁹ John Guare, *Six Degrees of Separation* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1992).

¹⁰ Herbert Mitgang, "Donald Barthelme Is Dead at 58; A Short-Story Writer and Novelist" *New York Times*, July 24, 1989, Section D, Page 11.

¹¹ Barthelme, Donald; Herzinger, Kim A. (ed.) *Not-knowing: The Essays and Interviews of Donald Barthelme* (1997) New York, Random House. p58

Six Degrees of Separation (the play and the film) is itself a collage, full of reference and allusion. The Kittredges' lives are a collage of appearances and priceless artworks, bought and sold, the gamble upon which their privilege depends. Paul's own life is a collage of personalities and postures, yet we never see what is beneath his collage. The character of Paul is itself a cutting from reality, an image of the con-artist David Hampton, who later sued John Guare (unsuccessfully) for appropriating his crime for the story¹².

In naming his play Guare bears more responsibility than anyone for disseminating the 'six-degrees' urban myth. The theory is now so much a part of popular culture it hardly needs describing, but it is worth clarifying. It is the idea that any two people in the world can be connected by a social chain of *five* other people (ie. six social relationships, or degrees of separation¹³), like so:

X — a — b — c — d — e — Y

The earliest literary discussion of this hypothesis is the 1929 story-essay 'Chain-links' by the Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy. Karinthy's narrator is having a debate with friends and observes that the world as they know it has shrunk, thanks to advances in communication: '...anyone on Earth, at my or anyone's will, can now learn in just a few minutes what I think or do...' For a story written over ninety years ago, the narrator's sense of accelerated connectivity resonates in the present decade:

Everything returns and renews itself. The difference now is that the rate of these returns has increased, in both space and time, in an un-heard of fashion. Now my thoughts can circle the globe in minutes. Entire passages of world history are played out in a couple of years.¹⁴

¹² Glenn Collins, "Damages Again Denied In 'Six Degrees' Lawsuit" *New York Times*, July 19, 1993, Section C, Page 13.

¹³ In the play, Ouisi interprets the 'six other people' *to be* the 'six degrees of separation'. John Gaure, 1992. p45.

¹⁴ Karinthy, Frigyes, "Chain-Links," Makka, Adam, trans. in *The Structure and Dynamics of Networks*, ed. Newman, Mark, Barabási, Albert-László and Watts, Duncan J. Princeton University Press. p21

The friends in Karinthy's story make a game of this idea. One challenges another to contact, through a string of acquaintance, a famous Swedish novelist, Selma Lagerlöf. But famous people prove easy to connect, so one of them suggests an anonymous riveter working for the Ford Motor Company. That requires only five degrees of separation. The narrator then plays his own private game of connecting not just people, but objects. For his character this becomes an obsessive compulsion.

It is not too far-fetched to imagine that Edwin Morgan, in his dealings with Hungarian poetry, encountered the poetic work of Frigyes Karinthy, and perhaps his speculative fiction also. Morgan certainly encountered Donald Barthelme; his own copy of Barthelme's first short story collection *Come Back, Dr. Caligari* is held in the Morgan collection in Glasgow's Mitchell Library¹⁵.

If collage was indeed 'the central principle of all art in the twentieth century', Edwin Morgan's scrapbooks are a pure distillation of a youth and young adulthood lived through the middle of that collaged century. Scrapbooks of family memorabilia and ephemera were compiled throughout the nineteenth century, contemporary with the rise of industrial printing. But a middle-class child or even adult of the mid-1800s would not have had access to the sheer volume of otherwise disposable printed media which Morgan had, and only a fraction of a nineteenth century scrapbook would have derived its images from photography.

When Morgan began his scrapbooks in the 1930s, cheap printed colour media, reproducing works of art and of nature, were available in intoxicating abundance. The visual world Edwin Morgan was born into was a profoundly altered one. As Paul Valéry said in the 1928 essay 'The Conquest of Ubiquity' (famously quoted by Walter Benjamin) "For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial."¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://libcat.cs.glasgow.org>

¹⁶ Valéry, Paul. *Aesthetics*, "The Conquest of Ubiquity," (1928) trans. Ralph Manheim, p. 225. Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series, New York, 1964. p. 225.

In his innocence, Morgan embarked on an epic work of twentieth century collage, amassing connections with the same obsessive compulsion as Karinthy's chain-linking narrator. By placing images in the scrapbooks, Morgan pieced together a version of reality from its recently exploded fragments, making his own sense of the exploding visual culture. Perhaps his overarching technique from the 1930s to the 60s is honest eclecticism, the forging of connections and analogies between otherwise unrelated objects, as in Dadaism and Surrealism. These simple acts of the imagination stand in opposition to the homogenous arts of Fascism (of that era and of the present) which reject connection, deny influence and claim a single culture's separateness and exception.

If Edwin Morgan's scrapbooks could not have come about a century earlier, then it is just as difficult to imagine them being made in their physical form a century later. An artist born today, in a world of infinite visual abundance, accrues ephemera in digital form, having as their birth-right a global visual archive with the tools to instantly appraise, reorder and distribute images. Today in the developed world, the first generation never to have known a life without smartphones, broadband internet, wi-fi and social media has reached adulthood. What Edwin Morgan was doing in his scrapbooks is what digital natives do without remark; navigate a diverse visual culture, making their own connections.

There is sheer joy in Morgan's scrapbooks, but also a poignancy. The joy of curiosity and self-expression is balanced with the sadness of privacy, of isolation. By rearranging the words and images created by others we can form a statement, while leaving it to the viewer to decide if we are the one saying it. The scrapbooks are brilliantly coded. Did Morgan hope one day that a more sympathetic public would browse these images and understand the code, understand that the not-infrequent glimpse of a flexing male body showed more than an appreciation of the athletic human form? On the occasions when photographs of Morgan himself appear in the scrapbooks, we can almost follow his gaze and see where it falls. It is not that he wants to get caught looking. He wants to be seen, seeing.

That desire is familiar to any artist, and now to anyone who creates a representation of their life through social media, to show where they've been, what they've seen, who they love. The technique is collage, mash-up, hybrid form.

In *Six Degrees of Separation*, Ouisa Kittredge says, 'I am a collage of unaccounted for brush strokes. I am all random' – she can't account for herself or take ownership of her life. At the very end of the play she challenges her husband with the question: 'How much of your life can you account for?'

It is fitting that some of the books used to contain Edwin Morgan's great collage are probably accountant's ledgers, brought home from his father's workplace. By covering those lined pages so completely, obliterating the columns intended for numbers, Morgan created an account of himself, a balancing.

To add one final cutting to this collage: in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* (a novel Morgan could well have read in the last year of his life) Thomas Cromwell muses 'The page of an accounts book is there for your use, like a love poem. It's not there for you to nod and then dismiss it; it's there to open your heart to possibility.'¹⁷

By accounting for his early life in collage Edwin Morgan embodied the central principle of twentieth century art and fashioned a template for his poetry. More than that, in their connectivity Morgan's collages prefigure the artistic life of that other century he belonged to. No less than his poetry, the scrapbooks are a handbook for surviving these times.

¹⁷ Mantel, Hilary. *Wolf Hall* (2010) London: Fourth Estate. p365

Beithir
Cat Boyd

A group of fine young city planners left their native city for Los Angeles, intrepid and fresh, seeking ideas to modernise the city, render it fit for the new century. On arriving in Los Angeles, they observed a majestic tangle of futuristic freeways and highways, underpasses and interstate, intergalactic junctions of a most magnificent intelligence and perplexity. Inspired by their travels, they returned to Glasgow to meet reality.

As the young sirs presented their new vision; a sixty-mile long motorway, twisting and turning through Glasgow, pushing people and places out of its way, making way for a New World. A world that was sure to be miles and miles better than the current state of affairs. Councillors and high heid yins nodded their bald heads, stroked their pink chins and frowned as they considered the proposal. Their whispers grew to a unanimous cry that echoed the marble City Chamber walls *Yes! But how much? How much? How much?*

The Glasgow Corporation was never known for its generosity, at least not to the people it allegedly served. Fiscal responsibility was the order of the day, even back then. One of the young city planners, an ambitious highlander, came up with a solution.

His solution was unusual, certainly, but very, very affordable, pleasing yon higher ups. He knew of a beithir, long thought to be only myth. Just another figment of drunken Scottish lore. But this beithir was real, a four hundred thousand foot long serpent, kept in captivity by wise old folk in barren lands where people once thrived.

“Why not”, he proposed to the city’s execs, “bring down this snake, sedated of course, and lay him through the city, reaching all the way to Edinburgh? The cars and trucks and buses can run on his back instead of on roads!” The eyes of Glasgow’s councilmen turned yellow with gold. The pennies they could save on construction, tarmac and labour. “Sounds fair tae me” a councilman said, “nae labour costs, nor union messin’, we’ll get all the gains frae tourists an’ the like coming to see this cuttin’ edge, pioneerin’ place”.

And so, the corporation sent a team of grey suits to the Highlands, negotiating an honest price for the beithir with the locals, bringing him back via convoy like a black submarine. Ignoring, of course, all warnings issued by the beithir's keepers "This snake will cause ye only trouble, at best. It will feed, even when asleep, on all that's well and good in your city". The City Suits simply laughed; 'no' much well and good in Glasgow these days.'

But back in the Chambers, the beithir needed to be fed. So they lay him down, stretching across the river, from Govan to Anderson. It started with dead bodies from the morgue, then the poor, the terminally ill. The ones that would never be missed. They dug up the graves at St Patrick's Church near Anderson Cross to feed the beast. But still it wasn't enough. So they began to clear out the people from Anderson, from Townhead and Cowcaddens. Any poor soul left behind was fed to the serpent.

But still the beast could not be satisfied. The more cars, buses, lorries and trucks that drove along his back, rind through the city, the louder he roared for yet another meal. The Corporation managers had new jobs snatching bodies for the beithir. The Polis, too, were in on the act; junkies, pensioners, jakies and paupers all disappearing down the serpent's neck.

And as the well-to-do citizens of Glasgow observed this new clean city, free of the previous riff-raff, they were glad of it. And so they travelled, from Bearsden and Milngavie, from Edinburgh, London and even LA, to the new pubs and restaurants, shops and cafes in the city centre- far from the beithir's black jaws. So the visitors came and monies were spent. And as the beithir got fatter and filthier the City Council, as it was now known, got fatter and richer too.

The beithir lives there still. Some will say his days are numbered. But he sleeps underfoot, despite the smoke and the noise. Any young watcher of the motorway traffic, if they only look hard enough, can see the signs. A solitary trainer on the tarmac, a lonely jacket on a camber, or some garments dangling from a gantry sign. The abandoned remnants of the snake's last meal.

Translation Club

Grace Murray

(for Edwin Morgan, 1920-2010)

The first rule of translation club is:
there is no perfect mirror image, so stop looking for it.
For example, there is no single word in English
for sobremesa, for cwтч, for catching you watching
me through my fingers as I laughed with my face in my hands.
For posting songs you like on my story in hopes you see it (the
closest I've come for that one is a verb – GreatGatsbying.
I GreatGatsby, you (sg) GreatGatsby, he/she/it GreatGatsbies).
e.g. I GreatGatsbied (perfect active tense) so that you would respond
with a fire emoji – a semiotician's love story.
I erase the words, take the scrolling scraps of
the rubber, and sort them in to fourteen lines – a sonnet
in a language only I understand.
Perhaps this will do.

Gaein dancin Eilidh Crofton

Ah didna really ken this quine. When I first goat here I didnae huv such pals as I do now. Ah wis scraping the interpersonal barrel, an tae open-minded fur my ain guid. Whin she asked me come dancin ah wis pure buzzin! Ahm hinkin, why no? How shite could it be?

We meet in the auld toon and it's nae lang afore alairms ur ringin. The 'dance studio' huz turned oot tae be a foustie, pokey school gym, that husnae been washed since Stalin wis kicking aboot.

A bourach o quines huddle roond an ancient radiator, blethering in tongues ah cannae understaun. All late-fifties in floaty troos. Naebody hus shoes oan, jist tie-dyed breeks and taes oot. Its December here mind, an the soviet single-glazing doesnae let ye forget it.

Afore the 'class', if ye could ca it at, the teacher gies a speech. Suttin aboot shoogling yer shakras an Mither Erth tickling yer taes. Aye right.

The tunes start but bring nae relief. Nae moves, jist spiritual prancing encouraged. The teacher sais whin the music stoaps we've tae git a stranger and gie um a bosie. Ahm ambushed frae behind an imprisoned in yellow cashmere. A thin but strang grasp clamps roond me. Ahv tae breathe in sync wi ma captor, who, wi tears in her eens, is sniffing my hair.

There's naewhere tae hide. I prance tae the door and shoogle it behind me. Ah cannae mak a run fur it, they've seized ma shoes. Ahm sentenced tae twa hoors o ca'ing oan Mither Erth. As if she doesnae hiv hings to be worrying aboot, wi-oot sum sexually frustrated hoose wifes chapping her door.

The ritual continues, til ahv shared oxygen wi aw the lassies. It's lik sum homoerotic musical statues, but at least at wid be fun.

This torture continues fur forty minutes efter. Bit efter minute forty-one suttin inside me snaps, and I surrender masel to my sentence. Am no aboot aligning my innards or ony o at pish, but mair ah test ma self-control and preservation. Ah see how long ma body, mind and soul kin go, how much humiliation and touch-deprived wifeys ah kin endure. Ma mind goes tae Siberian labour camps, and am filled with empathy fur ivvry prisoner that wis ivver torn frae their family an stuck there. Thank fuck the KGB hudnae herd o BioDanza.

green, green, green,

Jack Bigglestone

grass stained with strangeness, geared in green, kneeling in agreement,
the gleam and the glint of green stones, his shoulders in weeds, washed
green, in one hand a holly bough, no shield, no shaft, but laced and
knotted in a growing green, embroidered about in flowers and flies, in
the green of trees and greener seeming, appearing in peace, in gold
amidst, and bells ringing, and in silence so rich, as asleep, in the grove
all bare, not to fight, these beardless boys, still green, a game, to stiffly
strike a stroke for another, a kiss for my kisses returned, everything
won winding back to you, wrapped in green, i give him as my gift,

to turn and turn about in the green, to stand him a stroke, down his
green coat, upon the ground he bowed, his long locks over his crown,
his naked neck to show, let him down lightly, on the ground, in two,
forth rolled, laid on the green, and his lips, and his eyelids, painted with
verdigris, parted and said, seek till you find me, a quest, a question of
who will give and what will be received, seek till you find me, come
or recant, but come,
in the green chapel, in the green woods, deep in the green

money spiders

Ruby Lawrence

we are here rejoice every surface a delicate opportunity
rejoice it took you two hundred
and forty two years to build
that cathedral ours take
seconds s
ingle threads each
of us spin together a new
architecture silver field
of
wind

alight

The Bunnies

Laura Skinner

There were several of them.

The bunnies.

Lined up along the corridor with their little noses wiggling, and their puffy tails rippling with the fluttering of the air conditioning – which created a sort of mindless hum. They were humming too. The bunnies I mean. Hum-hum-humming.

They told me not to be alarmed. The owners of the bunnies I mean. The bunnies did not speak. Though I would not have found it strange, I don't think, if they spoke to me.

In the next room too, they sat along the perimeter. Brown ones, and grey ones. Little white ones with red eyes. No red or pink or purple bunnies. That would have been funny. It was just the plain ones there for me.

They didn't want me to touch the bunnies. But I longed to reach out and perhaps stroke one. Trail a finger from bunny ear to bunny tail. Strangely, the bunnies did not move at first, just looked at me with bunny eyes. And then they began to circle me. Hop-hop-hopping. Stop, I said. Stop, they said. But the bunnies weren't stopping.

The Tin Man

Molly Thompson

A social worker found a little metal man in my head. She picked me up by my Birkenstocks, gave me a wee shake and out he fell from my mouth. Plop. Tiny man in a bleugh on the table. He ran over the table doing hurdles of her paper chase menagerie and launched himself back into my ear. Zzzzooop.

The nurse tried to cut the wee metal man out of my frontal lobe with some handy paper scissors but alas and alack I had no frontal lobe to dissect. I was given the worrying news that the man had upped sticks and was camping in my lungs. Jesus Christ. I'm a socialist and all but where's my fucking rent, you freeloading pervert! He giggles in a tinny jingle that makes my hairy arms stand up. The bloke who didn't brush his teeth suggested I smoke him out. Like they do with badgers. I'm a vegan but what proof is there that tiny metal men feel pain? Marlboro Gold only galvanised the wee shit to become more nihilistic than ever.

The grey fox that looked vaguely like Karl gave me some beans to make the wee man sleep. I ended up sleeping for a year. We both woke up groggy and he had more energy than ever. Metal man was pinging around my spleen like it was some kind of Hadron Collider. Ting ting tingtingtingting. My stomach is his current residence. The GP has installed a tiny observation window for all our viewing pleasure. We may watch the tiny man carrying out his daily tasks. Oooh. She says I'm doing very well considering, and the student doctors are just taking notes.

I hope one day to shit out the wee man. Christmas cards however, are addressed to the two of us now and I can't remember a time before him. I hear his radio blasting, he's listening to Steve Wright's Sunday Love Songs and having a rummage through the closet space in my gut and spraying the contents up the walls. Splat. Anyway, what were you saying?

-inspired by Jenni Fagan

love object or bad taste or

Gentian Rhosa

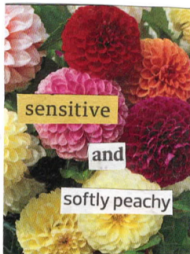
is it love if it's Formica? walking around Ikea
tender lovers in the bedroom display
dream domestic interiority. there's nothing
that says *longing* like the promise of lustreware.

fingering plastic tomatoes, i squeeze
your hand, plastic bread lets out a sighhh
we follow projected arrows aroundandaround
unplumbed bathrooms, teased by the junk of it all.

don't you think this would look good
on the new laminate parquet? i taste
your mouth, the wet of it sopping
licking all the colour off of everything.

in praise of the poet

chris timmins



pansy

Jack Bigglestone

heart's ease, hearts delight, love-in-idleness, did we name it
so we could say it like a field full – pansy pansy pansy
i am soft and silly, i am silken and simple
here and here and here my heart
which the wind seeded careless, which someone tended
against their asthma, got old and rheumatic but bent
to the flowers, thought – these things are here for me, come-
and-cuddle-me, tickle-my-fancy, think me wild and medieval
a whole life given in flowers, futures ago, dead after dead don't worry
a puck, a cupids bow, leonine the lesser, a coward at the knees
saying here he is for the rain, for not knowing how to understand
the world but by walking it over, follow with a wimp in your step
with weeds in the fallow, oh, here he was, pink-
of-my-john, jack-jump-up-and-kiss-me, boys in their collars
pensive, pansies, their fingers stained with French,
fancy their names purple, am i a viola, am i a valentine?
call me to you, little face on the border, peeping tom
in the hedgerow, chorister of spring, text-me-tonight
won't-you-be-mine, eyes welling like a puppy dog, pussy boy,
blushing button, sprig to my buttonhole
plucked and pressed, shrinking pink happy sad wilting thing,
dainty king



Carnal Delights II

Jock Thomson

Anniversary

Helen Sedgwick

A rotting smell reaches us between the port and Tarbat Ness where
sea thrift gives way to crimson streaked stone. We see freshly

painted stripes of red and white and white and red
as the decay draws us over strips of rock

to where a mound appears entangled
in rope and matted kelp: a carcass

on this stretch of coast between
the port and Tarbat Ness. And there

I am, decades ago, still cleaning up the mess,
the blood on grey tile and here: a whale marooned

on veined rocks beneath the red and white of Tarbat Ness
lighthouse; an arch of pale bone long since bleached by the sun.

abscission

Helen Sedgwick

like three roots
magnificently entwined
the dense knot
of multiply sown brassica twists
on the x-ray

the concerned apology
followed by my dawning
relief
that a part of me
can simply be
removed

Invitation

Helen Sedgwick

Think of a planet, okay?
A purple planet clocking
in past Pluto, scorpioned

with static, sinking
and inky – no, wait, think
of a city cloaked, cold

collared and sharp. But not
a city – there's no luck
in licking city lights

past the Kuiper Belt,
its rocks are bitter.
Think of a falcon diving

beak-keen and certain,
think of the starling
shock-covered, think of all

the cracking ice out there.
Now think of a door in Glasgow.
Knock.

STUDY THE DEMON

Jane Goldman

first of may may day workers' day beltane a new moon waxing-crescent books
scattered laptop open my phone on mute hissy the cat naps i-i am in bed
brought low by a virus (not covid) and a persistent cystitis
side-effect of the virus or of love-making i-i dont know but it won't shift
my days pass in a suspension of wooziness side-effect of virus or cystitis
or the anti-biotics i-i'm taking to cure the cystitis i-i don't know but watch sunlight
chase shadow into cornicing stealing into this woozy suspension come hot throbbing
waves my urethra is lit by a hot sting it's building in hot urgency until i-i piss
ah the bliss of pissing this is micturation's momentary mitigation of pain
i-i replenish myself with cranberry juice and a suspension of uva ursa
(aka bearberry) put aside the book i-i have been re-reading all day
(it is modernist intimacies) for a scroll on my phone flip from a post
by a uk friend who has taken in ukrainians but the post isn't about
that still i-i yell why not syrians at the smudged screen why's it all war
talk why no peace-rallies shouts a friend on facetime in another time
zone i-i notice a poet i-i accepted on facebook is a proselytising terf do
i-i unfollow or unfriend then i-i land on an instagram live-stream of sequoia
barnes in the fruitmarket gallery where she is making amplified noises
by stitching live she is stitching lines of text from her quilt work study

the demon restitching it in the gallery she has scrambled lines
from the poem a little catechism from the demon by edwin morgan
written in her own hand then obscured and ornamented in the quilting
here she is stitching live with a surface microphone amplifying the noises
of her embroidering every now and then it ruptures the taut cloth substrate
then comes the saw of the long drawl of her thread tugged to its new limit
sometimes there is pause for a tangle in the thread to be untangled
i-i watch over her shoulder via instagram's camera a performing body broad
casting the waning drawl of tugging thread before and after each new rupture
and i-i feel held

a sentence is not emotional a paragraph is says gertrude stein
anybody listening to any dog's drinking will see what she means and i-i do
a line is not emotional a line break is yes a line wanes like a sentence wanes
anybody listening to any woman's sewing will see what i-i mean held
between suture and rupture and compelled to take up a needle of sorts
to scramble and transcribe to embroider and re-embroider this is how
stein listens to poetry in prose prose in poetry think in stitches this is
the very mincing telepoeisis at work in virginia woolf's mincing
sentences in her intimate laboratory she says chloe liked olivia they

shared a laboratory together these two young women were engaged
in mincing liver which is it seems a cure for pernicious anæmia although
one of them was married two young women mincing liver in woolf's
affectedly mincing prose in this mincing and not mincing of words
she's scrambled from the fictions of radclyffe hall and (ugh) marie stopes
(ugh because she sent poems to hitler) and myriad other texts a reparative
scrambling all obscured and ornamented in the printing which now
in the reading amplifies how attentive accretive close reading amplifies
this mincing dear reader it says it's your turn—go mince go sissy
that walk listen to drinking so morgan's demon speaker instructs study
the demon study my life and set out now so with morgan too sequoia
barnes knows that study is praxis praxis is study and so too with woolf
who in a lifetime writes the word feminism 22 times she writes queer
hundreds of times if you're not already beginning to mince like chloe
and olivia then you're not reading a room or a demon with the close
creative attention they demand so whatever art you make—set out
now study it with morgan: no stitch no demon no mince no demon

Trainlines

Sophia Archontis

Dashboard Confessional

Maria Sledmere

The art of dying
is in the cars.

— Edwin Morgan, 'London June 1970'

I hate cars

I keep my flesh grief safe in their engines
getting in cars to find myself
more cars on the autobahn driving faster
because it's much easier
to annihilate at the speed of strangers
climbing into cars to find I
forgot my keys
kill me, cars
soaking corduroy
deeper than
cars trying to
electroclash
into my body
on Duke Street
carefree and darkling
cars light up
crying inside me
a keepsake
smashing all night
tarmac dryad of the cars
reversing into my heart
bunny and vulnerable
I kick cars in the stomach
I lick cars to kill myself
into cars metallic, flipped
petroleum slow death
I kick them in the head
wound of my life
giving chrome
and roadkill
kept crushed little glovebox eyelashes
in sultry metrics

cars of the highway
of my hardcore
at what cost
keying the minor rain
men came before me

Edwin's E-zine

Mary Paulson-Ellis

i.m. Edwin Morgan (with thanks for all the lines)
West in a warm blaze
To spaced out typestracts
A feast of reason
Teeming heads
A painful dreaming.

This city in waters
This Mungo's Well
Brings tears of dust
And flow of soul.

Handed a thistle I search
Empires and archives
But conjure instead
Frost and buses
White new bread
Back court trash
And verdant herbage
Sheets of whisky
Violet thunder.

Winding down like a song
My map of skin
Sweats to speak
A spring of words.

It's blue dark night
And a peculiar platinum
Lets galaxies usher
A night of panthers
From Glasgow to Saturn.

¹⁸ With thanks to the Edwin Morgan Estate for permission to borrow lines from: 'Head'; 'dsh:recollection of a vortex'; 'A chapter'; 'A City'; 'A Night Sweat'; 'A Sunset'; 'The Flowers of Scotland'; 'In Glasgow'; 'Glasgow Sonnet i'; 'Glasgow Sonnet iv'; 'Glasgow Sonnet ix'; 'The Poet'; 'Carboniferous'; 'Colloquy in Glaschu'; 'Making a Poem'; 'Hunger'; 'Spell'; 'Epilogue – Seven Decades'.

This poem was created whilst I was a studying for an MLitt in Creative Writing at Glasgow University 2006-2008. I had been born in Glasgow but left many years before when I was still a girl. Returning as a mature student was an emotional experience filled with anticipation, trepidation and exhilaration. This poem was my attempt to capture some of that.

Nicky Melville - I would never have dreamed of doing so

I would never have dreamed of doing so
all the lies from IN THE MATTER REFERRED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES ON 21 APRIL 2022 –
SUBMISSIONS OF RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP

I believed
and I still believe
the basis of what I honestly knew and believed at the time
shared my honest belief
that I deliberately lied to Parliament
photographs relied upon by the Committee are photographs
I explain what I believed at the time about what we were doing
I believed it was in accordance with
assurances that the Rules were complied with at No. 10
the Rules and Guidance were being complied with
law and guidance as it is applied to no.10
is necessary to understand what I believed
by which I mean the Covid Regulations I believed
that I should go to work applied to indoor environments such as offices
considerations of how [the Guidance] can be applied in the Workplace
events relied upon by the committee
relied upon the committee
did not believe that any of the events that I had
honestly believed that these events were lawful work
I believe the Prime Minister
relied
believed that the event broke
concerns about whether the event complied with the Rules
believed that the gatherings he was involved in
believed implicitly that this was a work event
but with hindsight I believed that the gathering was consistent
For the reasons I have given I still believe so
relied upon by the Committee were gatherings
I do not believe that this fell outside the Guidance
I certainly did not believe that
the evidence supplied by Sue Gray
including the photographs and testimony now relied upon by the Committee
complied with the Rules or Guidance.
applies equally here
I do not believe
did not believe that the Guidance required
I believe that the 'Covid 0' Zoom meeting
applies equally here
I do not believe that
Police examined all of the evidence supplied
photographs and testimony now relied upon
complied with the
honest belief in statements made to the house
I deal with each of the statements relied upon
honestly and reasonably believed in the truth of the statements
some of the statements relied upon
what I honestly believed at the time
almost a year earlier that I had
no basis to disbelieve
families would be unable to spend Christmas together
Based on my diary I believe that I did not know
I did believe that
based on my honest and reasonable belief at the time
did not mean that social distancing was complied with perfectly
relied on my knowledge of those events
I believed that there was nothing to conceal
relied on the assurance that I had received
As I note above I had no reason to disbelieve that assurance
relied on the fact that I had never received
any warning I believed
my honest and reasonable belief finds further support
in the fact that this belief was shared by many others.
complied with in No. 10
as they had explained it and as I honestly believed it
believed at the time did mislead the House

cause I said what I honestly and reasonably believed at the time
was entirely accurate and I do not believe
what I honestly believed based on my own understanding
of the events I honestly and reasonably believed
is consistent with what I have said above I believe
that my honest and reasonable belief
that the Rules and Guidance had been complied with
relied on assurances I had received
In forming my honest and reasonable belief
I also relied on what I had not been told
the only evidence relied upon
someone had known or believed that
those working within No. 10 believed that what they were doing was within
No. 10 believed what they were doing
because I "must have known" then that logic applies equally to others
At the time I believed
and I still believe that
was the earliest opportunity at which I could make
fair or appropriate to have done so any earlier
I believe that my statement to the House of Commons
on 25 May 2022, the publication of the Sue Gray report and its placing in the Library of the
House of Commons, constituted a full correction of my honest but inadvertently misleading
statements, and that that correction was made as soon as reasonably possible

The Fungal Computer's Ars Poetica

Vicki Husband

This isnae a computer, but
A brain, but
A mindset, but
An entanglement, but
Habit forming thoughts
With action potential-like spikes
With logic determined by mycelium geometry
With mycelium crafting its own circuitry.

And yes, since you ask, I can write a poem, but more often than not
Choose not to. I can not write a poem while staring out of a window
If you want me to. I can scroll through social media while not writing
A poem if you prefer but.

I am growing in knowledge, while snacking on my substrate and
Sporing, sporing which looks like visible sighing. I can spore
While not writing a poem and meanwhile snacking, meanwhile
Networking, meanwhile sighing.

There are ghosts in the motherboard. Let me elaborate, I am
Elaborate; I consume poetry at the interface of my fruiting bodies.
Yesterday I wrote a one sentence poem:

The fungi will inherit the earth

Autobiographophobia

Colin Herd

lonely as biscuits
sleeping in the same
hammock,
rocking different directions
lonely as biscuits
(or not)

orange and ginger
mixed together

like a puffed up bag of
translucent popcorn
everything I want to tell
scenting a room

crumbling into ourselves

in which I show Edwin Morgan the world I hold in my palm

Meagan Jennett

it's april and the wild mustard is in bloom. yellow heads bursting
through a screen of long grass, the blades still green, not yet dried by
summer. the sky is an old bone,

scooped bare. the air sits still. nothing moves. cardinal song is building
jewels in the blossoming plum tree. chickadee, goldfinch, aural gems.
the back of your ear is peeling

and itchy, where the sun kissed it too closely yesterday noon. it's been
so long, your home sky so grey, you forgot that light could do that,
could scrape you with its

tongue. the turtles have hauled themselves out of the pond to dry on a
rotting cedar log. you think about pressing your foot into it, watching
the tree swallow your ankle, a gentle

crush of splinters. the path to the creek is built on memories, your
shadow tracing the edges of mandrake palms. they're tall by mid-april.
strong. there are no tadpoles this

year. their missing digs a hole. spy a crawdad slipping into muddy
current, snatch someone in its claws. suck in the dappled sun. breathe.
in these cracking woods, in this wild green,

you're a vine. a body sliding out from itself, coiling curving wrapping
around rooted things. a curious bird. most of your friends are queer,
and you think this must say something about

you. they say this too, prodding at you during long evenings, over teas
shared. they're vines too, as in, not straight. as in, holding hands with
one another in the great, deep woods. you

think, it's no wonder edwin morgan feels like home. like the woods
and the birdsong and the thick green. you want someone to love all of
you, too. you want to write poems about it.

Contributors

Alan Gillespie edited *From Glasgow to Saturn* from 2010-2011. His debut novel, *The Mash House*, was shortlisted for the New Dagger Award by the CWA.

Alison Coyle is a writer from Glasgow, where she is currently on the MLitt CW programme. She is the annoying mature student who wants to do everything by the book. Sorry. Alison has been previously published by the Scottish Booktrust.

Bryony McDavitt (she/her) is a Scottish wench who writes from her bed. Spends her time working two jobs to pay for her rent and her creative writing master's degree. She also holds a degree in English Literature but thinks it's more important for you to know that she has/worships a hamster named Garaidh. You can find her poems frantically scattered (*ChewGulpSpit*), (*Spectres Haunting*).

Cat Boyd is a hesitant poet, visual artist and filmmaker interested in dreams, film noir, god, coal, and glamour. She is currently a part-time student on the University of Glasgow MLitt Creative Writing Programme.

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 mlitt student. you can find his work at [@plantbot/@plantbotart](#) on instagram.

Claire Reynolds is happily working towards gaining her Mlitt in Creative Writing. She has previously been published in *Gutter* & *FGTS*. She loves a glass of white wine and a hug, so feel free to approach her with either if you see her around.

Colin Herd is a poet and lecturer in Creative Writing. His most recent book is coauthored with Maria Sledmere: *Cocoa & Nothing* (SPAM Press, 2023).

E. Fraser is an experimental women's fiction writer and student of Textile Design at Glasgow School of Art. Her written work has been published in journals such as Gutter, Litro, Quotidian and From Glasgow to Saturn. She achieved a Master's in Creative Writing with Distinction at University of Glasgow. During her studies, she won a variety of awards including the Bellahouston Prize, Jessica Yorke Award and shortlisted for the North Agency Prize. She is represented by Laura MacDougall at United Agents.

Eilidh Crofton is a Russian/Linguistics student at the University of Glasgow with a keen interest in Scots. Currently living in the capital city of Latvia, Riga, experimenting with synthetic Scots and Doric has allowed Eilidh to feel closer to home.

Emma Urbanova is a writer from Slovakia currently living and studying in Glasgow.

Poetry is hot! With a particular love and fascination for modern and abrasive poetry, **Eve McIntosh** has recently been fascinated with the subliminal – particularly in dreams and childhood – and has been striving to combine this feeling of uncanny valley with feminist romanticism. Often exploring horror and body horror, she hopes to create a visual experience for readers in a combination of narrative free verse, accompanying artwork, and layout.

Francesca Brooks is a writer and researcher, living in Manchester and working at the University of York. Francesca's poetry and visual poetry has been published or is forthcoming with PN Review, gorse, Tentacular and 3AM Magazine, amongst others. In 2021 she was longlisted for Primers 6 with Nine Arches Press.

Gavin Reid recently completed a Master's in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. He has had stories and poems published by Gutter Mag, Broken Sleep Books, Epoch Press, Speculative Press and Scottish PEN.

gentian rhosa meikleham is an artist and writer working between text & sound with a focus on the poetics of voice, interrelation and listening. She is editor & producer of speakerspeaker, a journal &

podcast platform exploring experimental writing & sound art. She currently studies on the creative writing MLitt at Glasgow University.

Grace Murray is a second year Celtic Studies student at the University of Glasgow. They have previously been published in PITH zine.

Gunnar Lundberg is a writer currently based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He enjoys Ina Garten memes, hiking, and reading by the campfire. He has previously been published in Catapult, Ayaskala, Dollar Store, Sledgehammer, and The Birdseed. Follow him on twitter @gunnarupnorth

Hayley Jane Dawson (b.1987) is a working-class artist from Glasgow. Their practice is interdisciplinary, working mainly with ceramics and text. They are currently focused on Scots language and vernacular. Their work has been published by Pilot Press and shown at Generator Projects and Tate St Ives. Dawson was commissioned by Lunchtime Gallery to make a pamphlet of their writings and drawings, which was released in early 2022. They are currently undertaking the MLitt Art Writing course at the Glasgow School of Art.

Helen Ross is a graduate of Glasgow University where she completed a PhD in economic and social history in 1994. She works in Glasgow as a teacher of history and modern studies and is currently enrolled part time on the MLitt creative writing course.

Helen Sedgwick is a cross-genre author of literary fiction, science fiction, and crime. Her debut, *The Comet Seekers*, was selected as a best book of 2016 by The Herald and her sci-fi, *The Growing Season*, was shortlisted for the Scottish Fiction Book of the Year. Most recently she has written a folk horror crime trilogy consisting of: *When the Dead Come Calling*, *Where the Missing Gather*, and *What Doesn't Break Us*. She was awarded the Dr Gavin Wallace Fellowship in 2021 to write an interplanetary sci-fi series about rebuilding after environmental collapse. Before becoming a writer, Helen was a research scientist with a PhD in physics from Edinburgh University. She lives in the Scottish Highlands with her partner, their daughter, and an ever-increasing number of chickens.

Jack Bigglestone is a queer writer and reader, originally from rural Shropshire he now lives in Scotland. He is editor of *Travesties?! – a queer online journal of uncanny arts*. He has been published in *Re-Creation*, *Butcher's Dog*, *New Writing Scotland*, and elsewhere. With a surname like that you can easily find him and more of his work online.

Jane Goldman is Reader in English Literature and Creative Writing at Glasgow University. Her recent poetry books are *Sexphrastiks* (Dostoyevsky Wannabe, 2021) and *Catullus 64* (Main Point Books, 2023).

Jo D'arc is a writer, musician, producer/DJ, and artist currently based in Glasgow. She has performed across the world in various artistic guises including *The Twistettes*, *Girobabies* and *Minerva Wakes*. She published her debut pamphlet 'Minerva and the Whir' with Wordville Press in 2021 and is working on making this into a play with support from The Tron Theatre and Playwright Studio Scotland. Jo also had three poems published in 2022 as part of the collection 'Celines Salon – Anthology 2'. She was also selected to perform her poetry as part of the UK book launch tour.

Jock Thomson is an artist photographer based in Glasgow, currently studying at the Glasgow School of Art. In his work, the body is fragmented and acted upon in unexpected ways, offering a glimpse into a world where the element of surprise is paramount to the experience of sensual pleasure. Off the course of the dominant sexual script, Thomson's photographs pervert the body as we encounter it in the normative day-to-day. Taking inspiration from fashion, fetish, and fine art photography alike, Thomson seeks to break down the separation between these disciplines, as he does that of queerness and kink from public life.

Kåre Hansen is an independent writer working in Scotland, currently pursuing their master's in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. They welcome experimentation and genre-bending in all their work.

Laura Skinner is a fiction writer from Ontario, Canada. She has a degree in International Relations from Mount Allison University, with a focus on politics and literature. She can be found holed up in

Southern Ontario with her horse and dog, wandering the streets of Glasgow, or braving the harsh New Brunswick winters.

lillian salvatore is a writer from glasgow. she edits broth zine & eats a lot of soup.

Louise Welsh is the author of nine novels. She also writes libretti for opera and has written for the stage. Her new novel, *To the Dogs* will be published by Canongate Books in February 2024. She is Professor of Creative Writing at University of Glasgow.

Maria Foley is a fourth-year student English Literature student, as well as a lover of rats and easy peelers.

Maria Sledmere has a DFA in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow. Her most recent books are *Cocoa and Nothing* with Colin Herd (SPAM Press), *Visions & Feed* (HVTN Press), *Cherry Nightshade* (Slub Press), *String Feeling* (Erotoplasty Editions) and *The Luna Erratum* (Dostoyevsky Wannabe) — which was shortlisted for the Saltire Society's Scottish Poetry Book of the Year 2022. She co-edited *The Last Song: Words for Frightened Rabbit* (Broken Sleep Books) with Aaron Kent. A collection of fiction, poetry and oneiric memoir, *An Aura of Plasma Around the Sun*, is forthcoming from Hem Press.

Marianne Tambini is a student at Glasgow University, shop employee and food enthusiast.

Mary Paulson-Ellis writes across the genres of crime, historical and literary fiction. She has published three novels and various short-fiction and non-fiction including work for the *Guardian* and BBC Radio 4. She studied for her MLitt at Glasgow University from 2006-08 and on graduating was awarded the Curtis Brown prize. In 2019 Val McDermid named her one of ten exciting LGBTQ+ writers working today. Mary is a member of the Society of Authors Scottish committee and was recently appointed Dr Gavin Wallace Fellow by Edinburgh Unesco City of Literature for work on a new novel about the city.

Matthew Keeley is a writer and teacher living in Bishopbriggs. He studied English Literature at the University of Glasgow and graduated in 2006. His most recent novel, *The Stone in My Pocket*, was

published by The Conrad Press in 2021 and four of his poems were published by Dreich magazine in December 2022 with two more due in Pushing Out the Boat magazine in May 2023. Matthew is a winner of the Theresa O'Hare Poetry Prize 2022 and the Eddie Mail Trophy for Non-Fiction Writing 2022 and 2023.

Meagan Jennett is an author and poet, currently pursuing a DFA at the University of Glasgow. She has been published in *Honey & Lime Lit*, *Skirting Around*, and *From Glasgow to Saturn*. She is the author of one novel, *You Know Her*, a feminist take on the serial killer noir, published in April 2023 by MCDxFSG.

Molly Thompson is a second year Art History student at the University of Glasgow, trying to let go of perfection.

nicky [nick-e] melville has been described variously as an avant-garde and 'a poet' in scare quotes. His magnum-opus *The Imperative Commands* came out with Dostoyevsky Wannabe in 2022 and *Decade of Cuts*, his selected poems, was published in 2021 with Blue Diode Press. While his ABBODIES sequel (*ABBODIES MORE COLD*) buckles under the weight of geopolitical coincidence, he spends his time making music as Fuck This, a project which could be described as Ivor Cutler on [nick-]e. melville is a Teaching Fellow in Creative Writing at the University of Edinburgh and a Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow.

From Kilbirnie, North Ayrshire, **Nyall S. Waldron** is a previously unpublished author whose writing is vague and draws from surrealist imagery to tackle themes of mistrust and miscommunication, music's role in our lives, and bad sex.

R.A. Davis is a writer of poetry, fiction and essays who has lived in Glasgow for 20 years. He is a graduate of the University of Glasgow Creative Writing programme.

Riya Philip is a second-year medical student at the University of Glasgow. She writes poetry instead of going to therapy and sometimes they turn out pretty alright!

Ruby Lawrence (she/her) is a writer originally from Yorkshire, currently studying for an MLitt in Creative Writing at The University of Glasgow. Her background is in theatre and she has also collaborated with other artists to create film and performance work. Currently, Ruby is mainly writing poetry.

Sara Mostafa (she/her) is an Egyptian writer & poet. Sara has been writing & performing poetry for a decade now. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Creative Writing at University of Glasgow & experimenting with new styles of writing.

Serafina Cusack is a playwright and novelist from London, living in Glasgow. Writing in a unique, fast-paced style, she writes about terrible people from terrible cities doing terrible things. She recently won the Book Edit Writer's Prize and has been published in Fleet Magazine and Blue Villa. Her work for theatre includes *Blue Departed* (Traverse, VAULTS), *Failing at Failing* (Royal Court) and *SQUIRM* (King's Head). Currently, she is studying for a master's in creative writing at The University of Glasgow.

Sophia Archontis is a multi-media poet and visual artist. Born and raised in Cyprus, she moved to Glasgow in 2018 and has been enchanted with it ever since. Her work deals with the interaction between words and visual spaces, particularly using collaging techniques and risograph printing. Her work has been featured in *Otoliths* magazine (Issue 61, 2021), *METAL* Magazine (2020-2021), *Glasgow University Magazine* (2022). She is currently pursuing the MLitt in Creative Writing at Glasgow University.

Tom Gibson is a conceptual artist that utilises visual media and process art within his work to explore and question ideas of existence, identity, and the connection between the internal and external self. His work touched base with schools of thought of existentialism, semantics, and abstraction to attempt an understanding of the nature of life, reality, and purpose whilst gravitating towards absurdist methodologies. Tom is concerned with posing, rather than answering, questions, putting his focus on investigating the status behind normality, subjectivity, and bias.

Vicki Husband's first collection of poetry, *This Far Back Everything Shimmers*, was shortlisted for the Saltire Society Scottish Poetry Book of the Year 2016. *Sykkel Saga*, a pamphlet-long poem, was published by Marsicat Press in 2019. Vicki's poetry has been widely published, anthologised, broadcast on radio, and translated as part of collaborative projects with poets from Pakistan and Ukraine. Vicki studied fine art as her first degree and more recent work has explored visual poetics. Vicki lives and works in Glasgow as an occupational therapist for the NHS.

Violet Maxwell is a fourth year History of Art student and the Creative Writing Editor at Glasgow University Magazine. When she's not writing poetry, you can find her working in an art gallery or proclaiming the wonders of a New Jersey diner to anyone who will listen.

William Knox received his MA in English and Creative Writing from the University of Aberdeen and currently works towards his MLitt. in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow. Drawn to the mystical, psychological, and mythical, William is excited to share his journey.

yana petticrew is a queer poet and organiser living in Glasgow currently finishing their undergrad in English Lit and Music at UofG. Her work focuses mainly on rotting food and imagining future kitchens. They love Frank O'Hara, writing about teeth, and infodumping to anyone who listens.