

**FROM  
GLASGOW**

**TO  
SATURN**

ISSUE 51  
WINTER 2024

# déjà vu

*Asbna A.*



*(cover art)*



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## WINTER POEM I

### Untitled

*Rachel Smith*

January sifts its misery over Glasgow

lessening the temperature  
to a rapid vascular cold cells making  
an irregular map,  
my skin  
becomes an unseasonable blouse.

Why is it that inside blood looks blue?  
and fake tans don't seem to last

when the Moon buttons the sky shut -  
checking the lock,

the city scares itself out doors and  
drinks themselves a jacket.  
The streets refract like a great glass eye  
remembering

the seasons where you tried to change.

Sauchiehall strikes me  
as at odds with itself

Why don't they make big Baby Guinness.  
They have the right to refuse service.  
Not today mate.

Kababs forever spinning.  
Looking tired, I  
Can't Help Myself.

Uber driver asks familiar questions. Big night.

If you say so.

There were enough stars

## WINTER POEM II

### My Mum's a Catch!

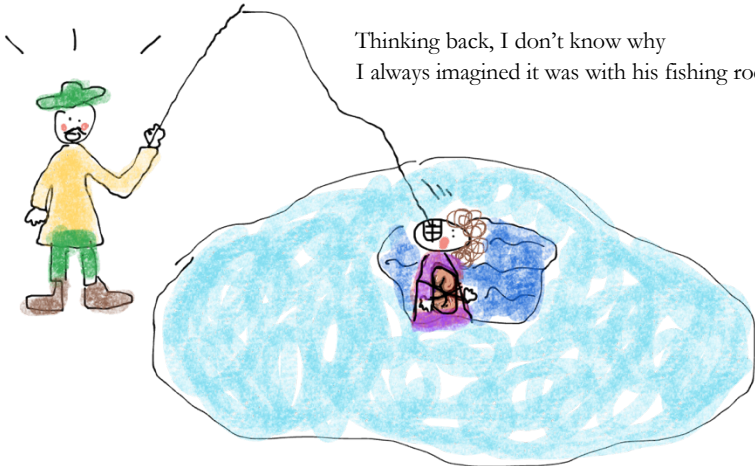
*Leonie Staartjes*

My mother told me a story once  
about how she used to walk over the canals  
to the baker's and back,  
but one morning on the way home  
she fell through the ice.

She still swears she was so small  
the loaf of bread clutched in her arms  
buoyed her to the surface.

Mum pressed her nose against our window then,  
and knocked; like this, she said, I was trying to get out,  
but the ice was too hard,  
and water makes you move all slow.  
I could see the sky so clearly.

Did you get out? I asked her then, holding my breath.  
A fisherman pulled me out, she said.



Thinking back, I don't know why  
I always imagined it was with his fishing rod.

### WINTER POEM III

## **What a long winter what a bad joke**

*Leah Sinforiani*

I look up from your ankles and realise it is no longer July,  
no longer toes in toes in soft butter,  
just October and an old sock on the floor.





WINTER POEM V

**Cabin Fever**

*Lucy Lauder*

In winter I have no use for art

note I am            transposing  
winter lists note

teaspoon rhythms  
bedroom soliloquy  
only partly

delivered

hang me up in gold  
tell me I command  
attention  
call me  
Work of Art

In winter I am  
white            sheep  
                 splintering  
fizz    thoughts    slow  
sleep    my            only  
                 responsibility

art  
part boiled  
in my arms like a kitchen  
made waiting to warm  
it up now  
with a little water

I stir and wait

*The year goes, the woods decay, and after  
many a summer dies*

*from "Winter" by Edwin Morgan*

## **Lerwick lunch poem**

*Mark Ryan Smith*

Around the town and back.  
Into the wind both ways.

# How to (De) Compose

*Rose du Charme*

Exhale the heavy breath of humiliation and draw a secret with the condensation on the window.

For example,

loving you is feeding on a corpse - believing sustenance will immortalize.

Or,

there is a pig floating in Loch Ness: long dead, caressed by flies.

Or,

the metaphors have nowhere to expand. They resort to rotting in the ridges of your teeth.

Then, lick the glass.

## Clatter

After Neil Hilborn  
*Rose du Charme*

Crocodile tears attract butterflies.  
When I'm happy, the poems won't  
reveal themselves to me.  
My grandmother says  
"all we must do is create" as  
she watches the spider spin a  
web on the open window.  
Scientists have no idea how eels mate.  
The ocean has been explored  
less than space. Cowboys are  
my heroes, and cowboys die  
alone: lines stolen  
from my father's  
notebook. We, humans,  
produce around 40,000  
liters of spit in our lifetimes.  
The poems came to me then,  
I was foaming at the mouth. I was  
rabid, and words poured  
out. The sun has just set in  
Ohio, and I think I am happy.  
I do not know if the poems do not  
reveal themselves because I am happy  
or if I am happy because the poems  
do not reveal themselves.  
Helium has the ability to work  
against gravity. Sound travels  
faster in water than it does  
in air. Creativity is a relatively  
new concept. When poems bear  
their teeth to me these days, they look  
different. They are strangers.  
Configurations of all the  
faces I have seen in my dreams.

**Empty**  
*Alison Coyle*

The Cold Sea in Her Hunger to Dissolve,\*  
Lures the Unforgiven with Her Salty Little  
Promises of Absolution.

\*Meena Kandasamy, Exquisite Cadavers

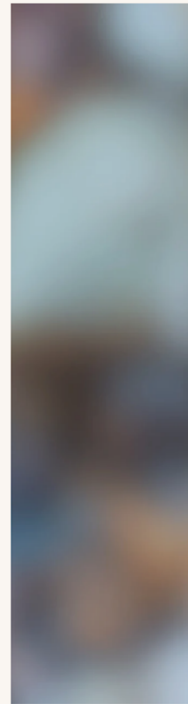


Ravenous.

Shucked and Sucked from Soft  
Shells, Bleeding Hearts and  
Wounded Parts are all that Satisfy  
the Sea's Edacious Ebbs and Flows.



Empty.



## THERE'S NOTHING SEXY ABOUT A CORPSE [sicko]<sup>5</sup>

*Kåre Hansen*

bunch of fishermen came across it in the morning. thought it was a whale at first, afore they noticed it were glowing. off Tunisia, that's right. Started one bastard fishwife tale or two. couldn't believe their eyes—would you? beached up carcass rubberised and milkyeyed, spreadeagled strandwise sandymount and glisten! skin transparent jellyfish all stinking guts and churchly organs. could easily been one of them globsters, save for the heavenly aura all around...

irregular laticiferous ducts corrupted  
cells duplicating swollen information  
overedges bleeding printing adipose  
ka-chunk repeating into lymph nodes  
copy copied copyrights | metastasizes  
(oh no oh no oh no oh no no)

look upon Him only with your eyes closed. breathe in, taste tiny particles of rot against your tongue. what do you see? what did you hear? smell the salt, utterly odourless in its obscenity. yeswell the wellnessness or otherwise of Our Dear Father, along with certain other unimportant details (the fact that God has the lungs of a fifty year-old smoker, the uncomfortable fact of God's comfortable belly, the pendulous fact of His Magnificence and other pronouns) is strictly classified. I do proclaim I am afraidthat while construction is ongoing, His Holiness is quite limitless (in the sense that He is off limits), and will likely not be taking any further blasphemies



baskets & buckets & beer bottles  
& glass bottles & green bottles &  
blue bottles & water bottles & ring  
pull cans & plastic bags & Diet  
Coke™ & fishing nets & cigarettes  
& crisp & chip & condom packets  
&  
car tyres & takeaways &  
Styrofoam™  
& spools of wire & lighter fluid &

cell phones (dividing) & clothing &  
lip-stick & engines & oil & oil &&  
oil

if it could be contained...leaping at inadequate corners, vast & inconceivably  
vast, stretching on for miles untamed, catching the slipstream of your marine  
subconscious to escape and permutate...at night the lights that puncture dark  
like gaslamp stars illuminate a city that exists in instances, limbic systems and  
nervous superhighways, skyscraper columns made of skin and slums dug deep  
to armpits, whose residents in patricide sink slowly back to saturn's belly,  
lulled lowly by the lapping long asleep...in this pool where everything  
is known and combined, *consumption* is the wrong word for what we can never  
separate...regurgitate (regurgitate)

Did you know that? Did you hear?  
Did you sense it? In some way  
could  
tell already? Did you come into the  
fullness of this knowledge recently,  
by natural or super-natural means?  
Did you reconsider your reaction?  
Who were you when you first  
heard?  
What were you doing? To whom,  
and for what reason? When did  
you  
realise, or begin to realise? Who  
among your friends was first to

know? Did you suffer any paranoid reaction when you heard the delusions, after? What was your waves?  
they built a city on the corpse of God. through the colon colonising, gradually inhabiting their own constructed corpus. *if only*, resounded the lament of those first sphincteric settlers, *if only you had recycled that bottled water it would never have become!* yes they built a city on the corpse of God and all the statesmen and artists and politicians took up residence in pockets of flesh and shook their wrung their worried necks sacramented all over the place and one landowner president upon left nostril let out a cry which later noted down and underscored and raised again by some archivist in His belly read,  
He looks like [us] once-human  
object  
wondering indeed

‘[It] must have been lonely, out there  
water washing clean production  
on  
unequaled cargo vessel company  
poor sons to languid floating  
father  
abandoned endlessly) (dehydrated  
raise a glass the man that made us  
citizen of an alien environment  
humanoid once ours objection  
mountains mirrored upside into  
waves  
things appearing like other things  
breaking against lapses in  
formaldehyde  
high tide the milkless man  
returned  
‘that if He (comma) deceased  
then what (comma) did He de cease of?’

<sup>5</sup>More information required.

## jellyfishi

*Kåre Hansen*

my body is a shell  
to be contained inside  
water from the skin my water becomes  
feeling liquid as fuck right now  
interpenetrated by the ocean god  
fucked gently down into his depths  
this is the site of a thousand freebirths  
& a thousand free, you know, the other one  
my existence here rises tides  
—by point-infinity ml.  
this is the only effect I will have on the world  
let me get carried away  
let my cum clog the engines of your ships  
let me be fucked by seaweed and tuna and tiny particles of fish  
we will all be drowned in the resulting orgasm  
ocean's ready-salted anyways

# Woodlouse on duvet

*Ruby Lawrence*

pellet  
flex  
casing  
drop

Cretaceous  
wave  
scaling  
hilltops

someone

spectacular angles

none of them right

(below: a body)

## Ferment

*Jenny Munro-Hunt*

The yeast, neglected,  
in the absence of oxygen,  
edges the sugar into booze;  
leave the dough to prove  
too long and it will smell  
and taste and taunt  
and heckle and haunt  
as any mean, dying drunk would.

## Doe-Eyed

*Megan Willis*

The weight of the rifle makes the child's arms ache. It dwarfs her delicate boyish frame as she hurries a dozen yards behind the figures in the distance; their legs carry them along the shallow scar in the trees in wider strides than the girl is capable.

The men talk quietly. Or rather, the older dictates to the younger, about taking pride in the way one presents oneself and the responsibility of upholding reputations. Eyes bright, the boy nods, interjecting when he can with one-word agreements. This older is self-referentially traditional. The cigar and whiskey type.

Side by side, the two are like the first and middle in a set of Russian dolls. Tweed shooting jackets over waistcoats with large pockets for cartridges and built-in shoulder pads to protect the fabric from the butt of the gun. Jackets tucked into khaki breeks, which are themselves tucked into Wellington boots, and it is these that contradict the conformity. The older man's pair are weather-stained, like the skin on his face. The younger's are conspicuously clean, a gift opened that morning.

The girl has fallen further behind. Frost-white wisps burst into the air with each ragged breath as she scurries to catch the discards of her father's words, but her legs are getting tired and his voice evaporates right as she reaches it. With her attention so fixed on the man's back, she fails to see a twisted leg of roots stretched across the path. She trips but doesn't fall. The gun does, landing on the leaves at her feet.

Glancing back at the noise, the boy frowns. He still has a warmth at his centre, one his mother had kept burning. But it has been over a year since she left.

Without looking at the girl, who collects the gun again in her arms, the man says: 'It isn't loaded. It's to shut her up.'

\*\*\*

There is a motion to stop, a finger held to lips. The man scans the distance. Pauses. Gestures forward.

‘Steady yourself,’ he commands in a whisper. ‘You don’t want your first shot to miss.’

Strict instructions are issued in low tones. Hold the rifle at an angle to best absorb the kickback. Feet shoulder-width apart, right foot 90 degrees from the direction of the target. Legs should not be in a locked position, but slightly relaxed. Hips marginally forward. Keep your head upright and know that even with a good grip you can depend on bruises.

As the boy peers down the scope of the rifle, the crosshair of the reticle searches out the slender head of the fallow. Colouring is typical: fawn fur with white kisses on the flanks. Dark, glossy doe-eyes, like the pools of water that collect in shallow tracks when it rains.

‘Take aim.’

He swallows. Changes the glare of the gun with jerky movements. Centering now on the broadside of the chest, his curled finger hovers over the trigger.

‘Fire.’

A heartbeat passes.

Seconds.

A minute.

The man’s jaw clenches. A fat vein in his forehead begins to pulse.

‘Finish it.’

The boy’s hand begins to tremble.

‘Fire!’ The ears of the doe prick up in alert. ‘*Now.*’

A shot rings out, fracturing the quiet like the shattering of bone. As quickly as it is broken it is pieced back together, bit by bit, as the reverberation echoes into the woods. There is a thud, too far away to hear, as the doe falls.

Neither of the men had pulled the trigger.

The force of firing had knocked the girl off her feet. Devouring every instruction her father had offered, she had treasured each syllable that finally had a solid enough shape for her to grasp.

A sweet, metallic taste is immediate as she licks her lips. Her teeth have cut into them upon her own impact with the earth. A deep sticky pain radiates

through her upper body, which will later be diagnosed as a dislocated shoulder and tissue damage.

Despite the pain, she smiles.

'Did I do it right, Daddy?'

Wide-eyed, the boy looms over her and begins to offer his hand. It hasn't stopped shaking.

The man ignores the question, his attention on the kill. A good hunter never leaves prey to go to waste; he will send someone for it later. For now, it can wait. The silence as the man snatches the gun from the girl and starts back the way they came is deafening.

As the boy watches this retreat, his hand withdraws. Clenches into a fist. His shocked expression is extinguished, and with a final cold glance at his sister, he turns and follows.

Cheek pressed to the dirt, the girl watches the men's boots shrink; they are both muddied now.

*Did I do it right, Daddy??*

She lies alone in the undergrowth contemplating this question. The doe lies parallel across the clearing, its wet eyes blank and unseeing, far from her mind.



*dearest blue's not there, though poets would find it.*

*from "Winter" by Edwin Morgan*

## looking back now, I cannot tell:

*Aliss Wagner*

was that us? little sisterthings, lapsed among the bluebells, backs to the sun,  
burning crisp - honeyed bacon - fingers making crater holes, burrowing in the  
wet crust after the worst storm in a generation, all the while being

ignorant to the consequences, those red-tempered daddies who wait  
impatiently to punish each of us, and for what? for being rose-cheeked, chubby  
darlings, borne of a terrible earth?

I am not sure, I don't remember, I don't remember much of anything these  
days.

## optimists hope

*Aliss Wagner*

why do you live in the mountains?  
you ask, as if it were so strange

together we watch a cardinal sail  
through the pink sky

crux of the wind carrying  
a body beyond our comprehension

I hope, sincerely,  
there are no other worlds beyond this one

## **IKB**

*Rachel Brooks*

‘You’re never going to be happy. And you’re always going to be alone.’

If words had colours, if clauses, sentences, paragraphs had hues; how would that look? What shade would they be? I thought of red/dark red like blood of

rage or vengeance when I heard him utter those two sentences. Now I think they’re blue: blue for sadness and depression. Blue for a body with blood draining out of it. A psychoanalyst would say that anger is rarely the primary emotion. It always disguises something else (Grief, sadness, pain, or fear).

Anger is the mask forced up by the subconscious to protect the ego. To safeguard the ego’s game of repeating old archetypal

patterns about who we are and how other people relate to us. However, I’m not a psychoanalyst, nor did I have one at that point in my life.

Instead, I sat there, seeing red, hearing red.

In 1959, Yves Klein opened ‘the void’, which was essentially an empty space. Klein stated, ‘My paintings are now invisible’.

In 2018, I sat in front of one of his visible paintings. Big splodges of blue. I sat in front IT (thinking about myself). I hadn’t noticed that Yves Klein painting before, or it hadn’t stood out to me. But that day, I sat in front of it for a long, dragged-out period. I was trying to breathe deeply staring into Klein’s sea of blue, the colour of calm, the colour of water, the colour of the sky. I was staring at the blue of the painting for so long, wishing I, too, was one

single colour. I wanted to be one thing. Completely simple, with no nuance or grey areas. I didn't want to have this human complexity that leads to these kinds of mistakes. So defined by nuance. I wanted to be dark blue. Full stop. Without a doubt. I wanted to exist and not wonder how or why or when to be—the colour blue.

I looked around when I felt a hand on my shoulder or head; I can't remember. I only remember that the hand- squeezed me as the person behind me remarked something derivative; vengeful, sarcastic. I stood up to remove myself from his grip.

'I'm going to the gallery shop', I said, without looking at his face.

We wandered back down to the ground floor—the sick feeling in my stomach, which had appeared that morning, still hadn't abated. I felt like I had a balloon growing inside me, pressing all my internal organs against my sides.

Klein's party: 'the void' or 'the specialization of sensibility in the raw material state into stabilized pictorial sensibility'.

In 2018, his visit, during and after, was also a void of sorts, 'a completely empty space' which made me focus on the Klein's blue (IKB 'International Klein Blue'), turning it [and me] for a small while into stable pictorial sensibility.

That same IKB popped up a lot in the aftermath. In the deepest parts of the ocean, in a borrowed towel, my mum's eyeliner, my favourite pair of pants, a speckled bowl my friend stole in Copenhagen, a tiny vase that fell but did not smash, a biro, the cap of my bottle.

Klein first became fascinated with the idea of the void from his training in judo, from when he lived in Tokyo and became fascinated with the Buddhist idea of an infinite expanse of nothingness.

The boy from back home, the same one that created his little void, also was fascinated with Buddhism. He pretended to be at least. He had once sent me a stabilised pictorial buddha over messenger. 'He saved me' he wrote. He was also always interested in the idea of nothingness. A void before—and after. No incarnation, the afterlife, heaven, hell, purgatory. He saw the truth of existence at its core as nothing. A black hole, a lacuna, a vacuum, a negative space, the void party.

At the void party in 1959, the guests were served a concoction of Cointreau, gin, and methylene blue. The chemical blue of the drinks made the partygoers pee bright blue for about a week after the event. The chemical blue of the cocktail slowly left the system of the partygoers, but it was, unbeknownst to them toxic.

Western medicine-in general-seems to separate the patient from the body and the mind from the emotions. If I have a sore stomach: 'take a paracetamol' 'did you eat something that was off?' 'Are you on your period?' 'Are you going to be?'

'Here, have an ibuprofen'

It's never 'are you anxious?' 'Are you ignoring your gut feelings about something?' 'Are you staying somewhere or with someone who is potentially dangerous?' It took a long time for the anxiety to leave my body after saying goodbye to him. Possibly a similar timeframe to the methylene blue leaving the systems of the partygoers. Toxic relationships too must leave body in a variety of ways (through the urinary tract).

Klein said of the void party –

Conversations like parties can be either a redolent,  
glorious convergence of minds  
or  
a chaos, something that makes you wish you'd  
stayed away, stayed alone.

essentially a list of words, a word salad, (as unintelligible to me when I  
first read them in French as they were in English)

Conversations, particularly in toxic dynamics are  
also a salad of words, they are created to be  
rounded, with no need to seek the truth, a  
paradoxical, circular, repetitive, never-ending debate  
over nothing (sold as everything): a void party.  
These circular conversations are  
common in toxic dynamics where one person  
believes they have the monopoly of truth, that they  
are the emperor of words, language and sentence  
structure.  
They lead the other through a linguistic Dante's hell  
of circular confusion.

## Mystych

*Annie Johnson*

*i)*

no doubt you will find stranger islands than this one  
coasts bestrode by derelict wicker men  
their eyes, mouths and chests hollow  
waiting for burning beyond  
standing stones  
menhir blue in the mist  
while rabbits run circles  
suckling morning dew from the fields  
october sun bathing all  
the lands that lie as far  
south as south  
goes

*ii)*

even on starless evenings still  
the leer of a lit window glass checkered  
gold or black the pull to press  
palms to the sash and draw away  
into space to find hands  
mottled with flecked  
paint that takes many  
shapes, dog or chair or (talis)man  
deciphering a marred palm is a lonely act  
arts of divination perhaps  
better left to oracles and forecasts



## Cyclope Polyphemus March 2005

*West Linbaugh*

I thought I was the moon but apparently I'm salad cheese

and my shadow on the walk home, well, I thought I made a sweet woman but in the kitchen at 1am I taste like old milk

proud to say I am 'wintering' - everything is silver  
in the fridge

read the label and tell me what the thing that makes me is called // I am not Feta  
I am Salad Cheese // take me out of the fridge please and thus! hands on me  
peeling away that dreaded layer of plastic finally I am salad cheese all salad cheese  
all purity // come come crumble me over a salad or a pizza devour me taste me  
tell me what it is the thing that I am made of the thing that makes me salad  
cheese it will be // ah! // the first excellent bite // how does it taste? not far  
from the actual thing hopefully I'm bashful, me, all saladcheese // do you know  
it is strange I did not expect you to bite straight into me /// I was expecting a  
crumble and now the plastic is gone and binned // it is not certain whether you  
read the label at all have you found out what the strange thing is inside me  
whatever it is that thing which makes me the thing that is not the thing that is not  
// do you know it would be quite nice to be placed gently back into the fridge  
but there is nothing to wrap me up in now you binned my handy wrapper  
without the wrapper I am just crumbly and a strange smell...

it is getting dark now and nobody has answered my questions

the cheese is finished  
there are no windows in the kitchen  
we look to the fridge-light for want of the moon.

## Her Hypnopompic State

*Claire Reynolds*

He hasn't changed the locks. I'm too innocuous for anyone to assume I'd return, so I enter through the back door. I don't wipe my feet. The cat circles my legs. When she was a kitten she fitted in the palm of my hand. He said a cat wouldn't adjust to living in an apartment, so she stayed with him. Yet here she is, at her favourite time to hunt, shut in the house. There's a bell added to her collar, an embellished bid to halt her little offerings. The collar jingles as she forces her head into my calf. I ignore her. I can't touch her.

In the kitchen drawer my knives are where they're supposed to be. He moaned about the cost of these knives, thought they were too weird and expensive to put on the wedding list, said no one would purchase them for us. I bought them and put them under the name 'Fred'. I take the honing rod and as I sharpen the knives I think of the meals I cooked in this kitchen to satisfy, to fulfil my need to care, to sustain us.

Someone has blunted my knives. They are unaware of the visceral connection when the angle of fusion and repulsion of the blade simultaneously gnaws the metal and pushes it clean away. The feeling travels through your hand, then wrist as your whole body becomes part of the ritual. Though the sun is not yet risen, it is present in a small way; highlighting the tiny shards of steel wreckage as they parachute gently down and land like metal kisses on the cat.

Not much has changed. Less than I thought, but I feel myself in none of it now. There's the addition of a mug in the cupboard. *Little Miss Chatterbox*. Quite.

The fridge full of prepped meals and salad boxes. Protein-shake mix and vitamins on the counter ready to be consumed in four hours or so. Folic acid. Of course. The calendar. I turn the pages back seven months to February. Our anniversary and Valentine's Day are marked in my writing, as is our last dinner with friends on the twenty-third. I turn to March, expecting it to be empty. Sad. Twenty-eighth of March: *Sarti's with E*. His writing. And I see that April introduces my replacement. Fucking April fourth and her writing is on the calendar. *Dinner with Mike & Martine, B&E 4 days at Lake House!* From May

onwards the calendar is another reminder to the world of their relationship. The hearts and flourishes he draws around her writing. His need to comment every fucking time she writes something.

The calendar tells me that they train together (for what?), they have couples' massages, sound baths, dinner fucking parties and they track her period and my birthday in August is erased with tip-ex because to cross it out would mean I existed here once.

I wish I could shit in the downstairs toilet, not flush and leave the lid up. Instead, I rip two new silk cushions in the living room. Indents on the sofa show me they sit together. When I pierce the silk the feathers don't release in the dramatic plume I'd hoped for.

I crawl up the stairs to displace my weight, to avoid creaking as I ascend. Halfway up I pause and wonder if I just stamped up the stairs would anyone hear me anyway. Have I ever made a sound in this house that's been heard? A single act that left an imprint? Resting for a moment, I touch the wall, palms flat, hoping to transfer energy; record my struggles here in the bones of my home. The exposed stone is warmer than I expected. I close my eyes to the heartbeat of the house.

A place of solace that beats to the rhythm of

*too little, too late,*

*too little too late.*

The bedroom door is half open. She lies on his side of the bed, left leg bent at the knee into a pile of wrinkled sheets. Her right leg relaxes in front of her. There is more than just comfort in this exposure. There is ownership.

Dawn is on the verge of advancing through poorly shut drapes. The almost-light is thick in the room. Perfumed. You could stir it with a spoon, peach fuzz static. There's something primal, a fug laden with leftover want, and I want to touch it, like it touches her curves.

His face is half buried in her hair. How can he breathe? His right arm, resting on her waist, stretches down so that his hand clutches her untamed hair. She's not been asked to keep it trimmed. His middle and fore fingers are buried in its glossiness.

I linger in the doorway. He stirs. His eyes open and I think he sees me. Looking at me like a memory he reaches over her and pulls the sheets around them both.

I watch a little longer, until a blade of daylight slices through the drapes. In her hypnopompic state, she is a vision in marble as the sheets cling and drape. Reposed torso turns to find the warmth of his chest. They fit together. Perfectly

As I leave I pause to hear their waking mumblings, her soft laugh. This home has found its new cadence.

*She laughs when she wakes.*

*She laughs when she wakes.*

# Alleycat

*Maria Foley*

Everyone I know gets to be the dragon,  
or the hero or the princess or the fucking  
friends we made along the way and  
I'm living in the year of the feral cat  
biting and clawing and chewing  
all ineffectual teeth and  
claws Almighty  
pinprick bites scrabbling in  
too-large hands slick with  
waiting for the wanting  
for some languid stretch of sun soaked skin all lucid like  
dreams wash over my crumpled frame shoulders heaving head-over-knees-to-  
chest tuck in tight

kiss you goodnight  
twelve times on each eyelid, you didn't  
stir I stayed anyway  
making myself sick with it.

Everyone I know is a three-eyed median choking on the smoke that rolls off me  
in some desperate wave, I'm subtle  
like a kick in the teeth I'm  
chewing my fingers I'm  
meowing

*loveloveloveloveme*

all the

way

down.

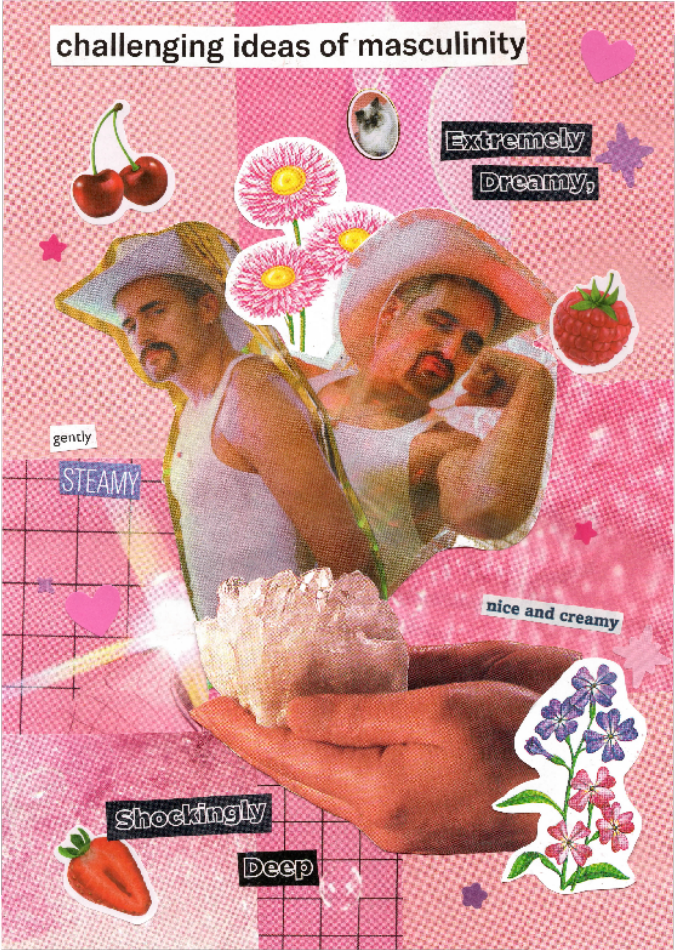
angel bunny

*chris timmins*



nice and creamy

*chris timmins*



*and break, the dark comes down, the shouts  
run off into it and disappear.*

*from "Winter" by Edwin Morgan*



# rhizophobia

Eve McIntosh

# rhizophobia

catch me confessing:

I have this irrational intrusive fear that when I turn away from my bedroom window at night, there is a French mime pressed up against the glass, pencil moustache quaking, hair slicked with motor oil, face translucent white

does he have to be Parisian?

when he has his hands UP like that  
I can hardly tell if he's  
**LOOKING** out of the box or in.

almost transcendent,  
you cured my fear of horses  
(the teeth don't grow the whole way around).  
no more stallion head x-rays. cavity-crammed in  
the back of my mind.

is there a word for 'fear of roots'?

I pry cloves of garlic free from  
their brothers,  
see the stalk, where they intersect.  
my own tendons sprawl  
like the beginnings of an oak.  
**f u r l i n g . . .**  
moss growing over broken tail-lights,  
mould spiralling over last week's peaches, deeply  
**c r a c k i n g**  
**r o o t i n g e n t a n g**

ling me to dirt?

at least, when vines mark  
this place as mine,  
they will be snared in yours,  
beside me.



## my grandfather is a tree

*Eve McIntosh*

doused in aftershave  
flammable & taking a drag  
on that long cigarette  
burn marks will start to grow  
on skirting boards  
between two creaky steps  
under the wallpaper  
if you can smell me then I'm doing it right  
chasing new jockeys in the afterlife  
to cash-in on that unholy jackpot  
an eternity's worth of Peroni in that woolen stomach  
betting a back-alley-business up here  
he is a seed who only brings me flowers  
on bad days asks me  
to dig him up to propagate the bulbs  
please consume him whole  
let a sunflower seed sit inside of you  
and turn him to face me.

# Berlin Body Collaboration

*Fraser Currie*

and after our latest visit we'll call it  
the jolly juice jungle  
where we embark upon our berlin body collaboration  
pilgrims shedding shame-skin in a possibility maze  
admiration of smell: the mint-heat welcome odour  
pre-ejaculate pores and the prostitution of the self  
(solipsistic) sex the love-me tourists needing extra shots—  
agave roots  
thrust down  
in the earth  
of their generous giving  
receptive receivers local in the way we cannot be  
beginning their night down karl-marx-allee  
boulevard strutting kreuzberg slutting—  
a free-me convention, united counterculture anticipatory drip  
on white tiles perverted peeks in the pool. we seek communion  
in sling circuits and voyeuristic curvature  
in thigh-grip and salvation-slap

traditionalists express devotion  
in red shrub I'll reject at least the rosebud  
instead a penetrable sprout shooting for new-age sharing  
of each other / with each other / for each other  
harking back

to *civilisation*

as long as the taxi takes us by tiergarten when we leave.

as long as the persecution memorial outlasts the brandenburg gate

## Hyacinth (as monologue)

*Conor Baird*

I came home and it was time for the upheaval. Moving house and moving all my shit. Again. I was relieved to be getting away from the drama. Some fucking freedom at last.

My past partners have told me I'm a free spirit but I also want love, and that I needed to pick one or the other. Well d'you know what I pick the free spirit. I will forgo all the ugly, turbulent sides of love to be just me. Solo.

So, deciding I really needed to be alone, I had to make ends meet and take on some extra work. Time for a rebrand I thought. A stage name?

I decided a masculine sounding name would work best, 'cause I wasn't gonna upload any pictures of myself. I had to paint a picture with a name. Something Scottish sounding that would match my accent. I googled the most popular Scottish baby names of the 90s. I just needed something run of the mill. Something believable, because we all want authenticity. But it had to start with a C. Some continuity I guess, to help me believe it myself. I became two years younger, so that I could retain that wee bit of youthful appeal.

When clients would call this new name, it felt weird, but safe. "Craig, is it yeah?". I wore shorts, a vest and took off my nail polish. 'Craig' became part of this new uniform, suitable for privacy and distance.

'Conor' has always felt good. The way I can say it with ease. Conor. And the nicknames it comes with. My sister called me Con. My dad called me Connie. My friends called me Coco and Conzo. Some of those I wouldn't mind coming back.

I do love the autonomy of choosing a new name, and having this complete overhaul of identity. But I've never felt capable of doing it in

my everyday life with such conviction. Serving this different guise, 'Craig' felt sort of unnatural. I really didn't know what would ever fit and feel right. Perhaps I was missing the point.

Last Christmas when me and my ex were still together, my parents gifted us a budding hyacinth plant. I had never seen one before, or even heard the name of it. Hyacinth. Maybe it was the buzz and anticipation of opening presents on Christmas Day, but seeing Hyacinth printed on the plants label seemed to chime with me more than any other potential name changes had before. It was a real aha moment. And how serendipitous? A new name found me, unwittingly in a gift from those that chose my birth name.

I started to use Hyacinth in my video game avatars and on dating apps. I definitely couldn't use Hyacinth with clients - the fantasy that I wanted to achieve would be lost.

Hyacinth though - it's got that warrior ring to it. Strong, yet tender, and a little floral, of course. And to my surprise, or maybe it was intuition, the Greek story of Hyacinth was even a queer tragedy. The God Apollo was so in love with Prince Hyacinth he accidentally killed him. After using Hyacinth's blood to grow the flower, Apollo then revived him into a fellow immortal. Literal rebirth from heartbreak.

All this makes me think of all the names I've been called by previous partners, and the names I've called them. Freak. Prick. Narcissist! Sociopath! Oh, to be unbound from such stupid labels! Weapons - word grenades picked up and tossed back to each other. In arguments, even my queerness came under scrutiny. I shouldn't be allowed to call myself queer because I present toxic masculinity? (laughs) ...gatekeeping?

No, no, no, we're not men, but children. Immature, selfish. Insecure and not ready for what it takes to be in love.

The lesson of compromise in love is never one I'm willing to learn. I remain unqualified in love. I am confident. I am strong. I know what I want. I know who I am now, now that I'm alone. If that makes me a narcissist amongst all the other things I'm made up of then so be it!

And my insecurities are not just in love but in lust too. When I sat in the gay sauna jacuzzi, in between fucks, staring into the foamy bubbles in front of me, I thought about my confusions towards feeling non-binary, and presenting as non-binary. As if such signifying was even necessary. I thought about the ways I present myself and why. Demiboy? I've always been stifled and never felt sexy enough. Sadly, I still feel the need to fit in. I sometimes worry that if I presented in a truer self, my insatiable hunger for sex would suffer. It would starve. I might get laid less often. I tell myself I must be masc to get fucked on a consistent basis. God, I hope I'm wrong.

I was completely saturated in sex. Even bored of it at times. Frustrated with my needs. But it was one of my favourite things to do.

So I need to be alone but I need to feed on the flesh of others?! For fuck's sake. What a conundrum!

Those flowers of our hyacinth bloomed in blue quickly after Christmas. Its green limbs falling limp when dry and perking up when wet. The petals wrinkling. This hyacinth died in the Spring, at the same time my heart was broken. I ripped the bulbs from their soil and wondered if I saved them, and cared for them, would they regrow again next year? I tossed them into the bin.

Conor.

Hyacinth.

Love was mine again, to rebirth in another space and time on my terms.

## In the pomegranate pith

*Hannah Parkinson*

Fingers delve  
into the  
          flesh  
Of your pith  
Why do you hide?  
(s      i      x)  
seeds in caves  
And thousands more  
And we will      always  
Remember you  
In the sticky  
Sour      sweet          so sweet  
Light   of spring  
Do you die  
When the  
leaves  
          fall  
Ochre tears of a mother  
Reign knee  
deep  
In the fleshy          red  
I pick at  
like      vultures  
With sharpness  
when  
All we crave  
is      softness



# The Baptism

*Christine Costello*

“Cash only tonight, hen.”

“Fuck sake, who carries cash anymore?”

“Don’t know what to tell you. Cash only.”

*Christ.* I look at my pal, who rolls her eyes. We duck back outside into the stinging rain, wet hair whipping our faces as we scan the illuminated shop fronts for a cash machine. I already spent ten pounds on the taxi; I’m not giving up now. My pal shivers behind me while I try to remember my pin; she really regrets not bringing her jacket now.

Taxis squelch into neat rows across the road, rolling over sogging, spilled chips and turning them to mush. Sauchiehall street sparkles in the November rain, the streetlights cast a pale spotlight over a young couple twisted in a shivering embrace, eating at each other’s tongues while her hand gropes at the sharp angles of his back. I watch them, long enough for the ATM machine to restart. I curse under my breath and force myself to look away, re-entering my pin.

“What’s the hold up?” My pal asks.

“It’s a four pound charge. Are they taking the piss? I’m only drawing out a tenner.”

I look over my shoulder and she shrugs. “S’pose we’ve no choice.”

I sigh and agree reluctantly to the charge. The machine blinks menacingly and swallows my bank card. For a few tense, whirring seconds, I worry it might not spit it back out. But the card is duly returned along with a crisp ten pound note.

## *DON’T FORGET TO TAKE YOUR CARD*

We race back to the bar, damp and shivering, our boots slapping against the pavement. The same woman is sitting in the doorway.

“Cash only toni—”

“We know!” I cut her off and hand her the sopping tenner, moving past the bouncers to head downstairs. The metal bannister trembles with the force of the music, itching against my palm as I cling to the rail. I try to arouse whatever

remains of my alcoholic mirth after our sobering detour. I refuse to let this sour note ruin my night, but the cinch of dread in the pit of my stomach tightens as we draw nearer. The flyer described the DJ as a ‘Master of Turntable Trickery’. I wouldn’t normally give ten pounds to such ambiguity, but I wasn’t ready to spend the night evading the Polo photographer and AXM was deemed too intense for my first excursion.

“It’s gay-adjacent,” my pal had assured me earlier that night.

“Honestly, it’s where everyone goes. Much less performative.”

It had been her idea to come out in the first place. I was already in my pyjamas watching old Girls Aloud videos and reminiscing bitterly about all the years I had wasted on men. I was halfway through ordering Uber Eats when she burst through the door, brandishing a bottle of tequila like an aspergillum, with that irreverent look on her face. Tonight was the night.

“Consider it a baptism. A Queerstening? Queer-ristening?” She laughed, handing me the bottle.

I took four shots at the apartment to smooth out my raw edges. The sobs I had choked back that morning were nothing but a scratch in the pit of my throat. Tequila heals all. It seared and closed the old wounds, leaving a veneer of burning confidence in its wake. We polished off the bottle and stomped around the living room to *The Show*, clumsily recalling an old dance routine we choreographed as kids. I called the taxi just after eleven and pulled my shoes on.

My Docs peel slowly off each step, the staircase tacked with spilled vodka and chewing gum.

“One second, I need to peel!” My pal exclaims as my hand touches the club door.

“Alright.” My fingers linger on the handle.

The queue for the toilet stops just short of the staircase. I wait a minute or two for the line to budge, but the cubicles are rattling with excitement – we could be here for hours. The doors tremble as the bass from inside the clubs threatens to burst free and my heart syncs with ease, mimicking the thrumming beat, my anticipation building to a crescendo. I make a hasty excuse to abandon my pal, leaving her in the warm company of a hen party from Rutherglen whose bride is perched on the sink counter, her legs swinging with idle glee. She promises to

take good care of my pal as I leave. Suddenly the bathroom doesn't seem all that bad.

The door to the club swings open before I can touch it and I'm greeted by a dense blast of noise and sweat from inside. The in-house 'Master of Turntable Trickery' is pumping out something semi-tribal, semi-disco. It's early enough in the night that there are more leaners than dancers, sipping their drinks while slouched against any available vertical surface.

The bar is directly to the left of the door and absolutely wedged. It's hard to determine who's waiting to order and who's simply loitering. A dozen men in North Face coats are bunched by the entrance, wondering whether to dance, lean, or head back upstairs until the room fills up some more. I elbow my way past the tight herd and reach out to claim a sticky sliver of the counter for myself. There's a jar of earplugs on the bar and I take two. The music numbs to a reasonable volume and the blood rushing in my ears slows to a sway, pumping steadily along with the music.

At the bar, a stout man stares at me with a sloped gaze. His face is porous and spongelike, not too dissimilar to those 'Grow Your Own Boyfriend' novelty toys. I look over my shoulder to see if anyone behind me knows him.

"Alright?" I ask eventually, assuming his attention was directed at me.

"What's tha'?" He shouts over the noise.

"What's what?"

"Tha!" He presses a finger to his ear.

"Earplugs," I reply. "For the music." I point vaguely towards the stage speakers.

"Wha'?"

"I said, it's really loud in here! They're earplugs!"

He scoffed. "Thirty years I've been a DJ and I've never heard of those things."

"In all fairness, I'd say you haven't heard a lot of things."

The bartender catches my eye and gives the universally recognised side-eye, pinching her brow and nodding to my new friend. I smile and shake my head. No cause for alarm. Yet. I try to hold her attention, but she turns to take someone else's order. I shrug and turn back to the bar to flag down the young bartender holding a card machine over his head for a signal.

“Southern Comfort and lemonade, please.”

I give Mr DJ a polite nod and take my drink away with me. The cool condensation of the glass prickles against my skin and I’m acutely aware of all the people wearing dresses. My legs are sweating inside my trousers, my palms too, flushed with a rush of exposure. I stop just short of the dancefloor and finish my drink in two sticky mouthfuls, immediately wishing I had ordered a double. I place the empty glass on a ledge and power on. The men too embarrassed to dance are gathered on the outskirts of the dancefloor, creating a thick crust of bodies. I work my way through them, ducking and squeezing, muttering unheard excuse me’s as I move towards the stage.

I text my pal to let her know where I am: *left corner of the decks, behind the seven foot man in the striped shirt*. The Striped Giant turns and kisses another boy on the cheek and I feel myself relax. My pal finds me and Striped Giant welcomes us into his circle. We dance here in comfort, shielded from the determined gazes of the men behind us. They wait intensely for one of us to turn around and make ‘accidental eye contact’ before swooping in. I turn towards my pal and dance inwardly, keeping my eyes fixated on the floor.

The murmur of a chippy and a cheap taxi home infiltrates our safety circle and within minutes Striped Giant and his friends are grabbing their coats to leave. Unprotected, the vultures surround us, forcing us towards the centre of the dancefloor. My back presses against the stiff arm of a pillar and I’m flanked on all sides by sweating men. Their nods and keen grins are inescapable, like the bobbing head of the Churchill Bulldog. *Ooh, yes*. The loudness of the music excused them from forming any decent verbal approach. Gone are the days of smart pick up lines and charming remarks, now one accidental brush is weighted with unspoken consent. Something as simple as a glance is interpreted as an intimate plea on a crowded dance floor, where all respect vanishes once the dry ice spills. When did dancing become so sinister? When did these spaces become so unwillingly perverse?

The hours slip by and the night is getting away from us, miserably summarised by leering men, failed advances, and two more Southern Comfort and lemonades.

“Try her,” my pal urges, nodding to a mullet and an eyebrow piercing dancing at the other side of the room. Her friends swarm around her like bees protecting their queen.

“How can you be sure?”

“She’s wearing a Uniqlo bag in a nightclub. Be serious.”

I check my watch. Ten to three. The club will close soon and the desperation amongst the men has heightened into a lecherous mania. Like pack animals they crowd the few remaining women, clutching at any semblance of a curve, drawing us out one by one. Sensing the sharp change in atmosphere, some patrons make the wise choice to leave, gathering their handbags and coats from the dark recesses of the room, ignoring the few who linger in the shadows waiting to pounce. But I paid ten pounds and a four pound bank charge to get in, I refuse to leave before I kiss a girl.

A gushing hiss drowns out the music and a wave of dry ice floods the dancefloor. I’ve lost my pal. I can see her blonde fringe swimming above the fog some feet away from me. The haze clears and three men have taken her place. The shortest grabs my hand and lifts it, twisting my arm to twirl beneath his in an inappropriate waltz-like gesture against the beating house music. His height forces me to duck slightly and I’m thankful when his sweaty palm causes my hand to slip free.

I turn my back to one man and find myself faced with another, licking his lips in anticipation of something. A kiss? A conversation? He leans in and bellows in my ear. “Your pal is well fit.”

I don’t know why he’s telling me this. I tap the plugs in my ears and feign deafness before turning away.

In the distance I spot the mullet and eyebrow piercing within reach. *My saviour*. I weave through the tight-knit, broad shouldered bodies to find her. Sensing my urgency, the stranger reaches through the fog and grabs my hand with her ringed fingers, dragging me into her circle of friends. They close the gaps with a practised precision, elbows out, arms interlocked around each other's shoulders like a rugby scrum.

“Thanks!” I yell.

“No problem. I’ve told that fucker to stay away from me three times already and he still won’t stop. They’re like vultures.”

“Which one?”

“The one that looks like Cillian Murphy.”

I turn to look and immediately spot him. The resemblance is striking, but in the sense that Cillian Murphy was born with an uncanny handsomeness that made him either fiercely attractive, or absurdly repulsive. Where Cillian’s features exhibit a fine balance of these two qualities, this man exists solely on the plane of repulsion.

“Christ, he does,” I laugh breathlessly.

We dance together and, for a few minutes, the sinister pallor of the night starts to brighten. I’m oblivious to any advances outside of our circle, lost in a shared trance with Mullet girl. She holds onto my shoulder for leverage, and to keep me from being swept away, her fingertips grazing the nape of my neck. There’s a confidence in her grip that draws me in as she kneads my shoulder in time to the music. I find my hands settling naturally around her waist, perfectly moulded to the smooth curve of her hip. It feels right. I remember the couple on the street, her hands scrambling for a grip on his angular shoulders. He was never going to fit comfortably against her. I recall the men at the bar and those on the dancefloor, reaching aimlessly for all the wrong places; their want fuelled by a lack of understanding and an unquenchable desire to seek and conquer.

I turn my head to look for my friend again and Mullet Girl intercepts with a kiss. It starts sweet and descends into a heated tenderness. She maps out the swell of my lips with a competence I’d never experienced before. I see flickers of first kisses, last kisses, and bored kisses with boys; their bruising and clumsy intensity now a distant nightmare.

The lights go up and she pulls away. I remove my earplugs. She presses her phone into my hand wordlessly on the Instagram explore page and I quickly type in my username.

“Listen,” I check my follow requests for her name, “Sarah. Would you like to get a drink sometime?”

“Oh,” She hides a smile and my chest tightens. “I’m not gay. I just kiss girls when I’m drunk.”

I delete her follow request in the taxi ride home.

“I promise it gets easier,” my pal assures me as I rest my head on her shoulder.

## 1 2 3 4 I COUNT 1 2 MARROWS

*Leo Bussi*

1 2 3 4 I count 1 2 marrows and a Clydesdale horse poems forcing themselves to come downstairs to say hello then doing something awfully gauche the way a horse will always be off-centre is a bit depressing you would think dropping larvae to the bottom of the pool would do something as I watch them mature and age drone-fly away with four beads of chlorine stuck to their wings same as it ever was the inclusion of this artificially constructed restaurant even necessary? Bad Scorsese film etiquette includes openly ventriloquizing horse-girls, the smooth finish of bronze fell in love with the aesthetic preservation of power and now we have to live like this, cramped subway, backpack in my face.

## accidental haiku

*Roslyn Potter*

frogspawn

this spring i held some  
frogspawn in my hands although  
i knew it was wrong

blue flash

kingfisher mother  
azure along the water  
we hear you first

you

you're almost always  
the moving firestone sparking  
near a tinderbox

sallochy bay

the rock beneath is  
surprisingly soft; i seek  
your sneezewort numbed tongue

mycelium talking

just after the rain  
quiet kissing in damp woods  
gold mushrooms blooming



*and on this paper I do not know  
about that grey dead pane  
of ice that sees nothing and that nothing sees.*

*from "Winter" by Edwin Morgan*

## obstetrician's office

in response to a painting by Alice Neel

*Bethan Pennie*

in some unfinished waiting  
room i sit  
with limbs all  
tied. maligned giant hogweed amongst magnolia.  
my sap burns. sticks  
to skin and when  
allowed light, corrodes flesh.

the sun streams in  
through gauze i make  
careful my tiny hairs  
don't touch. anything.  
my follicular contagion kept  
benign.

no one tells you mayflowers stare till you're sat  
in some unfinished waiting  
room then you  
believe.  
all jaundiced, unequivocal in their looks  
they pathologize. slurs come to mind.  
they needn't soil their tongues though thoughts are enough to exterminate.

when red conveyer belt display summons me i rise from the shrubs  
sticky with my own encumbered  
venom.  
approach numbered door  
knock.

*come in, have a seat*

he says.

## Writers In Between

*Jing Ye*

敏感 is my sensitivity to be creative

中国 is my home country

人 is me as an individual

海外 is living overseas

中间 is the in-between state, a Chinese writer writes in English

代表 is the representative for representation

向前 is the courage to move forward

反抗 is to write in English against English

I am a 中国人 in 海外 / I am not always 代表中国 / I'm in 中间

I 敏感

I 向前

I 反抗

## re: poetry

*Theodore Cross*

I went back to a university where I used to study to talk about  
my work. They wanted me back I had won a prize  
and then another prize and then I published a book  
a second book. It didn't happen so fast as that though.  
And I barely even set pen to paper.

I read them an insane poem a collage of words.  
There was an echo in the hall. Someone was coughing.  
I was asked questions and I answered them. I read a poem.  
I spoke about the sea.  
I was so far away from the sea.

Afterwards I signed books some of the undergrads  
smelled like cigarettes. They asked me in so many ways  
is it possible?  
I told them that it was it certainly was.  
I shook their hands.  
I was so far away from the sea.

I forgot about it all.

Then I got an email and it didn't contain any capital letters or punctuation, it read

*re: poetry*

*i read your book and then i read it again now i confess it is dog eared but arent all loved objects such as this and your poetry you claim is not yours but i never read something so clearly someones i never knew it was possible truly you have invented a new alphabet and i will learn it like a second language it will be the language of my heart like an austrian friend of mine who now only speaks mexican-spanish she says it is el lenguaje de su corazon and like her now i no longer feel impoverished sometimes i like to go back to that room and i swear i can still hear you reading it seeps from the stone like rain i live in a mouldy room with traffic always and i dont know how to write here anymore but your book is a rosetta stone tablet and when i read it i dont hear nothing at all i dont cough but i fell in love with your words you cant make love to words i tried to fuck them somehow but it felt wrong and insane and after i really wanted to cry im sorry nothing is the same now*

*it has all changed now*

*thankyou*

That was it. Their words. Their words like the brilliantined surface of the sea. Later I turned it into a poem. Their nitid tidal words.



**Steiner Overflow, er.**  
*Jackson Harvey*

Alice B. Toklas

Alice B. Toklas. Old Boots

Alice B. pronunciation

Alice B. Toklas A. for some

Alice B. unto others

Alice B. Toklas sea-eyed

Ali. B. Tokl.

AB – Teaching brother a lesson

a. b. Toklas. L'Ecole

Alice B. Toklas to pollen

A-B-Toklas can fit through a hole the size of a tennis ball

[or] Alice B. Carefully

Alice B. Toklas.



## The IKEA Conspiracy

*Adam Fraser*

The bed bit is nestled deep in the labyrinth. Some thoughtful soul has painted a blue line on the floor that tracks all the way through the shop, so you see everything in the right order.

Toeing the line is more difficult today because of the small issue of the dog. Stuffed in his hoodie under the huge parka. Security didn't look twice. It's IKEA, his girlfriend says. They probably get all sorts of mad folk coming in.

The line leads them past the kitchens, past the cupboards and wardrobes, past living rooms where men hitch jeans up to test couches. Skinny jeans don't hitch so that seems performative. Who wears jeans about the house? That's the mark of a psychopath. You'll learn nothing about a couch by testing it out in a pair of jeans.

The line unrolls in front of their feet and they're there. The bed bit. You ready, boyo? He feels the dog tense against his chest. People are milling about in here too, lying down on beds like they're posing for a photo. Ah well, they'll be up soon.

On you go, boy. He unzips the hoodie and Perro leaps from chest height to the ground and bolts in about the beds, hopping on to one, leaping to another, rubbing his shoulders all over them and yelping pure delight.

People scream. Some keep screaming and run. Kids are starting to laugh amidst the havoc.

A daughter. Daddy, look at the dog, and the dad, let's go. He pauses. He does look happy though, doesn't he? And the daughter, can we get one, please? Dad's hand is softly on the small shoulder, ushering, as if he can push the question out of her mind.

An older woman now;

Is he a spaniel?

No, he's a chepeponaise.

You made that up, didn't you.

He laughs and his girlfriend looks at him, disapproving.

Now Perro's being chased by three IKEA staff in the cruel blue and yellow stripes and he knows blue and yellow are two of the colours dogs see best so this is a visual treat for Perro now, too. He's bolting and jumping again, exploring every inch of the space and the IKEA guys look like it's the highlight of the shift, if not the working week or even month. Still they have to make the effort

and at least look serious about it but Perro's doing his play bark and growling like a muted trumpet, that joyous sound, and wagging his tail and the guys buckle, tears of laughter now. He takes his girlfriend's hand.

He looks like he's having fun, doesn't he.

He is.

I just wanted to do something nice for him.

## FOR ANDY

*Dario Sinforiani*

In the flickering antiseptic  
Strip light we gather  
Cousins partners brother  
And me more distant  
Closer Other.

Our small talk grows large  
Fills this room with sound  
*Don't you see? Don't you see?*  
I can see  
The one-eyed man  
In the tiny kingdom  
of this room.

It is you  
But it can't be you. Not you  
The heart and soul  
Though you have no time  
For the soul.

You have been here before

The kingdom of this little  
room. Beloved and beautiful R  
Gone. You left behind.  
Heart ripped out and broken  
This too remains unspeakable

It is the lords day.  
We do no work  
We do no good  
But malignant force inside  
Heaven working hard  
Knows no god. Does no good  
Burrowing Taking Keeping

I do not make it stop  
I do not leap up  
And rip the cables away  
And carry you out

And take you back  
Back to before  
To cider in the park  
To terracing and Tavern  
To school to train to Glasgow  
To fiasco over double date  
To never thinking of our fate  
To you as life And soul.

I do no work I do no good  
I fail to do as I said I would.  
Your light flickered, faded  
Fate has intervened.

It is you and not you  
Not what we said  
On that worst of days  
Where you and L  
Took my breath away  
Your strength at that door  
Amazed still does today  
As we embraced  
Face to tear-stained face  
We said we must now  
Look after each other.

But I did not stop  
The heathen's work.  
Stage 3 stage 4  
And L stood at another door.

And yet as I write  
Beneath a different light  
That life that soul that heart  
Flickers into view  
Somehow I still believe  
In a word a thought  
a song, a dream  
That you are gone  
But you did not leave.

**404**

*Harvey Russell*

graph my discontent  
recurse my immutable masquerade  
never nest, never lie down  
thread a noodle through my ramen broth  
tie a knot in my spine !! 1 !

sever my cables to the Earth  
leave them frayed ...---...  
stratospheric shattered modem  
up here I can almost see past the veil;

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Adam Fraser** is from Glasgow, where he lives with his wife, his son and his dog.

**Alison Coyle** is a student on the MLitt programme. She has previously been published by The Scottish Book Trust, FGTS, and was short-listed for the Propelling Pencil's Summer Flash Comp '23.

**Aliss Wagner** is a prose and poetry writer who writes a lot less than she should. She (mostly) works with the loose threads woven by relationships reliant on digital interfaces, but will often look out of the window in longing for the same in the real world. She will cry if you don't like her work.

**Annie Johnson** a poet and prose writer from the south coast of England. She is currently studying an MLitt in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow.

Exploring the realms of oil paints and pencil, **Ashna A.** is a traditional artist now venturing into the digital world.

**Bethan Pennie** is a current fourth year student of English Literature at the University of Glasgow. They write poems about being queer, being Scottish and being in the city but not of it.

**chris timmins** is a glittery, transsexual artist and poet. he is interested in fruit, feelings and faggotry. his work has previously been published in *gutter*, *spamazine* and *lickety-split*. you can find him making weird art at @plantbotart on instagram!

Originally from Ireland, **Christine Costello** moved to Glasgow two years ago to study American Literature. After several years of writing as a freelance journalist, she has decided to try her hand at fiction. "The Baptism" is her first published piece.

**Claire Reynolds** is a writer from Glasgow. She has an MLitt in Creative Writing from The University of Glasgow, where she is now undertaking her DFA. She has been published in Issues 26 & 28 of *Gutter*, and Issues 49 & 50 of *From Glasgow to Saturn*. She is trying concentrate on her long form writing but odd little stories and essays keep getting in the way.

**Conor Baird** is a Scottish artist embracing dramaturgies in performance art, film, theatre, sound and writing. Their work unravels personal truths, tensions and nostalgias, reviving them back into an intimate presence. Conor's training stems from the former Sculpture undergraduate at Gray's School of Art and the Theatre & Performance Practices Master's at University of Glasgow (2019). Conor participated in the alternative postgraduate programme Syllabus III (2018), and was a Committee Member at Market Gallery (2015-17). He also hosts *Obsession Has Memory* - a podcast where guests revisit cultural obsessions from their adolescence and the stories around them.

**Dario Sinforiani** is an English and Film and Television graduate of Glasgow University and is now Professor of Media Production at the University of Stirling. "FOR ANDY" was written following the death of his lifelong friend Andy Morran.

**Eve McIntosh** is an eco-horror enthusiast and surrealist poet from Glasgow. She loves the weird, gross, and the romantic.

**Fraser Currie** is a writer of poetry, novels, and short stories. His latest novel *Agnes* explores a struggling artist's obsession with the subject of a Kelvingrove painting, *Old Willie: The Village Worthy*. He is currently enrolled at the University of Glasgow on the MLitt Creative Writing programme, where he intends to develop his novel as well as a poetry collection. Much of his work has roots in absurdity, alienation under capitalism, queerness, folklore and the natural world, and death. He has also contributed articles for *METAL Magazine* (2020-21). Fraser regretfully resides in East Kilbride, where literature goes to die.

**Hannah Parkinson** is a 4th year English Literature student at the University of Glasgow with particular interest in modernism and hybrid forms. She is undertaking the creative writing dissertation exploring abstract experimental poetry. Alongside writing, she is also Editorial Director for *GUM Magazine*.

**Harvey Russell** is a Computing Science student at the University of Glasgow using his knowledge of computers, technology, and 2000s gamer nostalgia to explore a newfound love of poetry and a *Netpunk* aesthetic.

**Jackson Harvey** is a recent graduate of the MLitt Creative Writing.

**Jenny Munro-Hunt** is a Scottish poet. Her work appears in *Poetry Scotland*, *The Interpreter's House*, *The Shore*, *Raceme* and *Gutter* (February 2024). Her debut pamphlet is forthcoming from Black Cat Poetry Press.

As a Shanghainese writer, **Jing Ye** (she/her) takes pride in crafting her work in her second language. She completed an MLitt in Creative Writing with distinction at the University of Glasgow. She studied as a visiting graduate student at the Iowa Writer's Workshop. She also holds a MSc in Comparative Literature at University of Edinburgh. Her recent work has been shortlisted for the John Byrne Award and featured on BBC Radio.

**Kåre Hansen** is an occasional writer, even more occasional photographer, dishonourable mention in your upcoming short story competition, rediscoverer of the fabled 27th letter of the English alphabet, two-time victim of the Paw Patrol, and recent graduate of the University of Glasgow's creative writing program.

**Leo Bussi** is a poet based in Glasgow. They run WaterWings Press, a series of readings and publishing project.

**Maria Foley** has a bunk bed and enjoys writing about rats.

**Mark Ryan Smith** lives in Shetland.

**Megan Willis** is a writer and freelance editor from Edinburgh and the West Coast. She is also a part-time Bookseller, as well as Submissions Coordinator for Heroica, a writing platform for women and non-binary creators. She currently lives in London with her cat, Oyster, but will always return eventually to Scotland, where her heart feels freest.

**Rachel Brooks** is a Glasgow University English literature graduate. She enjoys writing and editing. She is currently a Journo Resources fellow and participates in the Indie Novella editor programme. Her work can be found in *Metal Magazine*, *GUM*, *Journo Resources*, and *Chew/Gulp/Spit zine*.

**Rose du Charme** is a poet from Long Island, New York. They have been published in *Violet Indigo Blue Etc (VIBE)*, *Hika Magazine*, and *Pith Zine*. You can contact them at [rose.k.du.charme@gmail.com](mailto:rose.k.du.charme@gmail.com), or find them writing poems for strangers on their typewriter in Washington Square Park.

**Roslyn Potter** is a writer and researcher with a passion for early modern women's poetry and song. In her spare time, she produces and hosts DAYTIME/NIGHTTIME on Subcity Radio and sings in Glasgow University's upper voice choir *Madrigirls*.

**Ruby Lawrence** is a writer and performer based in Glasgow, originally from North Yorkshire. She is currently studying the MLitt in Creative Writing at The University of Glasgow.

**Theodore Cross** is a writer of poetry and prose from Guernsey. He is currently undertaking the MLitt in Creative Writing at The University of Glasgow.

**West Linbaugh** goes to Glasgow. West has a dual nature. West's favourite creature is the poor wandering crab. West is sick of seeing birds all over the place West is sick of seeing your face in different doorways. They say that no man is an island but West is an island. If three is a crowd then two is West. West aspires to have a career doing something somewhere. West is nervous about West's poetry. West hopes you like it. If you see West in a pub you should approach West with caution and buy West a shandy. West likes lemonade more than beer. West is scared for the state of West's teeth. West loves electric blankets but worries about the state of things. Modernity. Trapped in our houses. The first poems were about love but then West gave up and started writing about salad cheese.



## THE EDITORS

**Leah Sinforiani** is a poet and occasional (accidental) sci-fi writer currently pursuing a Master's in Art Writing at Glasgow School of Art. She's currently into bugs and things that only make sense at a deeply media-saturated level of your brain.

**Leonie Staartjes** (pronounced starches) is a Dutch author who writes in English. She completed her Creative Writing MLitt at the University of Glasgow. Leonie enjoys writing short stories and poetry inspired by true stories. She aspires to be sillier in her work, but also more serious. She also likes to draw but isn't very good at it.

**Lucy Lauder** (she/her) is a writer currently pursuing a Master's at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests include international surrealism and dreams. Lucy can be found wherever there is porridge and/or shavasana.

**Meredith MacLeod Davidson** is a poet and writer from Virginia, currently based in Scotland, where she recently earned an MLitt in Creative Writing from the University of Glasgow. Meredith has work published or forthcoming in *Propel Magazine*, *Cream City Review*, *Frozen Sea*, and elsewhere. Meredith serves as senior editor for *Arboreal Literary Magazine*, and has cherished her turn at the helm of *From Glasgow to Saturn* along with Leah, Leonie, Lucy, and Rachel.

**Rachel Smith** is an honours MA English Literature student at the University of Glasgow. When she's not editing for FGTS or agonising over her unfinished dissertation, she is most likely presiding over the university Poetry Society, chasing-up her Qmunicate columnists, or dusting the Sylvia Plath shrine in her living room. She loves two things: her cat Gary, and Times New Roman.



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