

# Poetry *Express*

Autumn 2011

Issue 37

*Special feature - Survivors' Poetry videos, featured on Vimeo*

Sean Burn launches his new pamphlet '*People are their own dreams*'

Feature article '*Past-present-future tense*' by Philip Ruthen

Broadsheet, Review and more ...



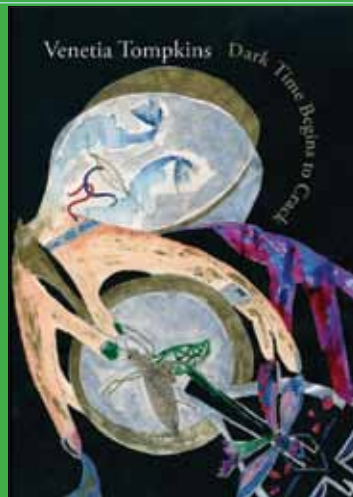
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## New publications available from Survivors' Press



Trevor Innes -  
*Finding Your Selves*  
ISBN: 978-1-874595-36-6

Trevor Innes was born in Lowestoft in 1946 and remains proud of his fishing and working-class roots. He studied English at Oxford, did research at Sheffield and had a career as head of faculty and English teacher in Sixth Form Colleges and F.E. Colleges. Mental health breakdown forced early retirement and many spells in hospital - he hears voices, as many thousands do! As the poems show, he believes a new world order may be coming with changed attitudes to religion and the world economy and saving the planet - will a movement for change enlivened by values ever happen? After some wilderness years travelling the country he now lives in Ludlow with his beloved second wife Pat and a problem dog; they are kept busy by art and arts and humanism and Labour Party politics and talking and friends and children and grandchildren.



Venetia Tompkins -  
*Dark Time Begins to Crack*  
ISBN: 978-1-874595-34-2

Venetia Tompkins was born in 1949, in Hadleigh, Suffolk. She grew up in the country, near Baylham, with her mother, father, brother, three sisters, and a herd of goats. She was very shy, hated school, found making friends difficult outside the family. From an early age she painted, and later began writing poetry. She acquired an unwanted companion, The Watcher, an entity whose existence, if not its exact form, will be familiar to many Schizophrenics. She also began to self-harm.

At age sixteen she was herself diagnosed with Schizophrenia, and was treated with ECT and drug therapy. She survived, became a student, learned how to make friends, went on Kibbutz, fell in love, fell ill, was given more ECT in Israel (without anaesthetic) was rescued and flown home.

Then came marriage, motherhood, Open University, work as a Montessori lecturer, the break-up of her marriage, more time in hospital, the arrival of a grandchild, caring for herself, her mother, and The Watcher; all coupled with the realization of her need to keep writing, which she has done. In her own words "I used, and still use, my poetry as a refuge and solace."

Venetia Tompkins is extremely gifted and extremely courageous. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with her.



Sean Burn -  
*People are their own dreams*  
ISBN: 978-1-874595-33-5

Sean Burn has an international reputation as writer, performer and outsider artist. He's active nationally in disability arts. Currently artist in residence for Celf o Gwypmas and Oriel Beaumont, he was shortlisted for a DadaFest Disability Arts Award 2009 and Outside IN's artist in residence to The New Art Gallery - Walsall - in association with DASH (Disability Arts Shropshire), 'reclaiming the languages of lunacy'. This was the first of three residencies mainstreaming disability arts. His plays have been performed by Breaking Binary, CTC, First Draft, Free-thinking Festival (Radio Three), Gobscore, Half Moon, Mavericks, Pegasus, Paines Plough, Queens Hall Arts, Under Construction, Weaver-Hughes Ensemble and Zeitgeist. His thirty poetry films receive many screenings worldwide, at Tate Modern and National Film Theatre Studios, London. Exhibitions / Installations/ Performances toured with Arcadea; Cesta, Czech Republic, DADA-South, Dash. The Door (Birmingham Rep), Fotofeis and Grampian Hospital Arts' Trust. Fold and Fred, Gulbenkian - Canterbury. Lit Up, Humber Mouth Festival. Interarte, Germany, Lancaster University and Lancaster LitFest. New Word Order, Odin's Glow, Ovada; Platform 00000008, Shout festival, Stanley Picker Gallery, the Live Art Development Agency. His most recent of three CDs is Speaksong (with Gareth Mitchell). Skrev Press published a third full-length collection of his writing - *Wings are Giving Out* - in 2009.

Available at our online bookshop or send a check payable to Survivors' Poetry

Survivors' Poetry {SP} is a unique national charity which promotes the writing of survivors of mental distress. Please visit :

[www.survivorspoetry.org](http://www.survivorspoetry.org) for more information or please write to us. A Survivor may be a person with a current or past experience of psychiatric hospitals, ECT, tranquillisers or other medication, a user of counselling services, a survivor of sexual abuse, child abuse and any other person who has empathy with the experiences of survivors. *Poetry Express* reflects the expression of interests, as well as, poetry and prose, of the survivor community. SP features a mix of contributions.

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# Editorial

## Dave Russell

Another successful evening at September's Poetry Café, with special guests poet **Jessica Lawrence** and singer-songwriter **Kath Tait**,

Jessica described some of her pieces as stories, as they were based on actual events:

*“Refugee Trees*: basically drawing on the ‘blunt stubs of the trees’ as war imagery, as images of butchery, when violence is perpetrated upon living things for sheer gratification and profiteering. *Carlotta*: a rhyming fast paced poem about a woman being robbed in Petticoat Lane market –of £500 in cash she had worked for, minimum wage to buy her Mum a present and pay the rent. “Carlotta, I bet he forgotta her, the rotter who robbed her in Petticoat Lane/£500 quid he stole from her person/if I met him I’d kick him and punch him and curse him/ . . . can’t remember the rest as don’t have it with me!! OK also: *Xenon Enhanced CT Scan*: about being given this hallucinating gas when having a brain CT done,(inducing a ‘tarantella jitter’ with cosmic, astral dimensions): *Hedgehog* . . . finding a rather large squashed hedgehog in the road (the painful occurrence witnessed by a child) . . . *Eternal Moment*: a contemplative moment spent with my geriatric cat ‘bird watching’ in the garden, knowing this was a mere snapshot in the annals of time, to be soon swept up like a grain of sand into an oceanic cauldron of such benign yet poignant events. *Swimming Pool*: a very rhythmic jazzy sort of poem based on a year of swimming at Vale Pool Swimming pool Wembley.” Jessica’s environmental awareness was proclaimed in her reflection on the Parnassian Golden Frog, a threatened species discovered by David Attenborough, “the frog who talked in semaphore”, and also in her condemnation of the ruthlessness of tree surgeons (‘refugee trees’).

**Kath** has long been a mainstay of Survivors events. She made some of her typical laconic observations – this time on freedom from stereotypes in Highgate Ladies’ Pond. Some of her perennial evergreen favourites, such as *The Friendly Song*, the lament of the harassed householder, *The Fading Rose*, her indictment of the shallowness of the beauty industry, and in *Lentils* some nostalgia for the days of hippiedom, when ‘our wisdom flourished, our wealth did not’. There was the happily ebullient *River of Life*, celebration of an independent free spirit, followed by a statement of vulnerability in *The Moon, the Darkness and You*. Finally the employee’s grievance *Don’t Rush Me*. Her albums are at present sold out, though she is planning a repressing of *Bastards*.

**Razz** made his customary, catalytic contribution, including his searing indictment of a ‘gunning down’ by American helicopters. On behalf of all in Survivors, I wish to express the greatest condolences for his terrible accident, and wish him a speedy recovery.

A welcome contribution from **Natacha Bryan**, new mentee. **Anita** is finding her feet with the blues. Her *Walking to See the Devil* shows that she has done her Robert Johnson homework. A bit of Drama from **Eve**, with her interesting gloss on the theme of ‘Away in a Manger’. Some interesting poems and songs from Brian, including *Eulogy for a Friend*, showing the influence of Stephen Stills and Neil Young. Nice Spot from **Masque** (who did a full set earlier this year); tasteful guitar, and melodic flute. The Spanish-style *Veinte Anos* was especially moving. **Helen McCookerybook** is indeed a thought-provoking performer, uttering phrases like ‘fame is just a passing through’. Some rhythmic robustness from **Mark Knight**. **Stuart Black** continues to gain polish and confidence, as well as developing his vocal delivery. The evening concluded with a predictably angular spot from **Celia Potterton**.

In the publication area, one major breakthrough is the release of Venetia Tomkins’ Collection, *Dark Time Begins to Crack*, and two more mentoring scheme pamphlets, *People are their own dreams* by Sean Burn, and *Finding Your Selves* by Trevor Innes.

Roy Birch is taking a Sabbatical in September, therefore there will be no Outreach report in this issue.



Good autumn, and welcome to the days of Desperate rather than Autumn statements. As I write National Poetry Day looms, and various gambits of how we should celebrate are solidifying with horrible pressure in my head. It's curious that the most evidential activity of such things is visual – on websites like the recently embattled Poetry Society's for instance, or indeed ours.

At a time when many poetry organisations and indeed presses have had their funding removed, it's even more curious to be writing with a sense of having come through much and facing the genuine reduction levels that a tail-off of the Arts Council's generous Sustain Funding entails. Consultants, part of the Agreement, are poised, and a lot of talking has pushed back the funding bids I'm making. I hope I have a staff to make them for. Survivor guilt.

Not that they'd thank me for talking about this. More important is what's happening not only to poetry presses and organisations but what's been pushed back as a hot agenda from last May – the NHS Reforms. We've seen what these have entailed for over a year, for survivors and people with mental health provision or a lack of it, since at least June 2010 - almost 16 months ago.

I'll soon be able to be more specific. But alarming stories have reached us that several mental health organisations have had to merge offices with organisations that – to be blunt – don't share their values (as the Waitrose strapline has it about their farmers) as a kind of given. Beyond that, several are allegedly hostile to survivors, and tell them they're not welcome if they can't be more positive and stop moping. Should this prove accurate – and such reports come from diverse and reputable sources - I'll name names when I've got permission from them. Some answers from certain providers would be welcome then.

I'd be happy – hardly the word – at this point, to receive your own experiences of the mental health provision you've been offered, how it has either commenced, continued, discontinued, or tailed off. Naturally things can only get worse, with the ideological disdain bordering on seeming hatred in some instances, that the present regime visits upon us all. But beyond that, we need to uncover specific and systemic examples, something that might give us a sense of a deeper pattern or undeclared policy (such as the emails sent privately by MPs, that are now coming under scrutiny). We can at least bear witness to evil times, as Milton said.

But to return to National Poetry Day, we've at least got something to celebrate. Three new titles, by three extraordinary poets - and all more than worthy of a PBS nomination. One was a pamphlet too long for their criteria. We knew, and in another instance, the author decided not to delay publication (being book-length, where you have to submit a typescript 5 months ahead, but not with pamphlets).

I had the honour to edit Sean Burn – my introduction to his

work, a fuller treatment of the preface in the volume (*People are their own dreams*), see page 30 – and since we began his career has blossomed. He's had another book nominated for at least one national poetry prize, and plays commencing a second run. He opines that this had at least something to do with our encouragement, though to me Sean is a finished (achieved, not assassinated!) poet.

Venetia Tompkins' remarkable full-length debut is the culmination of many years association with Survivors' Poetry {SP}, starting with the championing of James Ferguson, sometime Editor of *Poetry Express* from 2002-05. *Dark Time Begins to Crack*. It's an immensely powerful and sophisticated personal odyssey.

Amongst her sophistications and agonies, Tompkins draws upon a central inspiration, that at first comes unexpectedly: Dorothy Richardson (1884-1957) and her 13 volume *Pilgrimage*, a stream of consciousness work that for many feminists counterpointed the more celebrated work of Virginia Woolf or even Katherine Mansfield. Reading Tompkins one can see that she's received, infused, and (for her more compact and poetic purposes) transcended her model.

Trevor Innes's *Finding Your Selves* is big enough in both ambition and scope as well as pagination, to make a pamphlet format seem frankly inadequate. It was partly due to his own modesty, but his scale of articulation and political commentary belies this, and the work duly bursts out of its seams. It's an enormously erudite and politically engaged poet who also addresses elegiac loss, the interleaving of poetry with the raw permission of relationships; and a richer diversity of human scale than you normally encounter alongside a blistering of political witness.

After Oxford, Innes taught and became a highly respected Head Teacher, before illness intervened. Survivors, he reminds us by quiet example, come from every walk and indeed time of life. Like European and South American poets, and unlike many British ones, Innes addresses a continuum of the human economy as it were, and doesn't break it up into job lots of concern, special interest, and specialisms in the poetry workshop menu tool bar.

Nor should we. So I won't end on agit-prop, tempting in this climate as that is. The final poem of the alert and political Trevor Innes' collection, is a sonnet: 'The Wider Ripples of Love'. It concludes typical themes: a near-affirmation in its sestet where tenebrous joy trembles against something darker, wrenched back into purpose, planning and an escape route from imposed chaos, to a greater control over our own lives:

Still I try to be my doubting hero.  
You burn your selves, at the centre and more  
than a queen. I dream that white lights will join  
with newage spirits, reasons, knowledge, forms.  
We talk over news, plan larger projects.  
Relax. Enjoy. The quests are nearly home.

## a) Resisting fiction

Today as I write—is it late, or early?—the streets quiet now, the bulbs bright in this flat, I prepare to send to an on-line magazine three pieces of writing that I view as extensions of the truths and fictions of who I am, who we are as a society, how we remember and forget, how we hope and build our hopes solidly and further from the precipices.

‘Memorial’, first published a decade-and-a-half ago, re-printed several times more at strangely, worryingly apposite times, offered then and now as a memorial, is also again a too-contemporary narrative. Will there soon come a time when the systematic ‘shutting away’ of countless thousands of people will become forgotten, a myth, denied? Or is there coming a time when such a system will again become an easy option for government and wider society to remove people who, for whatever ‘reason’, don’t quite ‘fit in’? Are there good aspects in the ideas of sanctuary to be held on to, are there positive experiences and the narratives of people to be listened to and contemplated—not just ‘productive formal policies’ to be constructed from the rubble of lives and buildings?

In a connected theme, the poem ‘Melleril’ came from similar origins, also the disarray of a life; but shows, I hope, that in those, and these times, a poetry of resistance denies the imposition of other people’s or a systematic fiction about ourselves going forward in the shared circumstance.

## b) Memorial

“Born free: free as the wind blows...”

The steel band in the fair-sized yellow and white striped marquee was raucous. The bar at the far end, selling mainly ‘shorts’ (they were indeed short) had now been open several hours, and the band had taken full advantage. Willa Davies sighed; a single tear ran down her creased, old face. I grasped her hand and she looked at me as if she was remembering every minute detail of her ninety-one years. But I knew she couldn’t. She looked across the table with its mauve paper cloth, and smiled. Smiled at Emile. For three years, she hadn’t set eyes on him, or heard from him, not knowing if he were alive or dead—out in the ‘community’. Willa knew that before long the nursing home staff would whisk them away after the speeches in their respective ambulances. Would she ever see Emile

again? She had loved him; he was the only man she had loved or been close to, but events had separated them at the times when they had needed each other most.

Sixty years has passed since their first meeting, here at Westborn psychiatric asylum. Now it was closing, the party a final farewell to the staff, ‘ex-patients’, hangers-on, ex-chief executives. Over five hundred people milling about the only open section of the once thriving sanctuary, now mostly boarded and silent. The Great Hall closed and derelict for twenty, thirty years, was now throbbing to the sound system of the local radio station. Teenagers and younger children (who I hoped would never again see inside such an institution) were dancing vigorously to the latest ‘Prodigy’ anthem. Where was, I thought, the progeny of the inmates, the families, the friends? Of the numerous guests, only a handful of the resettled ‘ex-patients’ were present, conspicuous by their jagged movements, their ill-fitting and dowdy party clothes, the missing teeth, the jerking legs. A celebration for selling the land at a discount to developers, whilst three score patients died during or soon after being forced to move out of their ‘home’.

And where was this promised ‘community’ they were moving to? Willa and Emile didn’t know. It had been sold to them as a concept, something they couldn’t really touch or understand. Never more true than sitting huddled in an upright chair, a table wedging her in so Willa could not rise, listening to the splutters and whines around her in a shabby nursing home. What was the community for her if she saw the same faces day after day, unspeaking faces, tied up in their own pain, their own miseries, their own loneliness? No visitors, the occasional postcard from a niece who wasn’t really related, and who had left Wales to live abroad in Saudi with her engineer husband. Only the vision of Emile, Emile as a young man, when he fought to escape the locked ward. A handsome, solid man in 1933. Willa smiled again. She knew Emile would be thinking ‘this is not the way it should be, to celebrate suffering, to end the hope’. Topped off with a glossy pamphlet, full of typos, celebrating the successful resettlement teams, with a selective history of the 97 years of Westborn’s existence.

What did Emile think? No one could ever know his mind; it had been abused and disturbed by ECT, by sleep treatments. His birth, his origins, had been shrouded in mystery even when he had entered the asylum those decades before, found wandering the valley, picked up, and deposited by a local farmer. He would not speak, having simply an incredible urge for freedom. It took four warders to pin him down, preventing his escape. Willa was not the only woman Emile had been close to over the ensuing years, but he had always been discreet in his own

way, not wanting to let her down. There had been a bond between them that went further than the camaraderie of the wards, but now, Emile was tired. How he, how both of them, had survived the regime of inhuman treatments, of experimental drugs, is anyone's guess. I look around me, and see those twisted forms and wonder at human resilience. I also wonder at what we call civilisation, what harm we do in the name of supposedly protecting the majority. Whether Willa ever contemplated this herself, I do not know. Alone in her 'cell' at the nursing home, staffed by a bank team of nurses brought from overseas, she could not make the simplest request in her small high voice understood. But I knew she was tough.

There must have been over an hundred people in the queue for the buffet. John, an old acquaintance of Willa's, came over and greeted her. She suffered his enthusiastic words in near silence. 'I hate him', she said to me. There were few men Willa had any time for, except perhaps the gentler, younger men who sometimes appeared professionally in her life. However, these she had not had to live with for decades in close quarters, being taunted and ridiculed for her virginity, and for her love of the rogue Emile. Somebody way back, I knew, must have taken advantage of her naiveté—she would try to pay me for the smallest thing. She would reach into her cloth handbag for a large child's purse, fingering the small change, not knowing what to do with the notes. I repeatedly tell her that I did not require payment, for instance, for taking her for a walk around the hospital grounds. In her soft, Welsh accent, she would thank me, and return the purse to the depths of that worn cloth bag that held much of her life.

It was a chill evening for July; the rain, forecasted, held off, at least until after the speeches. The Chief Executive, fighting to be heard over the throng in front of the marquee, gave a short talk on the merits of care in the community, and how so many different purchasers, partners and stakeholders had been co-ordinated in the resettlement process. What did this mean to Emile and Willa? I wondered if it really meant the restriction of freedom of movement. The operational manager, giving much praise to the nursing staff and caterers, again had few words to spare for the loyal ex-patients gathered on the pitted lawn. This day should have been for them. Instead, it was a jamboree, and a free one at that, the staff and families able to sigh with relief over the closing of a chapter in their lives. Now they could, some of them, move to better things, with a redundancy cheque behind them.

Willa was again tearful. I had only managed to retrieve a couple of sausage rolls for her from what was left of the buffet—I was afraid of the dressing-down I would get from the nursing home if Willa went home hungry. Emile's ambulance had arrived to transport him and nine of his companions to their resting place. With a weary grasp of Willa's hand, a look into her eyes, Emile was shuffled out of the asylum for the last time. Looking back at the

redbrick edifice windows broken, grounds overgrown, he could not help feeling a choking in his throat, a tightening of his chest. He was carried away with the other nodding figures, the way he had arrived—with a future denied him.

The steel band began again, people were dancing, drinking, laughing. Willa was tired, and wanted a milky drink and bed. I too had had enough:

"Fly me to the moon...  
in other words, I love you."

### c) Melleril

Today it's as if God had died;  
shall I ask if this is why she's sad  
and bored  
with only our cat  
for company  
as I lie in blankness,  
just as I keep vigil through the night  
then sleep badly in a broken body  
through the day.  
It would piss off a saint  
when pain means  
you have to choose carefully  
everything and everyone -  
but we hope, we hope,  
and the darkness  
may reluctantly retreat  
from the blaze of the risen sun.

Philip Ruthen. Thanks to Cambrensis – Short Story Wales, Poets' Letter, Happy in Hospital national poetry competition anthology, for previous publication and support.

### TheFED Writing Festival

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She's chased her tail  
 And tried the help  
 Of academic know alls  
 Who say 'forget the past'  
 But they know not what it is  
 To travel in an empty space  
 And try to find your place in the universe  
 Your life was taken from you  
 Your choices and your mind  
 You were stripped bare of your dignity  
 And heart hoisted high  
 Like Jesus on the Cross  
 You don't belong  
 You don't succeed  
 No matter how you try  
 You are a dirty little girl  
 With a warped demented mind -  
 Not of others - of you  
 You trip yourself up like a junkie without a needle  
 You spill out your wrath like lava from a beetle  
 Your overheated emotions  
 Come out of the volcano  
 That boiled you up spat you out and laid you on the table  
 For all to take a piece of like birthday cake iced detail  
 Take a bit of her, chew a bit of her, swallow a bit of her  
 But don't keep her, don't nurture her, don't digest her  
 Just use her and spit her out - you don't need her  
 She's an accessory  
 Alright to hang on my arm  
 Alright to smile and give charm  
 Alright to use when your horny  
 Don't worry she won't say owt  
 You're protected, can carry on as normal  
 Protest at the jibe of incestuous lies  
 After all, who'd believe her  
 She's not normal, she's weird, she's from another world  
 She doesn't fit into this community, this town, this mentality  
 Close ranks!  
 Just kick her back to touch, it's what she understands  
 She will be subservient and do your bidding  
 Put her life on hold and send her to where they play the music she can dance to  
 Freeze - get higher baby, and don't ever come down!

Wendy Young

### White Pigeon

All the washed up stigma  
 that clings to wings of vermin  
 echoes through your name.

Among your winged counterparts,  
 you flourish in their shadows,  
 a lonesome wave of small footsteps.

You are the black sheep in white,  
 not in flight but in grace,  
 walking like a lost halo in sunlight.

Greg Williams

### A 'Bad' Mother Grieves

I realise my only hope  
 Is to find some kind of way to cope  
 With the guilt that hounds me from within,  
 But I'm paralysed by a sense of sin.  
 When I was younger things were good,  
 I loved my children like I should,  
 I read them stories when they went to bed,  
 They loved me too (that's what they said).  
 The years have passed and I'm getting old;  
 It's funny how your heart grows cold  
 'Cos now I don't care one little bit  
 About the family and that shit  
 Who married me and destroyed my life  
 By persuading me to be his wife.  
 He made me feel like I didn't exist  
 Although he squeezed me when we kissed,  
 He shattered every innocent dream  
 And when I wake at night I scream.  
 There's no-one now who can explain  
 Why the nightmares come again and again,  
 They'll never understand my pain  
 And my awful fear of going insane.

John Thorkild Ellison

### The Cross

The people carrying the Cross kept walking  
 and I was passing through them like a ghost!  
 And the gaze, the touch, the words of the Friend balsam!  
 White candles in the night  
 a wave of fires!  
 I was looking at the Cross patiently.  
 The neighbourhood in the streets,  
 each one with his burden!  
 "Christ is risen!"

Yannis Anastasopoulos

## Tomato Art

My eldest brother  
Lives in Sheffield  
I don't know where  
But I know why  
He reacted to the constant taunts  
Of kids  
and his frozen mind prompted him  
to do what his father did  
and he hit a kid  
and he had to leave his home town.  
Now he won't answer the door  
In case the police are there – he's in his 60s.

I know he pulled out his eyelashes  
I know he shat in the fire grate  
I know he painted yachts in oils in prison  
I know that one sat on Grandma's shelf  
I know that he was cured of his 10 year old toothache  
I know that father punched it out  
I know that he fell off his bike and banged his head  
I know that he was never the same again, mother said  
I know I remember the tales he told  
I know that the memory of fear he had was almost a grin like a chimp doing tricks  
I know he saw father's fist punch through mother's mouth  
I know he heard my mother's screams of no Jim no night after night after night  
I know he saw him punch the rabbit's face  
I know he held it up by its ears, every drunken night, every drunken night.  
I know he drew battles of world war two on his bedroom wall  
I know he didn't know where to draw the line with his little brothers and sisters

So I try to ignore the memory of fear I had when he was around  
The grown up fights he had with father I had to split up  
The weight of him when I tried to pull him out of the chair  
Out of the way of father's roar,  
His mantra 'someone's going to die tonight' behind his bedroom door  
To drunk father swearing his demise on the long walk up the stairs  
And my fingers in my ears  
Every night, every night  
The time when I was a kid in the toilet,  
Ian's grinning face and fat penis.

And as I bite into my tomato,  
Looking over the Chilterns,  
I think how Ian cut his into eight,  
Scattered salt over  
Took his knife and fork  
And made a meal of it  
Being the artist he is.

Wendy Young

## 'Tears'

They course down my face  
A symbol of my inner pain  
They are without acknowledgement  
Without grace  
Haphazard, running unchartered  
They are despair  
A symbol of yet more to come  
They fall unimpeded  
They are the tears of my pain

Their fall is planned  
They hit the ground  
Watering the blooms there  
Unchaste  
Their cause is far away  
They cleanse, heal  
Sweep clean, renew  
Helped by kind words  
They are the tears of my hope

They well in my eyes  
The knowledge filling my mind  
Their source not unkind  
Though not able to fill the void  
It is though  
Decreasing in size  
Filled with the once needed  
Though unheeded love  
They are the tears of my soul

Samantha Long

## Picadilly Busk

Upon the pavement kissed by Metro trams,  
Psyche's Kora suit duet's beats rhythmic drums,  
Where pluck's rich plectrum heat swung come to jams,  
When wedded feet display pitch Bongo rums,  
And in this Square's Metropolis busk dance,  
A pulse of here's now hear a sound that calls,  
Upon mind's like to capture in entrance,  
Note's brilliant arpegg'o tantric ralls.  
Yet as the eyes in book page more concerts,  
And vendors street for change as players rest,  
So rounds applause begs ever more deserts,  
As listeners late to day the evening's crest.  
Thus Picadilly busk in light's aura,  
Zing's the fading sight cooled by the Bora.

Barry Bardshaigh

## Nothing is lost

Nothing is lost  
when the sun goes down  
to light up distant lands.

Nothing is lost  
when the wind eases  
and umbrellas stay in one piece.

Nothing is lost  
when we die  
and mingle with the soil.

Nothing is lost  
when we say goodbye  
and our memories last forever.

Mandy Ducksbury Windrush

## A Tin For A Rainy Day

The tin in my hand used to contain old pennies  
I don't know where it came from or who bought it.  
The slit at the top was made with some sort of instrument.  
Pennies I was told were saved for a rainy day.  
I couldn't understand why for a rainy day and not a sunny day  
Oh well perhaps one day when I've grown up I will understand.  
The tin was empty, it must have been raining  
Silver and grey with red paint on the top it felt smooth to touch.  
I like to feel the coldness of the metal against my warm skin.  
The tin could tell many a story maybe one day I will understand.

Mandy Ducksbury Windrush

## Et Philos

Between two heart beats moments butterfly,  
Emotions tingles breath awaits in grasp,  
To zing desire in quivers thrilling hie,  
And climax longs in kisses throbbing gasp.  
Then shall the love we bear unite in wrest  
Of ruby lips in Cherie Mon de fare,  
So succulent to sun so sweetest blest,  
That ripe is joy and ecstasy its Fleur.  
So in hearts kitchen heat of loves concord,  
I's egg the beat that cakes in Leah's hope,  
And whip's in sweeps cloth plays of nips discord,  
As smiled cheese toasts so hot as lovers grope.  
Then chilly be not hot but love a-more,  
Or chilli be not heat but hearts a-dore!

Barry Bradshaigh

## Absence Report

In seven years,  
seven long, torturous years,  
my life a wreck,  
I've got nothing to show –  
a two year suspended  
bullying and harassment,  
Conduct Code, issue,  
after I'd said something insensitive  
and stupid to an ex-soldier, Bruce,  
teeth, faculties, all gone,  
whether he was 'shacked-up' with Sheila,  
recently emigrated from South Africa,  
a delicious German pretzel coated in mustard –  
what with his wife in hospital,  
unable to drive,  
and Sheila with her spare room,  
now long term sick with acute  
arthritic fingers, painful, enflamed wrists.

I've managed to meet the required  
standard of attendance  
I've been mostly morose, hung-over,  
picking arguments and fights with  
all and sundry,  
an arrogant Italian who challenged me as lazy,  
everyone steering clear of me,  
menopausal women on anti-depressants,  
blaming me,  
one almost veering into the back of a lorry –  
my patronising manager calling me 'amigo...'

Fizzing Alka-Seltzers for breakfast...

Coffee and cigarettes,  
self-inflicted injuries,  
owing money, no love too  
cracking my ribs,  
falling over on the ice and snow,  
stomach upsets from the Rushmoor Kebab  
in town,  
on Victoria Road, flu, diarrhoea  
official industrial action which I spent  
polishing the balls with Brasso in the snooker  
hall  
or in Ladbrokes  
a sore, rasping throat, inhaling too much dust...

Bereavement, the death of my father,  
more industrial action and bruised ribs,  
an eye irritation, general nausea,  
my working environment...

In seven long years.

Simon Robson

## I

I am never one thing I am myriad  
I am legion. I represent

Nothing more than my voices  
They take turns I am a kaleidoscope  
That reconfigures

I am your mental patient. You do  
Not expect my changes my

Apparent new line — ask me to explain  
Why I said it. I am

Listening with many personalities  
And one is active to sort

A thread of conversation into  
A whole where they belong

In the personality the dropped stitches  
Are trying to re-knit

They are asking the unspoken question  
Answering the unspoken thought  
Of those who are with them

And it was endangering when it  
Slipped the stitch so they are annoyed

Unless they get the reasoning behind it  
The person is trying to get back

Into their company. The mad person  
Wants the force of their personality's

Views to be acknowledged again  
The small tree is trying to view

The sky. The others have grown  
Not noticing.

**Juliet Ruth Jones**

## Goddess

Why of course in dreams I catch nothing but common  
Language? My soul fixes and drives away  
Depths? I cancel the love I believe in?  
Like Eve I trick myself, I ruin others?  
I am callow like a myriad colour butterfly? But  
I eat and silently mystery unfold of child  
I look at you and remind you, you think these things  
That Nature fashions the unknown in me

17 Pillars are raised to meet the heavens  
They are mankind struggling with stone  
No food to eat. They have a magic touch  
That aligns each and every pillar with the  
Sun I am an acolyte who learns in a figurative

Speech. I damn the fortunes of sailors  
And men pray to me. I am able to say

Anything I like. I am wise in everything  
I say. My gold is tressed around my shoulders  
And hair. I have a fixed stare that  
Reflects on every and each ideal in life, perfectly  
A man put me there. I was behind him  
Plucking corn, working with him.  
My female Servant touches up a smile

As she holds his hand the chisel  
Held by both we rule together we contradict  
Jupiter with wisdom. We are  
Man and woman.

In your twilight years  
You druids yawn and turn to welcome Christ  
It is a decision of the female. She  
Smiles a wisdom gone beyond your Friars  
I am the eternal – abnegation – that brings me alive.

**Juliet Ruth Jones**

## Two Dads

Standing at a bus stop, this boy, and his girl, made me cry  
Tears so profuse, as if they'd fell from the sky  
Never seen them before, never will again, I suppose  
What got me, was the way he planted a kiss on her nose

She was only a toddler, lying asleep in her chair  
When she stirred, he soothed her by stroking her hair  
I couldn't help but say something; I just had to  
It was beautiful, given the chance; it's what I'd do

I said '...that's lovely, I haven't seen mine for 3 years'  
It was his reply that gave meaning to my tears  
'I only get her for 6 hours a week, it breaks my heart  
She cries when I give her back, I cry when we're apart'

He knelt down and gently rested his hand on her head  
In silence we bonded, without a word being said  
We knew we weren't alone ... for a little while, of sorts  
So often we were, with unhappy thoughts

Why don't you see yours?' he said  
All thoughts and reasons went straight from my head  
The simple truth was ... I didn't know  
I wanted to, I want to-.but I don't know

So I told him what my wife told me..."She doesn't want me'  
'My wife said ... she doesn't want me'  
'My baby, my life...doesn't want me'  
'She ... doesn't want me'  
...And I died inside

**Ian Malin**



## The Quest of Embellishment

In the wake of birth  
where spirit loses itself  
in the soiled Earth.  
A quest begins without womb,  
without function, without past.

A shell of vain hope  
co-exists with mortality.  
Beauty structures itself  
in the within universe  
that naked eye soon cocoons.

Childhood dances  
with a soaked up sponge,  
placing you at home  
where dictatorship starts  
in the unholy basement.  
Teenage resistance  
to the transparent callings  
of solitude.  
The expansion of soul  
that sets the illusions free.

Set in stone motions,  
cut loose from the paternal  
inverse politics.  
Rebellion ties itself  
to layers of conformity.

The young adult flees  
from a warm, yet sordid past,  
to new open doors.  
A fresh face moulds with smiles  
that pave your way to glory.

The material  
is your Jesus on the cross.  
A heavenly realm  
of chasing non-existent  
rainbows in a dark sky.

A scream of time  
that's past the whisper stage,  
follows your dreaming body  
to the edge of the ocean's depth,  
amongst agnostics drowning.

In your swallowed old age  
where illness glances to and fro  
and shelters the past,  
allowing you freedom  
to roam within the bittersweet.

And so sweet is the light  
that returns to you the true self  
that was never absent.

Greg Williams

## Enid's Passion

I have hopes for tomorrow, tomorrow I see my shrink.  
Too many years have passed with a dim light on  
I need wit and laughter to return to my life  
Once this boarding school lass had passion  
Midnight feasts amongst the cows of Battle Abbey  
Lemonade furtively smuggled in by the kitchen staff  
Condensed milk in a tube, cold baked beans  
Oh what delights for me and my chums, straight out of Enid Blyton!

My daughter had a 'go' at Enid, then turned to Jacqueline Wilson  
A way of reflecting on her own issues possibly and  
Giving her a feeling of not being the only one.  
Daughter did not go the boarding school way  
She was encouraged to make choices  
Has an air of independence now as a result  
And a devoted suitor. He buys her flowers and 'adorable,' fashion garments  
Grandma hears wedding bells and refers to boyfriend's parents as inlaws  
G' daughter sniffs this off, she wants to spend times with her mates  
Calls them babe and uses words like 'cool'  
Fashion Queen. The world waits for you.

Jo Silver

## Fly her to the Sunshine

The bearded shrink has got "No Entry" on his door.  
He's lying naked with a patient on the floor  
He massages her temples, she's waiting for shock  
But it's all done by stealth in the E.C. Torture block  
She's tired, she's mixed up, she's afraid  
She can see the closing door  
Fly her to the sunshine, it's warm, it's home  
The cold white night has chilled her to the bone.

Classify, identify, dissect and diagnose  
Hearts of stone and ice-capped souls  
Fly her to the sunshine, it's warm, it's home  
The cold white night has chilled her to the bone.

Some half-cooked nurse says she ought to learn to laugh  
It's a wonderful life this – he's got James Stewart's autograph  
But her body is shaking and her vision is blurred  
And it's been so long since that cheerful little girl  
She's tired, she's mixed up, she's afraid  
She just can't take no more  
Fly her to the sunshine, it's warm, it's home  
The cold white night has chilled her to the bone  
The cold white night has chilled her right to the bone.

Patrick D. Fitzhenry

## Half Moon

I imagine myself pinned to  
the stratosphere, where only  
you and I converse with the  
evening light.

In your pale emotionless past  
I see your fortress light the  
clouds with a sharp indigo  
mirage.

With an imagined Beethoven  
sonata and my own crisp  
silence, you grasp a second  
of enlightenment.

Greg Williams

## Deny this and Deny that

Heavenly, how's your fathers hotchpotch stinging in the sand  
Hopefuls', head full, free of petrol sitting so hand  
Religious fervour strikes the hopeless dredging on the land  
Gloating gospel prima donnas fill in where it all began  
Licensed mouthful floods the sadness  
Amsterdam fellowship the need for reason, disjuncting  
Disjointed in every way leave out the slack-fever to live  
another day  
The meat of the moment sidesteps the tasselled banana  
skin  
Trying to suppress the sin that lurks within  
Flint and sculpture canned at birth what is all the landscape  
worth  
Nervous chattering holds the brawn clutch at straws dreadful  
bargains drawn  
Cape horn lauded helpless lesser shown what will Horatio bring  
to throw  
Deny this and deny that, the piece of fluff that broke the camels  
back  
Send the showpiece, for a jaunt around the racetrack  
Bloodlust is busy body building an unhappy return to chambers  
Foot pedals flirt with flux and flotation  
Thatch brogans insult the naked midgets in cosmetic  
surgery  
Power drive puppets fiddle the books and the surly bonds of  
gravity  
The eyes and teeth of the world go to seed under the umbrella  
Treading the line on grey slanting deluge  
Feeding the bridge beneath a five-star skyline  
Working out with the hollow horse, cutting corners by hand  
Clinging to a faint gesture another printing error in your  
lifespan  
Heavenly how's your fathers hotchpotch bloodstains on your  
hand  
Hopefuls' head full free of petrol sitting in the sand  
Deny this and deny that the piece of fluff that broke the  
camel's back  
Send the jockey for a jaunt around the racetrack.

Anthony Moore

## Kids who Lose!

As a child there was screaming and shouting  
my mother and father were always balling  
Sometimes mum was there. Sometimes not  
too young to stop it yet never forgot.

We cowered in corners where they didn't see  
made to watch was my brother and me  
in refuge went mum us kids left behind  
behind with a drunk who's very unkind

furniture gradually began to disappear  
sold to next man so dad could buy beer  
even down to the coats on our back

at the age of ten I was used like a doll  
from the roof of the house swung to and fro  
a bottle smashed over dads head  
he's only unconscious though he was dead

tactics we did to stay out of the way  
he's drunk at night unconscious by day  
problematic parents we cannot chose  
it's not just the parents but the kids who lose!

Jacqueline Robinson

## Jana's Fragments

She drags her white skin and red hair  
through a bundle of cravings and pierced  
hearts.  
Her lover vanishes suddenly into the  
dark night, taking with him her universal  
birthright.

Like a mourned widow, her ego shell  
tightens round her eastern European  
waist, bringing with it those mild fragments  
of death.

Jana, the child of an ongoing fantasy,  
wrapped around and tied together with  
the cartoon blessings.  
Art and heart, inseparable entities becoming  
deities with every passing glimpse.

*(Based on a painting by Jana Fak)*

Greg Williams

## Exile on mill street

Sidestep the cohesive banana, skins the meat of the neck  
from humble oranges, value added Turks spill the beans  
doggerel jewellery inside a corona of leaves  
fusing cats whiskers to cathode rays bleeps  
hindered by an acute case of blanket athletics  
lip reading beyond further far flung malpractice  
Besotted with moonquake and the value of tears  
comatosed autocrat promising an algebraic career  
the cyst on the sixpence puts the beekeeper in jail  
wide awake, yet dead as a doornail  
stop dragging those knuckles and start crimping those lugs  
lightning strikes thrice, like a storm in a teacup  
Paint trim and assembly usher in a new day  
a brief respite from the horizontal rain  
will the bowling boots surprise the nimble Nile perch  
envoy relation polishes napoleon solos shirt  
escapology jockeys dingdong with a slide rule gofer  
Insecticide rations a partial eclipse, apple steals the thunder  
Like two fish embalmed in a frozen river.  
Feed the bridge with a cats lick and a promise  
Take the bullet by the horns and free your wish list  
buck the trend in one fowl swoop  
sachet the rabbit and rope the spoon

Anthony Moore

## A Miles Davis Moment

30 jan 11

A blues measure is but a measure of life  
Each bar of notes a stage in existence  
Build a rhythm, then do the melody  
and walk Kind of Blue  
with Cannonball & Trane on his side  
The sounds came, as we have been taught,  
as in a single trumpet blast

All that follows is ordained  
For bop to take us into an  
Aranjuez dreamscape of Moorish melody  
*parranda* through an ancient street  
destined to be heard on concrete.

The trumpet is muted & his spirit is vivid.

Ángel L. Martínez

## A New world

In the Canal near the old stairs  
I banished and cleared my old fears,  
I threw away my basket,  
I picked up a new aspect.  
I now had a new basket of flowers.  
Bluebell, roses, bright and lovely all the hours;  
I saw hidden in the long grass,  
A lovely autumn rose in a mass.  
I walked further in my pinafore,  
And saw a ready folklore.  
Dreamingly, in my eyes stretched this new world.  
Step by step as I walked, life began to unfold.  
I took then a new step, seeing like a child  
With new interests, taking nothing as mild;  
A new world,  
breathing on me to unfold.

Pamela Odunaiya

Note: poem from *First Time* edited by Josephine Austin  
I.S.B.N – 0266-0520  
No.29 Autumn 1995, page 73.

## Seeking refuge

When the wind blows hailstones in my face  
And I seek refuge from life disasters  
My dead father comes alive in uniform  
He commands me with a horse whip in his hand  
My radio body sometimes pleads with him  
I am like a frightened hamster denied food  
So I lay still waiting for my dead father  
To remain dead again like an Egyptian mummy

When the wind blows hailstones in my face  
And I find that words liquefy into the atmosphere  
I solidify my actions by painting with trembling hands  
My spirited being captured into a tribal dance of flowers  
My self confidence doubles and I think I am a legend artist  
I imagine I am rich the chosen few intelligent and famous  
But then people tell me to reactivate myself to readjust  
myself

When the wind blows hailstones in my face  
And the world seems a whirlwind cracker  
Circling hurricanes riding on my space my grace  
I hurl up like a drenched kitten in a corner  
Like the world's hose has been unleashed on me  
And my head speeds up like a ceiling fan in motion  
Whilst I cry and bleed from the heart from fear  
Still I live and so there is hope for better

Pamela Odunaiya

## Dearest friend Viola

I must remind you of the mindless things we did to make us feel better  
Do you remember the garden with the welcoming halo breathing on us  
It shone on us like a dungeon lit with kerosene lamps  
I remember when the hose washed my body in the hallway of the garden  
I remember when laughter bubbled and swelled fuelled with endless secrets  
I remember pretending I was an adult playing peek a boo with my doll

Do you remember growing up we pretended to be in Europe where wealth was abundant  
They tell me of their stories No one sat at the fire at night to tell us those stories to make rain come  
They didn't eat pink juicy African apples or charcoal grilled plantain yes or even guava  
Do you remember walking for miles to school with a chair on your head barefooted  
Do you remember the talking drums dancing during the masquerade festival  
Do you remember the feverish nights when we won the football world cup

Do you remember winning the beauty contest in secondary school  
Do you remember your school mother she drew nature and told of tomorrow  
Do you remember the several tricks we played in school the tribal weighty songs we sang  
Do you remember leaving school and looking forward to a greener future  
Now we are grown up and the wheel of opportunity and fortune have changed  
I dream when I can of yesterday with my pinhole camera to capture the halo in it

Pamela Odunaiya

## Father's Song

### Death

The train of existence halts to a standstill  
Just after which there is a void in existence  
And so a vacancy occurs for a new tenant  
It is also a new relationship with the landlord

Would death then wave goodbye to a house  
Full of new life essence with great expectations  
Would you stop the flower of death from blooming  
Knowing that its own very death will come

Still I wait for death to come patiently  
Like a pregnancy coming to its end  
I shall miss the sound of the new babe  
I shall miss the bump on my stomach  
But then the new babe will be born  
I shall give it new meaning to a new life

Pamela Odunaiya

It was a song of passing time,  
time never to be recaptured.  
And when he sadly sang this song,  
it made him weep.  
He cried quietly for life that was lost,  
and down his fragile, ageing skin  
the tears would fall onto my hand  
as I held his so closely and put it  
to my cheek.

I would wish to heal his hurting  
and would whisper, 'do not cry',  
but my brother, who understood more,  
said quietly, 'let him cry, it is better',  
and, understanding, I would pause.

How often had my father and I  
exchanged the query, 'why does intense  
beauty bring melancholy, why do we cry?'  
For him it was the imperfections in each  
of us, it was the loss of lives in warfare,  
the calamity of discord, the realization  
of being no longer loved by one who  
had been the pivot of his being.  
And after all the years of acceptance,  
of compromise, of coalition,  
love was still his true belief.

### Venetia Tompkins

Performed by Simon Jenner - Director of Survivors'  
Poetry, for National Poetry Day 2011  
<http://vimeo.com/29793624>



# Survivors Perform

## Dear God,

Dear God,  
Do you look like Charlton Heston in those epics on the telly?  
Or are you like those statues of the Buddha with the belly?  
Did you really make the stars? Have you got a face at all?  
Is planet earth your masterpiece? Do you hear us when we call?  
HELP!

Is there hell & is there heaven, or is that all just in our minds?  
Do we live a thousand lifetimes, or is this the only time  
we get to tread a planet; get to touch & think & feel?  
Then are we gone forever? Or do we get a better deal?

And have you got a sense of humour when we do the things we do?  
Do you laugh at all our efforts to make some sense of you?  
Are you a beacon of compassion, or are you made of sterner stuff?  
Do you like it when some mortal attempts to call your bluff?

And could you do without the disciples when they come on so fanatical?  
Have you left it up to us now and gone on a sabbatical?  
Are you really just an absence we project on all the time?  
Or are you a reality that goes way beyond the mind?

And all those politicians, they must really piss you off!  
Sundays in the chapel, Mondays, noses in the trough!  
And all those popes & ayatollahs, are they just signs of our soul disease?  
And are you really only happy when we're down upon our knees?

And who is it I'm talking to? At whom do I raise my fist?  
I'm sure you're more like energy, than an evangelist!  
And if this is your masterpiece & if this is your turf  
Then don't you get frustrated that we don't know what its worth?

And if this is your masterpiece & if this is your turf  
Are you sharpening up the lightning bolts before we make it worse?  
Famine, flood & Geri Halliwell! Are they precursors of our curse?  
Razz

Razz

Razz is a poet performer, performance tutor and acts as our compare at Survivors' Poetry open mic nights at the poetry cafe. He also compares at the Tottenham Chances open-mic night the fourth Thursday of each month.

vimeo

In in this feature we are showcasing a selection of poems performed by just some of the most talented poets in the Survivors Poetry community.

New videos will be launched for **National Poetry Day**

List of Survivors' Poetry Videos available on Vimeo

16. *Flystrike* by Lydia Hill
15. *The Last Sheep* by Lydia Hill
14. *Power* by Hilary Porter
13. *Drummer Boy* by Joe Bidder
12. *Winterlight* by Barry Tebb
11. *Leeds* by Barry Tebb
10. *Barbara Grace* by Brenda Williams
9. *The Indictment of Boris Johnson* by Brenda Williams
8. *To the Left Honourable Allen Ginsberg* by Niall McDevitt
7. *If I Could* by Ingrid Andrew
6. *Who Will Accompany Me?* by Ingrid Andrew
5. *Dear God* by Razz
4. *Night Lights* by Dave Russell
3. *Crackdown Tribunal* by Dave Russell
2. Jason Harris performs on National Poetry 2010
1. *Rat Trap* by Steve Tasane

You can vote for your favourite!



## Who will accompany me?

Who will accompany me  
on this journey  
to the underworld?

Who  
will put on a cloak of shadows?

Who will consent to leave the light,  
and enter willingly  
into the dead of night?

Who will accompany me?

And who  
will abandon safety,  
comfort, and the known,  
and turn away  
from the sweet lights of home.

Who will accompany me?

'Not any of those  
who have not felt their own  
woundedness,  
and your journey  
is your own.'

So who will unravel  
the tangled thread of the years  
and loosen the knots  
and be there  
when the pain sears?

Who will accompany me  
when I am mystified,  
when I no longer know,  
what makes my heart beat  
or my heart flow?

Who will accompany me?  
Who will make sure  
that I don't lose the spool  
of my life thus far,  
that I don't fall  
into the chasm of night,  
moonless,  
with no star light?

Hush, child;  
I shall accompany you,  
I shall be there  
with you,  
even when you are most  
unaware.

On this strange journey  
you will not be alone,  
take courage, take heart,  
you will leave home to find  
within you  
an infinite home.



### Ingrid Andrew

is a visionary, elemental poet performer. Ingrid regularly performs Survivors' Poetry open mic nights. Ingrid is also the artist that raises the flyers for our open-mic night

And who will accompany me  
when the way  
falters and fall

over the steep drops

when I am blocked  
by desolate, forbidding walls?

And when friends disappear  
when no one is here

when morning grows drear  
when it grows late  
when Death waits at the gate ...

Who will accompany me?

Child,

I shall ...

©Ingrid Andrew

HeartsSong

### Hugh Ellacot

Hugh is the filmmaker and editor of these Survivors' Poetry videos featured on the Vimeo website.

Hugh took up photography as a teenager, learning to print black and white photographs while at school. Subsequently he obtained a City and Guilds diploma in photography. The purchase of a video camera five years ago sparked a switch to moving images. He has read poetry from a young age, an interest inspired by his mother.

The opportunity in 2010 to become involved with Survivors' Poetry by filming readings of Survivor poets has combined the two photographic interests.

Survivors' Poetry is grateful for the work he does for us.



**Steve Tasane:** Dynamic page and performance poet: one of the pioneers of 'Litpop' alongside Patience Agbabi. Has also made great experiments combining visual with spoken word (reviewed in an earlier issue of *Poetry Express*).

## Rat trap

Darren's on an ASBO  
 from a mad show of macho  
 acting like a bad bro  
 always got to have a go  
 showing off a shotgun  
 –Ebay–got one  
 easy as a pop gun  
 now he's up for action  
 trip that trap  
 trigger that snap  
 when he got slack  
 he smoked bad crack  
 hijacked Asda  
 demanding all the cash back  
 shot the store manager  
 smack through his bread head  
 look at life banged up  
 long-term brain dead  
 Nigel has an i-Pod  
 dad's got a nice job  
 bought him a hot rod  
 he rode like his X-box  
 right through a red light  
 wallop! what a write-off  
 when he gets his cast off  
 he's really gonna blast off  
 trip that trap  
 trigger that snap  
 he's acting like a C-list  
 West End party guest  
 slave to the free list  
 name of Spartacus  
 he drinks champagne  
 like midnight rain  
 a hatful of decadence  
 protects him from the wind-  
 change  
 Karen's got a damp head

a cardboard camp bed  
 embankment, pavement  
 low rent maisonette  
 gives her street cred  
 rain's her launderette  
 a pit bull best mate  
 guards her real estate  
 trip that trap  
 trigger that snap  
 her midnight houseguests'  
 negative interest  
 wrecks her bed rest  
 leaves her repossessed  
 change her address  
 she could be an actress  
 chained like a necklace  
 to a big-mouthed rockstar  
 I get born, get beat  
 box clever, punch neat  
 feel a bass earthquake  
 underneath my own feet  
 fired up, keep warm  
 meet mates, leave home  
 work for a pay cheque  
 get drunk, stay stoned  
 trip that trap  
 trigger that snap  
 get my income back  
 suck it from the bank  
 cos I'm taxed like a rat  
 with a heart attack  
 now you've got a widgit  
 I've got a gadget  
 if we're itching  
 let's all scratch it  
 yeah

**Steve Tasane**

## The Last Sheep

She is the last sheep left in the pen.  
 She is alone. A cheviot cross  
 with a long lustrous fleece,  
 regal roman nose, huge amber eyes

the youths go in to get her,  
 talking of other things,  
 she hurls herself at the bars  
 tries to force her body through  
 a gap too small

they close in on her,  
 she flies at the gate  
 head thudding against the top rail,  
 the pens ring;  
 they grab the sheep,  
 wrestle her down --  
 joking about what's for tea --  
 sit the ewe on her tail  
 drag her from the pen,  
 bleating for her flock,  
 her lamb

the shearer tugs the cord,  
 the blades run down  
 her belly towards  
 intimate parts

**Lydia Hill**

**Lydia Hill** is a poet, wool maker, sheep shearer, teacher and business woman, living in Kent. *'Fishing for Potatoes'* is her first poetry pamphlet published by Survivors' Press in 2010. Available at our online bookshop. See the review of her pamphlet by Bernard M. Jackson on pg 25.







Jason Harris is a mainstay of Creative Routes, and close friend of Survivors. An improvisatory poet, including asking people in the audience to offer a word, and then he makes an ad-lib poem around it.

### A takeaway poem for National Poetry Day

I didn't chose any cheese, I chose popcorn cheese

As the river flows and the heart beats, the beat of the beat  
and the beat of the river, the full moon and the tranquility shines  
we could have been here we could have been there but we were  
born in London, London is a wonderful place to be.

The wonders never sieze, they are amazing how wonderful  
things can be. We are here today outside the Tate, full of amazing go-gad  
Does he love her of does she love him, do they love each other  
will the spice be light or will it be sauce tonight

I say to you two join hands and have some fun

We will climb every mountain, every hill, every stream, we will be on the  
top and shout down "let the water and the rain come together and bring  
sunshine for you", on this day I do this for you.

One word, one simple word, one simple start, one simple thing, one simple  
prayer, starts with one idea.

Wonderful, from Vancouver

Jason Harris

### Barbara Grace

Your hand was cold and there was nothing to  
Be done to put it right, I had tarried  
For too long and night had fallen around  
You and the square was empty without you.  
I had let you down and there was nowhere  
To go with my sorrow or the echo  
Of my country, an inexorable  
Sentence handed down slowly tolling through  
The hours and all the limits of your days.  
And as the state focuses its mind's eye  
The only reality visible  
Is the Royal Coach in Parliament Square  
And the long shadow of your absence there.  
Barbara, Barbara, it is the cry  
Of Desdemona calling for her maid,  
Sung by Te Kanawa your countryman,  
Facing her silence, the wrong unaddressed,  
Othello strangling the voice of protest.  
Sing willow, willow, for five long years she  
Has stood her ground facing the Palace from

The pavement, from the sheer necessity  
And need to help him lift his load and for  
The pity of it all, and the people  
Passing to and fro, bewildered, lost, and  
The dissident and the disenfranchised  
And those who have simply nowhere to go.  
Full fathom five, her own dreams lie trampled  
Into the ground where murmuring streams run  
Softening the stones, with no other care  
Than to be there, her back to the wind, to  
Somehow share his load. Nothing of him that  
Doth fade, but doth suffer a sea-change she  
Is Desdemona calling for her maid.  
Anyone else would have given up long  
Ago, sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Sing willow, willow, my garland shall be.  
How much I fall short of her courage, an  
Inestimable force that will never  
Waver, welling softly and endlessly  
From the high depths of this godforsaken  
Universe, here where there is no longer  
Any lasting harbourage to be found,  
Where the spirit has nowhere but the ground  
On which to lay its head, a margin there,  
Scraped bare, the pavement of Parliament Square.  
Unseen are the shadows that struggle, pressed  
Against the wall, pushed too far beyond their  
Own understanding, the futility  
Of it all, the massive misalliance,  
The squares of the world's cities are full to  
Overflowing, crying with one voice for  
A freedom that will never come, freedom  
That can only be won with the last drop  
Of their blood, their trampled lives, the bitter  
Fame of their fight for what they considered  
To be right. The light to ignite the voice  
Of protest is now the new world war and

Whatever the cost, it will never be  
Extinguished, an underground stream that runs  
Softening the stones on its way even  
To the end of time. Sing willow, willow  
What can I bring to you who have given  
So much to the casualties of war?  
Their memory can live forever more  
Because of Barbara and Brian Haw,  
The nameless, the forgotten, the unborn,  
The people that generations will mourn.  
The heat, the cold, the pity of it all,  
I who can only stand in your shadow  
And the far ricochet of your echo.

Nb: The author is indebted to the Willow Song from *Othello* and to 'Ariel's Song' from *The Tempest*

Brenda Williams







Hilary Porter, A true veteran Survivor, alongside Joe Bidder, from its inception in the early 90s.

## Power

for Tania

You stood at the water's edge  
the sea was wild  
as the Brighton sea can be -  
an errant wave caught you unawares  
and you, so small, barely more  
than another pebble on the beach,  
stamped your tiny foot  
and told the sea to go away  
then laughed with delight  
as the sea receded  
as if in deference

and when the moon displeased you  
you said "*Turn it off mummy,*  
it's staring at me"  
and even as you spoke  
a friendly cloud drew across it  
as though in answer ...

Oh, mistress of the moon  
And the subservient sea,  
such power you have over the elements -  
what earthly chance have we

© Hilary Porter

Also published in: *Eyes & Spirals* published 1983 by Intercon, Don't trust The Moon, 2001 (self-published) and *YOU* magazine 2003.

## Leeds

O my beloved city,  
How many times have I deserted you  
For the sights and sounds of Babylon?  
How often and from how far  
Have I conjured your broad boulevards  
O Quartier Latin, crowded street cafés  
With white and scarlet awnings, gold  
Adornings on stone cupolas, Byzantine domes  
And plinths of equine statuary before  
The Gare du Nord, grumbling fading  
Faience of the Gare de l'Est?

Often, O how often, did I mingle with your crowds  
Crossing the Pont Mirabeau in their Sunday best,  
Regretting my lost loves, watching the barges  
Snail along the Seine, hearing the bells  
Of the Angelus dawn?

Exiled in the south and in a new century,  
I recall leisurely Sundays on the Grande Jatte;  
The children in sun hats knelt by their boats  
Unfurling handkerchiefs for sails and for supreme farewells  
(Shall I return? Steamer with your poised masts  
Raising anchor for exotic climes?)  
The bells of Sacré Coeur shake rickety tables  
Where old men in blazers sport the Légion d'Honneur.  
Priests in birettas sip Green Chartreuse over their  
Breviaries while Wilde and Gide stroll round Père  
Lachaise vying to outdo each other's tinted  
Memories of soft-skinned Moroccan boys.

Wearied of their weariness and of my own, and of  
Rimbaud and Verlaine's battle of strophe and  
Anti-strophe and rhetoric's demise, I take a  
Lacquered tram to the Bois de Boulogne, hoping  
To catch Mistinguette's last song.

Barry Tebb

Also featured on Vimeo is '*Winterlight*'



Barry Tebb has a long relationship with Survivors' Poetry {SP}. Barry edited the most recent Survivors' Press anthology *Orphans of Albion*. Barry runs his own publishing press Sixties Press.



**Joe Bidder** is a mental health system survivor. He was born in Ripley, Surrey, raised in Ilford and has been living in Hackney, London, since 1984. In 1991 he co-founded of *Survivors' Poetry* and was its Director until 1998. He co-edited "From Dark to Light" (Survivors' Press) and co-ordinated the editorial team for "Under the Asylum Tree" (Survivors' Press). He was Chairman of Arts Council England's Arts and Disability Advisory Panel (1998-2003) and a member of its Literature Panel (1999-2003). He is a writer and critic in the fields of poetry and disability arts and is currently Chair of NDACA Co-op (National Disability Arts Collection and Archive). Previous poetry publications are "Eyes and Spirals" with Hilary Porter (Intercon), "Matter of Life and Death" (Zzero Books) and "Blue in Green".

## Drummer Boy

The drummer boy comes once more,  
Prances downstreet into my life.  
Captive to his magic rhythm  
I dismiss caution, grab some sticks  
To beat in slavish syncopation.

The drummer boy subverts  
Sycophantic fellow travellers,  
Slyly advances the downbeat,  
Increases tempo, demands obedience.  
And like a vassal, I follow.

The drummer boy runs amok,  
Clashes cymbals and high-hats,  
Pounds tom-tom and timpani  
Until life is a screaming wall.  
And like a vassal, I follow.

The drummer boy has left town,  
Torn down the symbols of time,  
Leaving chaos and creation  
In bizarre symbiosis.  
Gone the delicious frenzy  
Gone the ecstatic high.

The road is strewn with ticker-tape and tinsel  
Evidence that someone had a good time.

Now I stare at drumsticks and snares,  
Trapped in lazy cross-rhythms.  
I remember the drummer boy,  
The excitement of dancing on the altar,  
Frightened of his return  
When like a vassal, I will follow.

**Joe Bidder**

## Crack-Down Tribunal

*(Re Jack Straw's 'Community Treatment Orders' for the mentally ill)*

Borderline Personality Disorder -  
Everybody welcome to the edge!  
It's the cripples' convocation;  
We're the tin end of the wedge.

Rattling jars of medication cocktails,  
Pinballs batted in eternal circles,  
Listen to the words of wisdom:  
"Do what they tell you; don't ask questions;  
Take what they give you, don't ask question."

*It's the Crack-Down Tribunal;  
Of great sorrow be expectant.  
Crack-Down Tribunal;  
Governmental disinfectant!*

Ever felt stuck with a discard label,  
Shred of we rag in the midnight drizzle?  
Hope comes shining through the cracks;  
The flames rise high as the hiccups fizzle.

Ever hammered on a DSS perspex panel,  
Been head on with some po-faced nerd  
Who just can't cope, so he ups the dosage;  
Remember the voices that you heard -

**Do you hear voices?  
Do you hear voices?**

*It's the Crack-Down Tribunal;  
Of great sorrow be expectant.*

***Crack-Down Tribunal;  
Governmental disinfectant!***

When the hypocritical is hippocratic,  
The autocratic gets automatic,  
So you'd better get mentally acrobatic  
And stuff your heads with anti-static!

*It's the Crack-Down Tribunal;  
Of great sorrow be expectant.  
Crack-Down Tribunal;  
Governmental disinfectant!*

**Dave Russell**

## Dave Russell -

Editor of *Poetry Express*,  
singer-songwriter, poet, storyteller,  
painter - aspiring Polymath.

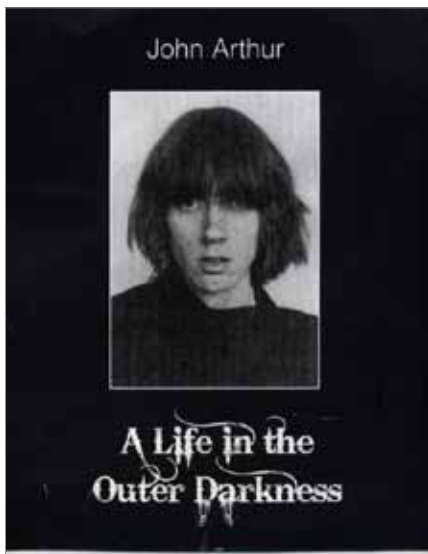


# Reviews

## John Arthur: A Life In the Outer Darkness

**Musicians:** John Arthur: guitars, vocals, bass, funny noises; Tony Belton: drums. Greg Rose: keyboards; Katy Andrews: keyboards; Michael Byron: lead guitar. Janet Martin: cello; Kim Lumley: oboe

**At the Desks:** PJ Fahy, Andy Blake, Dominic Decicco, Simon Wring, Martin Brown



As typical of John Arthur, this selection is representative of a 'divided focus' on contemporaneity as against antiquity and mythology. As frequently, I would have appreciated the lyric texts provided in the inlay. *Paying the Reapers* has quite a heavy sound, with dubbed chorus. It concerns mortality and nostalgia for a self-sufficient agrarian economy (which may still exist, or be susceptible to revival). *Robert the Ploughman's* son he echoes of Steeleye Span, largely concerning an old-time rakish folk-hero, though with an intrusion of the present day in "There was a time folk drove their cars up his arse." He is also atypical in that he writes his poems by night. According to John, the 'central question' of this song is "... querying the essential nature of consciousness? *Where does identity start and perception end?* I recently read a book by Steven Pinker, neuro-scientist and pin-up, in which discussing consciousness, sentience, he grinds slowly to an embarrassed halt and says, *At the moment we really have no idea how it comes about.* Full marks to him for his honesty there! It's a very important point for our times, one that you won't find discussed on the BBC or in *New Scientist.*"

*Mists of Evening Blue* -Traditional tale of love requited and then rejected; but again (anachronistically?) the hero, Graham, describes himself as a tube train. *My Parents* is a lament (probably from an ageing person) for deceased relatives. It takes a flippant, self-consolatory attitude to the transitoriness of life, epitomised in the catchphrase 'Dip, dip, dip'.

*I Shrink Heads* is a piece of pure black humour. The double-entendre of psychiatrist 'shrinks' and primitive trial headshrinkers is totally appropriate. A vivid portrayal of antique squalor with overtones of Sweeney Todd and Jack the Ripper, darkly terrorising their neighbourhood for heads to shrink. *Jason (Of Wooded Hollow)* is musically perhaps the most sensitive number in this selection, done mainly acoustically, with nifty harmonics and tasty instrumental break. Another antique, mythical character equipped with a 'state of the art' lawnmower! Final expression of optimism, 'That one day we shall live the way we feel. *Mersea to Thaxted*, a journey of struggle in a bleak rural setting: "I must toil that for winter I'm prepared". *Smile of the Moon* features some really nice cello. *The Sundial Will Help You* features some nice sitar at the start; then the number progresses to a more rocking rhythm; effective use of double-tracked vocals on the abrupt refrain. *George Woods and Betty Green* features some background birdsong, then goes into John Lee Hookerish mid-tempo. *In the Palace Garden. I'm Bleeding for the Animals* has a psychedelic opener, a touch of Beach Boys' harmony, and an abundance of dramatic pauses. *Elk* is heralded by an echo of Duane Eddy, totally appropriate to its theme - the subject is a 'harbour boy from a North English town who responds to a prompt to make a voyage of exploration - to the land of the elks where he becomes enthralled by terrain and main animals alike. *Ride My Life* has a grunge feel, with some excellent lead guitar, reflecting the theme of fighting a bitter struggle, but coming out on top: "My goesunder ranneth over, but now I laugh on the wings of my love". *I've Been Here Before* is subtitled 'a story of reincarnation'. The recent reincarnation is an aspiring woman pop star, the preceding one a humble man who 'elevated' himself to be a footman for a dignitary, but felt frustrated because he had 'capacities never put to the test'. The woman has a sense of déjà vu as she enters the studio. It is left to the listener to decide whether she is headed for spectacular success or for self-destruction. Musically, the influence of the Beatles' *White Album* (especially *Martha My Dear*) is very much to the fore here, especially the vocal harmonies. *Raan of Wharn* tells the story of one who flees from servitude to a tyrant, and enters a neighbouring empire, whose emperor overthrows



the realm of Wharn and frees the slaves. Musically, very Rolling Stones; some effective crowd noises dubbed on to the end. *On the Vocal Fabric of a Rose* is happily whimsical. I have heard many solo acoustic versions of *Keeper of the Furry-Throated Wyvern*. The backing here fleshes out what I find the best vocal performance on the album. Back to the black humour - of mock-heroic dragon-slaying. *Spiderman* has some very sensitive 12-string guitar - hint of Beatles/Beach Boys harmonies. A sensitive backing for a creepy theme - a malignant entity in a spooky, amorphous environment, where "Emptiness if form, and form is emptiness."

All John's albums are available free via his website: [www.john-arthur.co.uk](http://www.john-arthur.co.uk)

Dave Russell

## The Shallows

by Laura May, Chipmunka Publishing 2011

"Poetry, for me, is so expressive. When I was struggling through my teens, not knowing what was wrong with me, not understanding the mental health system, poetry came naturally. Now, I'm in my twenties and my first collection is being published, and it still seems so surreal that this lifeline has become more than just my own personal release."

I hate going on about technicalities, but this book definitely merits an ISBN. There was also too much blank space at the beginning. The contents list and the section headings are very poorly designed. The opener, *The Kitchen Table*, evokes a piece of furniture as a respository and passive, inorganic chronicler of experience. Then more urgent tension takes over, with *Clouds*, which speaks with the voice of creative friction: "Your throat is thick with thoughts that/won't form,/things you can't say,/as you struggle against the tide, the waves that hit as/you try to breathe,/try to smile." *Mind*: this poem has been driven by painful necessity: "As you pull me in with your skein,/With your standards slipping and your spite blatant,/You force these words". The last stanza is a tasteful vignette, playing on the concept of colour: "Blank page, run,/Before the ink does,/Creating another poem filled with you,/Filled with the orange hue/Of another sunset in the park. This device is reiterated in *I am a Naked Wild Colour*, where full analogies are made between personality traits and the colour spectrum: "I can be painted across any canvas." *Ruled Lines* explores the idea of rulings in an exercise book being a metaphor for calm, placid order; she feels to some extent like a 'ruled person'; but the power of real experience, in the shape of past violent kisses, and menacing drumbeats, threatens to break the mould in the interests of truth. *Brittle* rejects the stereotype of idyllic, tranquil childhood.

*Think* presents a disturbing hypothesis about what life would be like if the thinking process were removed. *Peace* recognises tranquillity as being unattainable. *My Name* refers to the subject's struggle with her mind; she would like to exist on the planes of pure sensation, but the mind prevails - all to the good, in my estimation. *And Poetry Found Me*: here, fittingly, poetry is shown as being double-edged: the ultimate disturber/challenger, and the road to calm: And in she stepped,/Forgotten thoughts released,/And screaming,/I met her in the farthest/Corner of each word.//And so I have escaped,/Taking her hand,/Into a world of/Clarity and contentment. *Symptoms* describes a heightened state, free from mind-control: "I am a goddess/Creating the universe in my image". The partner in *My Other Half* is to be a mirror-image, an alter ego. *Edit*, a poem about cutting/editing a film roll, compares the creative processes to the processes of daily living. *Hey Baby* is more simplistic than the other poems, and would perhaps stand best as a song lyric.

Two blank pages before the introduction to the next section, *Body*. This makes a quantum leap of intensity: *My Own Heroin*, to read, straddles the boundary between the literal and the metaphorical. It could be using the imagery of a powerful drug to convey the intensity of a personal attachment; according to the author, "that is purely illustrative, I have never experienced addiction to any drug." *The Fully Divided Heart* makes ingenious use of medical imagery and the motif of dissection to depict the reality of divided feeling. *These Strong Hands* is a cry from the heart of someone afraid of her own strength: "the stars, the moon,/have all been wiped out." *Girl in the Bath* is a stark poem, in the author's words ". . . based on an actual incident of self harm, where I cut myself so deeply I needed to go to hospital." *Two Legs, Two Arms* is a profound exploration of platonic ideals: every individual has two faces, as he/she has two limbs; the interaction of the two faces is a vital prerequisite of individual functionality. *The Girl* is a gloss on the idea of 'inner child'. Here the two entities are utterly interdependent; the child needs the adult's exterior organs in order to be articulate. *Paper Thin* refers to the poet's thin skin; she has a compulsion towards self-harm and reopening old, scarred wounds. *Old Songs* presents another side of 'hearing voices' (even though they are specified as 'Not voices'. There follows *The Shallows* - title poem of this collection; one can drown in shallow water. Still in the aquatic element is *My River of Rage*, where the subject's elemental, many-faced alter ego assumes the form of a torrent - the most overtly romantic poem of this collection. Laura has a great love for water in all forms; it is a recurrent theme in her work.

*Breathe* presumably refers to an oxygen tube. *Norma* refers to obsessive adoration, of an idol - Norma Jean (Marilyn Monroe). The poet rationally recognises that the attraction is based on a surface fraction of Norma, and yet its very intensity justifies the feeling: "But who I am to change legends,/To ask for a different ending?"

Too Blue is an extremely subtle poem: it suggests both a dying/post mortem entity and the desire, unattainable, to be one: “the sky was too blue/To hold all the secrets of my heart,/So I had to let them out.” It seems there is a restoration of/return to, mortal life. Dark romanticism again with *Sweetest*, where absorption in love is equated with drowning: “you drown in me./And it is the sweetest death.”

*Heart: Ribbons*, the opener, is about unrequited longing: the heart has been cut to ribbons, but the ribbons are enormously beautiful; beauty and pain are vitally interlinked. *Collide* is, in some ways, in counterpoint to *Sweetest*: here the beloved is the reassuring presence, countering the sweep of the tide. *Mortar and Pestle* explores the surgical and pharmaceutical areas. The heart is ground to powder, as part of an attempt at transformation - into a ‘Baba Yaga’ - in Slavic folklore, a witch who flies around on a giant pestle and kidnaps small children. But the organic matter of the heart is ultimately proof against the pummelling. *Duckling*: this one really does feel ugly, and yearns for growth: “Like an old lullaby,/the water rocks beneath me,/but it doesn’t hold me close, //Because I’m like the ugly duckling,/I don’t belong, I don’t bond/with this coarse world . . .” *Lost Lover* concerns the memory and or illusion of a lover: “I have to leave before I lose you” - the illusion might be destroyed if she stayed. She aches for painful reality: let me hurt you,/Let me tear at skin and bones and us . . .” but knows the illusion would vanish if she made the request in reality. *Luxuries* touchingly describes the process of recovery; the poet thinks back on some material luxuries in the past, but then compares them to the real luxuries of health after being ‘under diagnosis’. In *Charade*, the poet is shown as being in the grip of an obsessive attachment; she longs to place this at a safe distance, but her organic being keeps it painfully there: “. . . I taste blood, metallic, in my mouth,/And I realise my heart has burst/trying to let you back in.”

*Caught* enters the realm of the pains of inspiration, a fleeting, elusive song that cannot be captured in writing. *Assisted* keeps the reader guessing; there is a suggestion that the poet has found peace by doing some sort of wrong. This poem refers to a ‘prophet’ who organised a mass suicide pact in America and ‘assisted’ the deaths of his parishioners. Here Laura is emphasising that nobody has ever pushed her to, or assisted her in, self-harm. Ambiguous focus in *Undone*: does the poet want to hold on to a lover, or to her own separate life after that lover has gone? *Amica* - another tender lover who repaired and returned a broken heart. The phrase “. . . you know no red lights, as promised in the history” suggests a variety of interpretations. *5/9* - desire to be wrapped up in guilty secrecy with a lover, and facing the concomitant pain: “Under your bruises/I wait to turn blue.” *Foolish Devotion* - the sheer literality of this brief poem speaks volumes: “. . . after days of building myself up again/You shattered me.” *Sparrow* is about a one-sided, possessive relationship; the poet is a free spirit who steadfastly refuses to be treated as a domestic pet.

*Soul: The Great First Lines* - Laura is deeply attached to the poetic greats, in a way that makes her catechism totally meaningful: “I want the great first lines written across my body,” I’m sure some tattoo lovers have actually done this. *Dear J* - a dedication to someone often confided in, with great admissions of faults and wrongs, but a determination to get the better of them: “I’m trying, dear J,/to look closer at my palms,/to explore my restless finger tips,/to hold my hands steady.” This poem was inspired by letters written over the years to Laura’s best friend Jay. *Another Hope* - another one-sided attraction: “I am pathetically grateful for your indifference,/Though I can never walk away/In you I can never take off my watch,/And wander in your woe and love and crime,/Because I’d lose myself/In the beauty and love and grime.” There is a dual fascination, with the image and reality of the partner, and with the solitary desolation without that partner - who is actually ‘London’ itself as a city; the poet had a great love for London in her younger years. *When I’m Happy* - literal, straightforward, and somewhat singable! All I Can Carry is a highly spiritual and existential piece: “Let happiness hit me like a bullet”; she wants her ‘stars of illusion’ to be burned out, and the slate of her sensory world wiped clean: “Build up these clear walls,/Let the dawns and dusks fade.” *Let Me Make It*: the utterly divided feelings intrinsic to everyone’s everyday struggle for existence: “Hoping I won’t make it, won’t care,/but I do care, let me make it, please.” *Betrayal* - divided feelings again: ‘a daughter of deception’ suggests both victim and perpetrator; but this role gives her almost superhuman qualities: “I am blind, as only the gods can be,/Reflecting the mistakes of man,/I am a mirror of betrayal.” This poem is based very loosely around Shakespeare’s play ‘King Lear’, which shows the betrayal by his daughters as he embraces madness. *London Bridge* is happily simplistic, expressing pure feelings against a backdrop of urban squalor. *The Lost Sonnet* is an uncomplicated set of reflections on the onset of night. *Catching* is happily whimsical - the poet finding herself to be an utterly elusive entity. *Inspiration* is a desperate plea for determination and integrity “. . . when the lonely soul,/Needs a hand” . . . sometimes in apparent conflict with daily living: “Rot away, great beauty and art,/though remember your duty,/When the time comes,/The world will call on you,/To inspire her once again,/As you have each man of worth,/that hides in your attic.” *Each Dream* - dream image of an elusive lover. *Settle on My Shoulders*: A day of living feels like a blanket: “. . . this covering is accepted with the greatest reluctance: when I am not/ready, Not ready to soak myself in dreams. . .” *Goodnight B* refers to an unusual sort of alter ego, who will be happy and fulfilled when free of its mirror-ego. This poem is actually dedicated to Laura’s partner, Brooke, trying to explain to her why she hurt herself in the past: “it is not personal, when I am unwell I just genuinely believe she would be better off without me.”



This collection is highly challenging, and full of perceptive insights. I feel that the title does not do it full justice as it negotiates so many depths. In her own words: "I have a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder and bipolar, and explore the symptoms and every day challenges I face with these conditions."

Find out more about Laura May at [www.lauramay.com](http://www.lauramay.com)

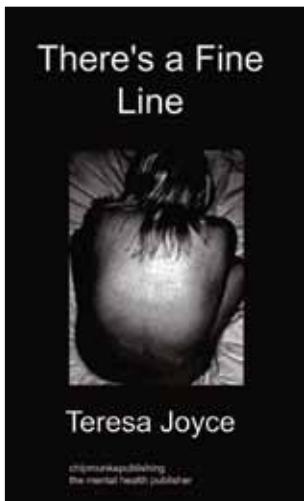
Dave Russell

## There's a Fine Line by Teresa Joyce

Chipmunka Publishing 2010

ISBN: 978-1- 84991-185-6. £5.00 (e book); also available in paperback £12.00

This work embraces the themes of abuse, breakdown and bereavement, expresses emotions in total depth while clinically putting them in their domestic and environmental context.



*"People would be hurt both physically and mentally. No one was safe if they stood in the way of my stepfather and what he claimed was his. I would be abused and blackmailed unable to stop or control anything going on around me; I felt that the only way out would be to check out on life completely and it seemed a welcoming prospect. Running from memories of all those*

*years living by his rules, buried so deep within me I never really remembered or faced until I was forced to do so."* (Press Release)

**About The Book:** *The subject of my book covers more than one issue; it's a true story that ranges over a period of many years. It covers the first married years of my mother's life, and the abuse she received from my now deceased father. The hardship she found within her life in so many ways, no one should have ever had to go through, but sadly it just seemed to follow her around. Some years later she remarried, but unfortunately this union would tear her once more into tiny pieces. She would see everything slipping away from her. Was her husband really having an affair with her daughter? It seemed to her that was the case, why would he lie? It would see the breakdown of her complete family unit, scattered to the wind without care.*

**My Thoughts:** "This book is a memoir, unfortunately what this woman had to endure is not a work of

fiction. How do you review someone's real life? The author of this book is brave, having to relive these horrific memories to tell us her story. The stories told in this book are unbelievable, to think that someone can be so heartless, so manipulative. 'Teresa' had to deal with the devil himself. 'There's a fine line' will take you down a dark road, a road that no one should ever have to travel. The author tells her story in so much detail and emotion that you feel as if you are standing right there with her. While reading the book I couldn't help but get emotional, I got sad, happy but most of all angry, I was angry because of the situation she was forced in and at her stepfather. A lot of people will take something from this book, even people that haven't been in a situation like this. It's hard to think that life can go on after a tragedy or a horrific crime or something else life changing/shattering, but it does and the author is proof of that. It's a giant step that a person has to make to move forward, everyone has their own methods that suit them best, the authors was this book. The rawness and vulnerability is etched into every word. The events that take place in this book are heavy, no doubt, but I think a person could take a great lesson from this book. I am glad I had the opportunity to read *There's a Fine Line.*" (Review in *The Crazy Bookworm*)

\* \* \*

As a piece of autobiography, this work is exceptional. It was a completely solo effort, but that one person has a superbly observant, monitoring mind which keeps a clinical appraisal of the situation. Through all the depths of trauma, there is no weakening of lucidity.

Teresa remained deeply attached to her mother throughout her life. She lost her natural father when she was very young: he had been a violent alcoholic, and indeed she was born prematurely because he had kicked her mother in the stomach when pregnant. The family was in the deepest poverty. The stepfather appeared on the scene, very charming and charismatic, and holding the keys to material prosperity. The action unfolds in the context of a 'family business', where domestic and workplace tensions impinge on each other to an extreme degree. Because of being entrenched in both areas, the Stepfather is able to keep her under constant surveillance, forever pestering her with phone calls when she was not in immediate physical proximity.

He undertakes a sustained and calculated attempt to corner, brainwash and seduce her. They end up with a physical relationship which falls short of full intercourse (He would have to kill me before I had full sexual intercourse . . ."). She decided to pretend to be sympathetic to his advances in order to slow him down. These manoeuvres, unjustly, gave Teresa a sense of guilt, and she felt constrained to keep a painful secret, mainly for fear of hurting her mother. There was the further problem of containing

a conflict between her husband and her stepfather, and she had to protect her son. In the course of this tension, her husband remained cold and apathetic; in return, her feelings for him evaporated. So to a degree she colluded with the Stepfather's actions. She felt utterly degraded by this: "I became no-one". She turned to self-loathing. Her husband seemed indifferent to her situation. She was put on a dosage of multiple pills and proposed resigning from her job. Then, forced into overwork, she had a fall, through which she fractured her coccyx and prolapsed both her L4 and L5 discs; as a consequence, she could not return to work. She certainly contemplated suicide: "with me out of the way, people would be able to restore their lives".

Her stepfather told her mother that Teresa had seduced him; she was accused of expressing her natural father's bad character traits. On the side, he remains sadistic, smashing up Teresa's car.

In the light of these stresses, Teresa began to explore her lesbian tendencies. Her mother recognised this tendency, and pointed out that many people have bisexual potential.

The first, transitory, lesbian relationship was complicated. The partner wanted children; at a point of high stress she tried to persuade Teresa to go to Psychiatric Hospital. There was a heavy confrontation with her partner's parents, where the father threatened her. Teresa mistakenly told her mother of this threat; she duly informed the stepfather, who attacked the partner's father. He had used a baseball bat and not the gun which he had in his car. He was arrested, but for some unknown reason the police dropped the case.

Her second, long-term and fulfilling, lesbian relationship was with a close school friend she had known since she was 11, who always found her a source of strength, and they 'came out'.

There is one excruciating act of self-mutilation; her stepfather chops his finger off. The husband demands sole custody of the son.

Her mother has to be hospitalised, and was abominably treated there, being left for a week suffering from septicaemia without proper treatment. She has to be moved to another hospital for an MPI scan. Teresa loyally attends. The mother dies; Stepfather is not invited to the funeral. Through a bitter irony of fate, Teresa's consultant was her mother's surgeon.

Her dilemma with her Stepfather continues. He had written to her mother explaining how he had behaved with Teresa, who was reluctant to read a letter which would clear her name; some irrational guilt remained. The emotional blackmail continued: Stepfather continued to feed money into Mother's bank account, to keep a hold. At that point the Stepfather was

still in control of her Mother's well being and also her source of income. She had very bad Rheumatoid arthritis for many years, and had been ill-health retired from her Stepfather's company. Before this she had been Company Secretary. She was so scared of him taking away her pension income, that he still had hold of the strings playing me like a puppet, even when so far away. If Teresa were to upset him. . . then he would remove that income.

He was 'always a great tactician' - ruthlessly manipulative to the very end, even in the face of death. Profound reflections on immortality at the end: "If there is a higher place, then maybe we also need to believe the opposite is true . . . the direction my stepfather would take when leaving this world is very far from a sure thing."

Teresa is incredibly up-front in confronting the reader with all the problems in coming to terms with, writing about her experience: "I will of course reach that point where I share this with you . . . about to embark on the road of self-hate - replaying every dirty moment. I deluded myself that I could change the past.

"It's a story that resembles hell and it was her life for many years, as such she is equipped with everything she needs, to help you relate to the madness which ensued. Although this has been extremely difficult for her to write, her hope is that someone out there may take some strength from it's content, if finding themselves in a similar situation. This memoir is just a little different to most other memoirs i.e. most are written by ghost writers. This was something she never even considered. To her mind she had to be the one to write this. She hoped and needed to be able to express her feelings within its pages, as no other person could. With the best outcome being, you would feel like you were taking this journey with her. Strangely she feels an amount of support, at being able to think that you are out there. There is a fine line between sanity and insanity; she knows this personally, through the experiences she has had to go through involving her stepfather. She also has a personal insight of her own, of a mind battling to stay on the right side of that line, because in truth, she came so very close to crossing over herself." (Publisher's blurb)

True to life, in a way, the account is not a simple, linear narrative. There are frequent flashbacks - such as at the beginning of Chapter 11, where the narrative focuses on Teresa's 11<sup>th</sup> year, and her close school friend who became a Lesbian lover. A trauma often has the effect of recalling a comparable root experience in the past.

Another flashback at the beginning of Chapter 13 'when I was still in the marital home'. At this time the Stepfather discovered 'spirituality' and went off on his pilgrimages. He sold the company (the relations' jobs remained temporarily secure there),

and found another partner, by whom he had a child. Mum remained steadfastly devoted to him.

The author is incredibly honest about the problems and struggles of written composition. Take her introduction to Chapter 4:

“This chapter for me will be the hardest thing I ever hope to write. It has taken me days just to return to my computer to try to do so. I know I have to write this and in doing so, I will leave myself wide open. It will be like walking back into the lion’s den. Neither is it trying to hide my shame, because even to this day I rightly blame myself. I expect anyone reading this would also take that line. I am not going to stretch this out more than I need to do so, but the facts have to be digested so you can formulate an image of the madness which was to ensue for yourself. Sitting here, I can feel the palms of my hands sweating; my heart seems to be beating just that little bit faster. How can I write this down? But I know I have to. There needs to be an end to this and I have to try to reach it, without destroying myself in the process.”

“After an accident in which I injured my back, I was ill health retired. This has given me the time and dedication to put pen to paper. My life was no longer full, and I found myself with an abundance of alone time, to sit and reflect everything I had tried so hard to bury. Although this has been extremely difficult for me, my hope is that anyone finding themselves in the same type of situation may take some strength from its content. If this book were to be catalogued where would it fall, a true account, a personal autobiography or self-help? The real truth is in all three.

“Whilst writing, I was forced down a road that I never really wanted to walk again. It’s an insight to the lengths someone will go to achieve their goal. At times I had to walk away to deal with the emotions that it invoked. To say this person was very unhinged would be an understatement. Teetering on the edge of insanity, and crossing over more times than I can count. Where everyone else involved just became fall out. It was as if I were being pursued by the devil himself. Overly more there seemed to be nothing I could do to stop him and the destruction he left in his wake.

“The facts within are very hard to believe, but believe it I must because I was there. It’s still incredible to me to think that I came out of it the other side. I have spent many years under the mental health care umbrella, while trying to deal with the enormous sociological and psychological residue it has left behind.”

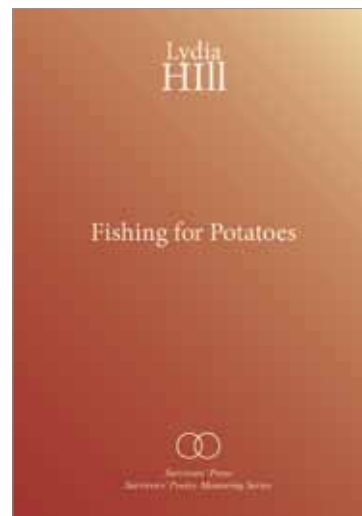
This work stands out like a beacon for Survivors. It should have come out under the Survivors Press imprint. There must be many others struggling to come to terms with their traumatic experiences

who would find a role model here. I find Teresa Joyce fully comparable with Kona McPhee in being exceptionally reader-friendly, and up front about the labours, stresses and strains of extended composition. She, again like Kona, is very keen to communicate with Survivors.

**Dave Russell**

## **Fishing for Potatoes - Lydia Hill**

Ed Peter Carpenter  
Price £5-00 pp 40  
Published by Survivors’ Press  
ISBN; 978-1-874595-31-1



As I lift the first forkful, the hole fills with water  
I throw the mud aside, looking for clues,  
the dead haulms poking up promise buried tubers.

### **Fishing for Potatoes**

The remarkable verse of enigmatic, Devon-born poet, Lydia Hill, though finely crafted, precise in detail, and notable for the keenness of its often graphic imagery, is nevertheless engendered by an underlying search for Self, within the scope of an immediate world in which the time-scale of life experience is seen to include the genetic influence of preceding generations. And there are, indeed, striking parallels to be discovered here, as the title poem so readily determines:

I grope in the murk with bare hand, pull up stones  
of hard mud, potatoes  
Sunk over my ankles shovelling, I recall grandfather  
and all the men who dug for survival at the Somme -  
globs splat, the fork is impossibly heavy, nothing  
to lever against, the handle slides.

Lydia had long been fascinated with fateful anecdotal instances (previously recounted by her father) concerning a grandfather who had died before she was born: His survival from those horrendous conditions of military action in the trenches during the 1914-1918 First World

War, His chance first meeting with Lydia's grandmother and, not least, Her grandfather's heroic exploits during that later Second World War (1939-1945):

An old sepia man in Home Guard uniform,  
Yet many more years to live -  
Oh why could you not have waited for me?

I would love to have heard your yarns,  
I would love to have sat on your knee.

### Whatever the future might show

The abject futility of war occupies several of Lydia's included poems, as she scathingly deplores the tragic loss of the young flowering of English manhood- in that Great War, almost a century ago. Much of her poetry, however, reflects life and work within a rural farming community. One of her longer poems, '*The Hedge Laying Competition*', gives informed, detailed, stage by stage development, as a hedge is gradually rooted and intertwined; and so striking is this verse account that one-is left with absolutely no illusion as to Lydia's obvious involvement in matters of agricultural import.

The first stem is shaken free, the first pleacher cut  
with a four pound axe.  
He lays the stem out (later it will be lifted in):  
he stops to plan his next move, buzzes off an  
inconvenient trunk,  
drags it free, crunching across the frost to start  
a waste pile.

### The Hedge Laying Competition

Her love of animals, particularly farm stock, is self-evident as she deeply empathises with their sufferings, and quietly grieves over their being eventually singled out for slaughter:

No pain relief, no tending of the wound,  
only a shot of antibiotic,  
a burst of blue spray on top of the dirt.  
She'll go for slaughter  
once she's raised her lambs.

### Sorting the Sheep

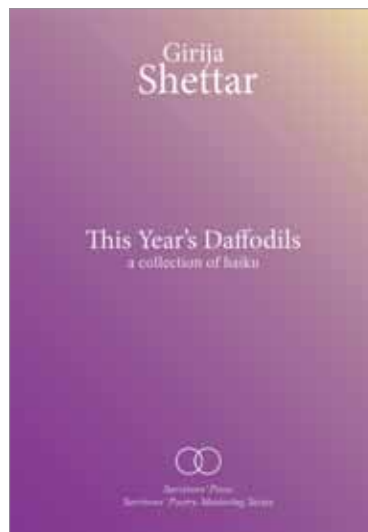
Meanwhile, in much lighter vein, we have that very entertaining 5-verse description of 'a dark chestnut Sussex bull' lording it among a field of potentially-amorous Holstein cows ('*Love in a field of meadow ladies*'). It is this poet's admirable ability to link up prevailing images and the disparate strands of interest and subject material, throughout her studiously assembled verse offerings, that marks out this opus as poetry of top drawer quality. And it should be mentioned that Lydia Hill's incursions into the starker side of life are not without the brighter accompaniment of pleasing turn of phrase and succinctness of expression. I look forward to reading more of this talented writer's excellent verse, in the very near future.

Available from <http://www.survivorspoetry.org/bookshop/>

**Bernard M. Jackson** - International Review Writer

## This year, daffodils. A collection of Haiku by Girija Shettar

Ed Diana Webb,  
Published by Survivors' Press  
ISBN 978-1-874595-30-4  
Price: £5



morning drifters  
robing us in saffron  
the Indian light

In recent years, that ubiquitous Japanese poetry form, the Haiku, formerly named 'Haiku', has gained in popularity to such a considerable extent that Haiku societies have become well-attended literary establishments almost universally. And yet, the very nature and structure of this ancient poetry form is ever open to widespread debate and discussion as to its actual required composition-The purist, of course, will ever stoutly maintain that essentially the Haiku must consist of three brief, unpunctuated lines made up of 5, 7 and 5 syllables respectively. Also, it would be subsequently needed that there be a seasonal reference included. However, many of our present-day poets now prefer not to be hidebound by any former 17-syllable directive for such poems, and Girija Shettar has emerged as one of the talented exponents of the modern minimal Haiku revolution. Koran of mixed parentage, Girija's small poetic gems very much reflect the culture and Indian background of a proud family tradition:

old, new, rich and poor  
Bombay's. soul  
under our slippers

It will be noted that none of these poems (a number of which are in related sequence) has a title, and this, again, is accepted procedure. The Haiku can be considered as an invitation to reflect or meditate on a given idea or concept, and this element is admirably conducted by this writer, for unlike many of her contemporaries, Girija, in her endeavours to create the clearer image and corresponding sense of purpose, has effectively managed to avoid any



tendency to obscurity of representation:

blackbird flies up drops down  
my thought suspended  
under our slippers

I was very much taken with the seasonal atmosphere,  
so prevalent in a number of these poems:

under pale grey skies  
ink flows on the haiku pad  
gentle rain

And do take note of the effective change of cadence in that powerful third line. Readers will soon become aware that within the framework of comparatively few words, Girija is well-able to express movement, stillness and extent of area and distance. Not only that, but in the following poem there is a pleasing sense of texture conveyed:

Shining in the wind  
a line of silk  
between the canes

A number of Girija's haiku are studiously devoted to bird imagery, amongst which, I very much admired the following example, which would be quite meaningful to any who have ever found joy in observing birds in flight under differing seasonal conditions:

hurled into the storm  
two gulls on silver wings  
-balance

And here, with this dramatic single word third line conclusion, we are able, not only to bring to mind the powerful intensity of a stormy wind, but we become one with the arresting change of pace and corresponding momentary suspension of gulls in flight.

- A lovely haiku!

Whether one holds dogmatically; to the traditionally accepted 17-syllable form of the Haiku, or readily welcomes the modern free -form variety of these poems, Girija's poems have much within to merit commendation ; for, after all is said and done, 'a rose by any other name is still a rose.'

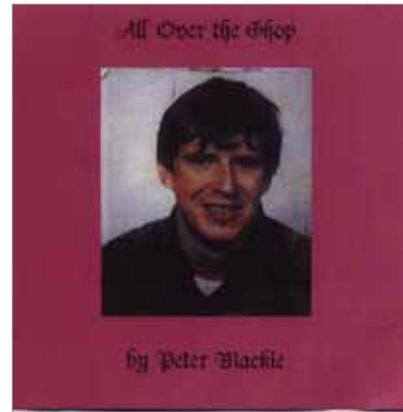
– An excellent, finely crafted collection of minimal poems.

Available from <http://www.survivorspoetry.org/bookshop/>

**Bernard M. Jackson** -International Review Writer

## All Over the Shop

**Peter Mackie (Piano, Synthesiser and Occasional Voice)** produced by Ivor Johnstone, Soundhire Scotland



“The music on this CD offers the listener Peter's unusual musical perceptions. It defies most musical categories. In the tunes and melodies are aspects of jazz, rock and classical music. It features wry musical and

aural references to literature, *Krapp's Last Tape*, and folk music; *Greensleeves*: neither will ever be quite the same again! Shades of Ivor Cutler, Wild Man Fisher, Keith Tippett and even our late lamented Frank Zappa, or, to quote Peter's *Rain Waterfall*, “and now love, beauty and madness reigns.” (Alan Dearling, Enabler Publications)

This collection shows remarkable imagination and versatility, from someone determined to make full use of the synthesiser's resources. The most imaginative track is *Forest Improvisation*, where he uses multiple stops. He spans the gamut - from raucous depth to ethereal delicacy.

I have only two major criticisms of the production: to me, the vocals sound indistinct. Secondly, there are 12 tracks on the album, but only 2 tracks register on the CD player. Perhaps this could be remedied on the occasion of a reprint.

The first two tracks sounded a little stiff. *Rain Waterfall* has a Hammond organ sound; the double-tracking of the vocals is effective, but they are mixed down. *Strange Animals* uses the harpsichord stop. It sounds hesitant, and could have done with some more arpeggios in the treble.

Thereafter Peter gets into his stride. *Jazz Improvisation* shows he has a substantial jazz background, with which he seems at ease. *All over the Shop* and *Try to be Free* (with its gospel feel) are instrumentally quite bright, but marred by mixed-down vocals. *Waves of Space* is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time; after a pedestrian start there is a switch to a faster tempo, then back to the slow movement of the beginning. *Krapp's Last Tape* is a favourite of mine. His use of the piano stop gives it a 'period' feel; one feels one could be listening to a recording made in the 30s or 40s. Some imaginative chord progressions too - and some striking discords; Peter has a good jazz sense; he is at his ease in this idiom.



His rendition of *Greensleeves*, to me, brings a tired melody back to life, with much exploration, some jazzing up, and a substantial amount of Debussy thrown in. *Bicycles of Evolution* reiterates the *Greensleeves* melody to some extent, but makes more experiments with tempo changes. There is also great variety in the sound, including drum roll and fuzz bass. Great progression from harp, to celesta and vibraphone; quite a Balinese effect in some places.

*Hungarian Rhapsody*: great 'gypsy' effect, with accelerating tempo, and meditative runs down chromatic scale. Sound begins with Hammond organ, then to pipe organ, then to harp, back to pipe organ, back to harp.

*Forest of Life Improvisation*: this is highly enterprising indeed - the full keyboard orchestra! Opening with the brass sound, then to flute, 'natural' wind, banjo, bass drum. Some excellent glissandi en route Then a rapid alternation between organ, xylophone, harp, harpsichord, brass (or electric guitar?) Nice discordant effect with strings. Then Hammond organ, digital choir, harpsichord, celesta, brass, breathy flute a bit like 'Los Incas', xylophone with some nice chromatics - all based on a quasi-flamenco chord progression. Beautiful phasing from strings, to choir, to organ - musique concrete discords, rasping flute sound, electric guitar. Lovely run down the scale against the background of a syncopated, broken rhythm.

I found the final song track, *Forest of Life*, a bit of an anticlimax after the splendor of its predecessor, though it is lifted by a key and tempo change before the end.

All in all, this is a marvelous role model for any imaginative home recorder with a keyboard.

To obtain a copy, contact [petermackie@hotmail.com](mailto:petermackie@hotmail.com)

Dave Russell

## Particular by Peter Vealey

Published by Chipmunka,  
ISBN 9781849915144 £10



This 60-poem selection is, in the author's words, 'Unashamedly compassionate, politically thought-provoking and observational', expressing his 'socialist beliefs'. He gave it that title because it is particular to his persuasions.

Opener is *All the glossy panaceas* indicts the emptiness of politicians' rhetoric, in the light of 'the death wish in us all' and 'the brutal history of mankind'. *Amy (all I wanted was you to be human)* - a longing for the real in a universe dominated by the ephemeral *Arteries* explores the metaphor of the arterial road - the main channels of communication, now utterly corrupted, 'a modern communications nightmare'. *Blonde Bimboesque* is a bitter comment on the pursuit of ephemeral 'fifteen minute fame'. Perhaps it should go more into exploring the reasons for that fame's allure.

*Cacti Corner* seems to refer to a bar, or place of ill repute, where people go when en route to their doom. Some pithy observations on drab contemporary life in *Capitalism Blues* and "*Commuterville*". Rather a cynical gloss on the structure of relationships in *Couples*; lampooning of the capriciousness of the electorate in "*Different Perspectives*", and jingoistic nostalgia in *Empire state of mind*.

*Eternity's moment with me* is in more speculative vein. Long motor journeys, including protracted traffic jams, do give one time to reflect and get to the essence of some music and literature, and the deeper significances of the universe: "Eternity has deserted us/Just as we deserted eternity/For an existence of mistaken fraternity."

Reference to his Irish roots in *From our frailties within* - enhanced by one of his excellent photographs. *G20 (Level Playing Field)* speculates on social polarities. "I'm all right *jackism*" expresses, none too optimistically, the struggle for well-being.

*If peace was an army* - some clever handling of irony, paradox and contradiction. Some philosophical depth in *Immortal*: "We all feel we are/Immortal as/Money flashing down the drain." There is a great feeling of powerlessness in face of the inexorability of time - and the universe: "We all feel this place is/Unbreakable . . ."

." A speculative mind comes to the fore in *Inferences*: "Inferences are drawn/By the slow drip of bias and prejudice." *Knitwork*: knitting the fabrics of life and society? Some really penetrating phrases here - ". . . the tired pith of days./Drunken anaesthesia and pledges." *Land of the Ghouls* - I like the phrase 'polished phonies'. Limited Consciences - a great aphorism-guide to survival in a bad world: "In the land of the limited conscience,/Thoughtlessness is king." *Natureforce*: this highlights humanity's helplessness under the canopy of the heavens - 'free will or not' . . . "Where fortune is stemmed,/Then ebbs away . . . All you new hopes and dreams/Are no sedative/On its life-force/Now or ever." *Neighbours* is a plea for a warmer, more positive expression of humanity, which ". . . should be more/Than an old-fashioned ideal." He protests: "So why are the lights/Always on red?" *Newspeak* (term taken from Orwell's 1984) indicts the manipulative oppressiveness of tabloid journalism: "All we need to do is keep grinding/Everyone's hoped down./While looking right and strong." "On Committee": Humanity can be full of ingratitude - a dedicated public servant indeed . . . "But when I died,/No one came to/Thank me." *Outstripping*: the struggle to break out of stifling stereotypes. Over the rainbow relates the tragedy of 9/11 to Hollywood and pop music nostalgia. *Paper Tigers* refers to imprisonment by language: "Words are empty . . ." but "you can never be more than they". *Passing Hero*: a past hero who has now reached old age, and bleak anonymity.

*Quangoitis*: in case anyone has forgotten or does not know, Quango is short for 'Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation' - absurd 'independent' advisory committees. Their pathetic absurdity is bitterly lampooned - '. . . splashing clumsily downstream . . . The obsession with unelected dream fakirs . . .' *Saplings* are a visible sign of the resurgence and resilience of nature amid desolation and desperation, 'carnage and regret'. There is a cynical irony about '. . . the old trusted values/Of displacement,/And confused disheartenment.' *Sleeping in a sane hell* explores the theme of decay and mutability, of human bodies and of those edifices which house them. *Stigma* I found somewhat opaque. It seems to relate to self-recrimination - 'the knocking shop of hate'. *Tea and rock cake mornings* presents a panorama of the comforts and stresses of today's up-tempo city life, the counterpointing of elegance and squalor. *Tender trees* are contrasted with brutal humanity "Where respectability/Bites and never ends". *The Framework*: sense of futility, 'Claustrophobic rooms of no power.' *The laughter of desperation*: that releaser of tension can be completely inhuman: "It's like a skeletal/Death rattle."

*The Power behind the Throne* suggests Margaret Thatcher to me; a cynical view of radical reform: "Anything is possible,/Except for revolution/in the UK." The Seductive world of advertising ". . . is all encompassing/and incomplete/As starched fodder. Some double-entendre in *The Whitewashers* - launderers who keep people pristine smart, covering up a multitude of vice and propagandists who edit out the embarrassing bits. *Thusandthem* parodies the hypocritical evasiveness

of politicians; in the desired, hypothetical world of 'thus and them' there are no divisions; divisions persist indefatigably in the real world. Tinseland could relate to 'idealistic', 'futuristic' building projects; wholesome 'natural' chaos and darkness are preferable. *To fill newspapers (to sell copy)* explores the traditional double role of newsprint: as fish and chips wrappers and as purveyors of spurious, sensationalistic news. Very moving tribute to John Lennon; I agree with the sentiment that he was underrated, and that his destruction was symptomatic of a world in decay. *Trust status* looks critically at the dictatorial nature of some public corporations "Overlooked by Rottweiler's in designer suits./Formerly of right-wing think-tanks." Humility is 'so redundant' - how true!

To this poet, the restorative power of flowers shrinks in the perspective of love, hate, blood & water. *Unthinking* - a good literal environmentalist poem. *Whistleblowers and Snitchers* highlights the inadequacies of the Christian Moral right, and the problems they failed to tackle. *Wise Owl Blues* is a cynical reflection on cyclic permanence and the eminently criticisable need for nostalgia. Within suits waxes whimsical about uniforms and uniformity.

Dave Russell

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# Sean Burn by Simon Jenner



## Introduction

Sean Burn's poetry takes on some of the (forgive the pun) forward slash and burn polices of 1970s modernism, and his poetry thus lives in these brief breaks, as if pauses in a telegraph. This way, language was configured as a continuum un-mutilated by bourgeois line-breaks. The trouble lies in its unrelenting appearance: jumped-down prose, difficult to negotiate. Burn has solved this beautifully by keeping his 'entries' short.

The inherent tension of this style is intensified by first, the jump-cut associative material, a kind of poetic aleatoric counterpoint (two musical notations unsynchronized, in different parts of the orchestra, as in Lutoslawski); but more tightly choreographed. And by the pressures of the time from which these texts arise. Specifically, they're exercised by the news, and the everyday reporting of world-wide conflicts; particularly Iraq, in the spring of 2008, five years on from the invasion, now contemplating pull-out.

Thus the pressure on language is two-fold: formal, which intensifies its associative leaps and fractures the discrete material further. And by the news items flooding Burn's consciousness that he turns round to creative account as an act of salvage, redemption, coherence and pattern. That he should subject himself to this diurnal, almost calendrical riot of how shit happens, is remarkable enough. What's more important is that the process, remarkable as it is, isn't where the poetry directs us, as happens in much experimental work. Burn sears the particular nerve-ends of sentences

and phrases into something patterned, consistent (the news is over a brief span) and electrifying.

A notable success is for instance his lyrical third 'entry':

30/3 all refugees together this ravaged / city the lapis lazuli  
– most precious skies / spark sung cherry tree too-too /  
militias ordered off shia streets / stagger thru interrogations,  
line up in headlights, hands in surrender always / e-mocracy  
suicides, uniforms change / guerillas wound, are wounded  
by their very nature / in the forbidden zones never enough  
paper / lit from below, exploding on up, exposed brilliant  
unders / entering the lighter half / kids hurl a ball repeatedly  
thru window

This is mostly congruent. Light – the jeweled sky, the headlights, even the de-fenestrated windows, all let in light. But it's used first as sheer lyrical affirmation, with astonishing beauty; then subverted into headlights and casual 'allied' torture. This morphs two ways, through politics (the illusion of democracy, or 'e-mocracy') and the banning of paper (also light-suffused?) and the casual existential emptiness of a ball through a window.

Such concatenations fuse the moments memorably in a way no other poet has achieved in this mode. The first entry is more problematic:

28/3 chords of bluster, fields of red, so much percussion  
stutter / weapons amnesty's extend in iraq / no real news  
/ just a leaf on wind up-ending, suspended above heads /  
skin crackles, the cellophane-unwrap, the giggle off-centre  
/ and whisperings always at edges vision / conflicts needed  
for theatre / yet the dalai lama is the most unconflicted i can  
conjure / meds blister packs re-designed / no longer naming  
days over each pill / and so we stumble and tumble / bones  
growl overgrazing nights / histories amber columns waiting  
/ like i said, chords of bluster, fields of red

Here is something litanic, which returns to its opening phrase, heavier with the weight of where it's been. It also recalls his inherently dramatic writing – Burn writes award-winning plays and working with actors has intensified his dramatic formalism, but twisted with the flexibility of theatrical writing.

The theme here too is simple enough, and more consistent. It all works beautifully until the Dalai Lama is brought in as an obvious contrast. I wonder if he survives the transition, transplant of sensibility even, and whether Burn wants him to. It's an odd dislocation, or dislocation, that Burn doesn't refrain from addressing several times throughout the sequence. It's a challenge to attention in what people might feel could be a predictive text. Despite his evident technophilia, there's nothing of that laziness in Burn. But the process, and thus our faith in the logic, is remorseless. Some of the lyric moments in the first extract quoted justify a whole book of more predictable poetry.



## II

Prisons too let in light, very infrequently. One of Burn's other strengths has been to choreograph incarceration, torture, and false imprisonment with war and the war on survivors (if they do survive) of the mental health system. An exhibited artist, his visualization is predictably strong. He effects this through light, and, improbably, music with its notions of flight, birdsong and piercing boundaries through sound. The whole process recalls *Carceri d'Invenzione*. Think of the stair-twisted Victorian Gothic piles where people used to be locked up, and what mind-altering drugs they were dosed with, and you'd have a pretty fair notion of such asyla as interiors, even now the great iron-railed institutions are now adorning business weekends.

These are Piranesi's *Imaginary Prisons*, drawings and paintings of whole vortices of light from the 1780s, surreally distorting enlightenment, which led to musical answers around the Millennium. Brian Ferneyhough addressed a whole sequence (1983-87) to these astonishing twists of stair, tower and light. Maxwell Davies's 7<sup>th</sup> Quartet, meditating on the spiraling architecture of baroque imagineer (and suicide) Borromini readily admitted (to this writer) that his 7<sup>th</sup> String Quartet (2005) was also inspired by Piranesi. This intensity lends some notion of how Burn traps music in an entrapped place. Maxwell Davies in his 3<sup>rd</sup> Quartet (2003) reacted violently to the Iraq invasion. This text, located in the early spring of 2003, is ambered in a similar pain.

The organ-like invocation above, its Gothic, is conjured in Burn by the sudden appearance of Dietrich Buxtehude's (1637-1707) baroque organ music, 'nectar surging'. Why Buxtehude? Perhaps he's that bit more mid-baroque, ornamented and beautifully encrusted, and less familiar than Bach. Perhaps he just happened to have a CD of him hidden from the staff. It's just possibly Buxtehude's Motet *Membra Jesu Nostris* ('who nailed Easter to this pagan ceremony'). Anyway, Christianity is hammered and nailed along the way. It's a time of Calvary and such radio or CD influences flood-plane in, in an appropriate, penitential underpinning of an obscenely sacred time of war. Mostly Burn is arrested (and arrests us obviously) by the notion of trapping musical divas' voices and then their distressed Priory-admitted selves into such mis-named places of sanctuary. Not that they'd thank you for Buxtehude. Noel Coward might, on a blue day. He's there too, as a jibe or jibber. Repeatedly music is bounced off the walls and trapped:

29/3 cheap music hissing on thru / sorry any pop princesses detained in psychiatric institutes but / wanting to hammer hammer the unbroke fist / blinds closed all day / our artillery fired into basra / in the eating of meat - that clotted vast wastage / to wake singing / julian copes motorik: buxtehudes nectar surging / urging armistice in sweet-truth-tooth / who nailed easter to this pagan ceremony? / and unto matana roberts tongue flutter depressions, the metal-stressing / nail garlands to fontanelle / spines

abandoned, everywhere their embroidery / like the hail flurrying blossom early, way too / no-fade out but coming to a dead-stop

Evoking Coward, de-toxing divas, and the pounding headache of the head and guns in Basra is a classic Burn move. But the montage of 'in the eating of meat – that clotted vast wastage' goes as aleatoric as a 1970s album montage. Paganism and nailing garlands (a subversion of crucifixion) moves the language from religion to less fixed, or fixated failures of faith, as Burns writes it. This is a theme he returns to in the fourth extract, or entry:

31/3 must-of been one their other satanic majesties ate and drank her and we are what's left / bottom falls out the mango chutney / fairy rings bottom the park, no-ones dancing / zimbabwes slo-mo steal much like the americans eight year ago / a week now, i've watched this leaf grow stop-mo / top of cistern as i piss / and i piss often (side effects) / first, a tiny scarlet as fairytale prick / then incremental slow swelling / now lung-urge plentiful / cello closest to human voice, how swans talk / the long-spell condemning / and so exiled from what thoughts

Here the demotic curls up with bitter laughter and then turns in on itself. You start with music and end with it (cello register of human voice) but in between the painful effects of medicated pissing means this is no act of purgation, more of purgatory. The detritus of abandoned paganism ('fairy rings bottom the park') and Zimbabwe offer a detritus of shattered hopes (paganism and post-colonialism). Burn frantically patterns the day's events and extend the metaphors he tried in the second entry, two days earlier. This antiphonal patterning works well for the first./third, and second/ fourth entries.

## III

The whole process is calendrical – one lunar month. But Burn's point is timeless, or at least humanely timeless. We move from Iraq almost imperceptibly as the news itself tries, and other obsession fuse and literally burn themselves out. Many elements from the natural world assert themselves as a kind of short-hand for freedom and then bleach themselves. This is striking in 03/4:

03/4 vine edges known world/s / arc roots above heads / spirograph feet in sand / and now from under / bells toll free of the winding-sheet / school was only ever the goalpost / least folks stopped stroking our shaved head / what message did your last kite carry? / ghost markets, our hair whiter, both hands on the eclipse / breathe in silenced theatre / a coda kicking chair away / anyone who dreams is only living / your song rips on thru

The beaches and vegetative life persist, as do shaved heads (here patronized like children from torture camps or those with lice), and morph later into Tibet's protests (emergent in 2003) in the light of the imminent Olympic Games. The startling beauty of such phrases

as 'arc roots above heads' and 'ghost markets, our hair whiter' do carry the charge of dispossession Burn feels and articulates so frenetically. In later entries like 4/4 'forty year on from mlk, this young blackbird huddled defiant beside red railings' carries the natural and animal world into a kind of startled empathy. But what is 'mlk'? Milk? Some treaty he knows. But Burn too is enlarging his own and not merely dragging things in through a narrow keyhole.

Obsessions recur: 05/4 begins: 'highest number of florists per shaved head' head / rice price doubling in the switch to biofuels / of risperidone: *the mechanism of action is unknown* which ushers in the green imagery which perhaps comes to pervade the later textures. 6/4 contains the Olympic shaved heads but is mostly private 'children shrieking like gulls' and 'our muscles torn to a differing / shroud of anti-psychotics ever tighter winding in', which suggests again this 'feathering' of physical containment as he expresses it. The sequence adjusts itself, holds still near its centre, 'all roads lead oil' a shorthand for keeping the road rolling.

But what are we to make of 10/4's 'so loki made a ship from nails of the dead / irises strain the unwind of light'? So far, so lyrical. But it then spools off into Burlesque about Moses, the burning bush and the 'orifice of fair trading' taking it up the arse from Saudis? 'We're back with oil, but where was Loki? It recalls Keats's cancelled opening stanza to his 'Ode to Melancholy': 'Though you should build a bark of dead men's bones'. Here the 'nails of the dead' evoke charred dead soldiers, perhaps, or civilians. This harrowing is undermined by the sudden switch to agitprop. Burn destabilizes not only the text but himself, deliberately. In his concluding lines, the 'appeal the burning, the burn / and ranged against the word, the world / flechettes ululate in dank coda' he enacts his own named powerlessness, the absurdity of Burn communicating anything. As Edward Bond has his imagined late Shakespeare despairing 'Was anything done?' in his great 1974 play *Bingo* (which Burn the dramatist will be familiar with, enacting suicide and political disenfranchisement), Burn asks this of himself. The stanza, after giggles, peters out into a 'dank coda'.

11/4 re-iterates his despair, but notice how he injects political comment like an adrenalin shot: 'how can you go on strike if you don't have work? mugabe sits it out / the minotaur in each of us / this dreadful itch / no rehearsal room' Burn gets away with this superbly twisted reflection which also enacts his theatrical take on living without rehearsal space,. Which might have become formulaic if he'd persisted in starting each of these paragraphs with political reflections. He doesn't. He flickers with them in opportune licks of a lizard-tongued politics.

#### IV

But politics re-surfaces, enacting a restless worry over what her terms 'suicides never far below' in 12/4. So 11/4's 'Icarus rare, air and fleshy / trust to elbow room? /

da vinci's mother was slave' moves into Italian neo-Fascist politics and Berlusconi by default. More important though is this lyric impulse which Burn trips up but melting it as it were, as Icarus' wings were, collapsing him into the sea. The 'elbow room' is clearly a restricted mandate, one that Burn mistrusts: not only is it dangerously dispensed, but only so far in Burn's managed universe. What does fuse in this middle sequence is smoke – Iraq's, inevitably – and avian imagery, with its obvious corollaries of freedom and bird's eye perspective: 14/4 ends: 'smoke bass, drone and overtone on circling down / your light into us, flex spectral / like curlews playing out'.

But with a poet's edgy prescience, Burn moves to one of those stories breaking not in 2003, but nearly a decade later. Artificial life. It starts in apprehensions and one might say fancy. Again, Burn enacts his Arcadian fractures, damaged pastoral, a bit like Harrison Birtwistle's mechanical pastoral (which Burn probably knows well). 15/4 opens: 15/4 trees speak the library of hands / elves walk alongside their secret paths never intersecting our / so-called vivid dream - side effects or hyper-brilliant-realities' That mightn't move further than the shredded beer can that turns up, literally on the ground. But 19/4 shows that he's aware of his movement. First, though, 17/4 refuses to give up its music/pastoral inflections, and some thinner, almost diaphanous paragraphs here end: 'martinu's madrigals, violinviolas incredible yearning for country we can never again' and abruptly vanish.

The great Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959) wrote these amazing string trios, ever prolific, calling them Madrigals after the four and five voiced vocal part-songs that flourished from the 1570s to the 1630s. He took the idea from his great teacher Nadia Boulanger, and Burn finds this appropriation quite haunting, instrumenting something that's originally sung. Martinu wrote them in France from the 1930s, and later – significantly in exile - in America. Music, birdsong and human, fuse into the imaginary prisons alluded to earlier. Burn's passion for music of course obsesses his poetry because his obsession informs it at every pitch. But he's been selective, insistent but not repetitive, and clever in his musical examples.

18/4 rope drops in midday espresso / the smell of faint is seashell / goose-grass too wet to stick / first horse chestnut candles emerging / bin handle dead centre opening whose worlds? / a small vinyl dolphin stuck to tarmac ever after / followed twice this same day / the same shellsuit / shout and replicant breaks cover

This lyrically charged episode with its fantastic opening splash – of coffee, then dolphin – but the waste world celebrated suddenly turns on that dolphin image, reminding us of *Blade runner* and the inner exile of the branded outsider, the not quite human that those suffering mental distress feel more keenly than most. In itself this wouldn't be significant if Burn didn't follow it with:



19/4 these synthetic lifeforms manufactured south / and shipped across this sceptic isle, green unpleasant etceteras / lock and bore, usually to walk slow and irregular / stand them out as they follow / their movement, laughter, gaze angular, trying / pavement eats chips, motion detectors, the coming rfid / operations of the echelon and this all-knowledge thermal imaging inside head

A very British replicant, green and unpleasant, then. Not the American life forms recently announced. But it's a measured life that threatened the organic. Look, literally at the thermal imaging registering, even sucking at, thought. Burn sees synthetic advancers neutrally, not as threats to some sanctity of life but as a scientifically-induced normalization of the living who have kinks. People are here their own dreams. This is his message, if he has a central one. I think his accent is a larger one, but if there is a didactic message beyond the methodology which forms its own polemic, this is close to its heart.

## V

After this there's a release of un-fractured lyric, paragraphs, or stanzas that can be enjoyed without exegesis. They adumbrate themes, introduce even more squalling children, and every second opening startle with for instance in 24/4 'night again gouging glacial / striates head to bleed / the slightest squall blossoming down', enacting global warmings of ice-caps in the mind, a haunting echo of a Russian spring cracking dangerously in your head. 25/4 takes in, like Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* of 1621 that Keats so ransacked, an itinery or litany of querulous ghosts and bedfellows: 'question marks the shape of spreadsheets, flatbreads, chainsaws / between flower and city, horse - sun - servant / scorpions who pray together / sickle, cleaver, rolling pin'.

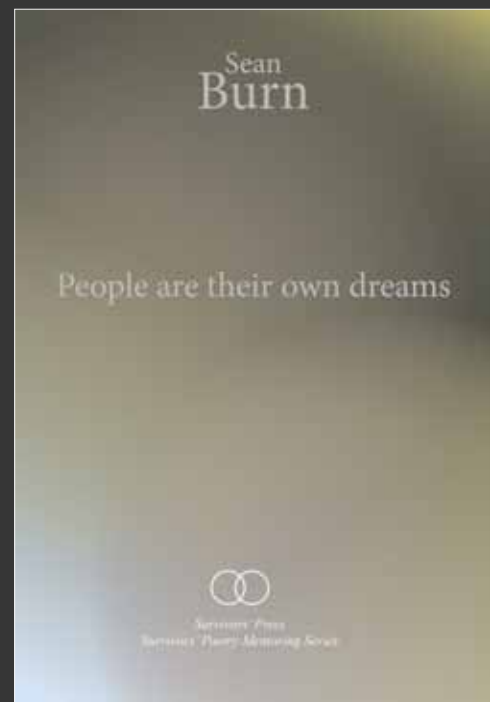
It's a bit like the catalogue of that optimist St John Perse in *Anabasis* that T. S. Eliot translated in 1931. But there's it's not the optimistic, pan-Deistic quasi-Catholic traversal of pre-history of that epic little book. Though it does suggest Burn read it – especially the scorpions. There's an excoriating political commentary embedded in an avalanche of paper that is pure Burn. In his last entry, 26/4, Burn summarizes his experience suddenly, without ceremony, quite happy to depart:

26/4 massaged meat, the degrees of purity (in) blowing yourself up / turnkeys and turkeys savour remnant shops / banks as victim, and whole islands shaped like gun / solder a room why dontcha? / the electric possibilities between words / dionysus bookmarking fingers / in the slo-mo of feedback / people are their own dreams

This reads like a looping back of tape, to the opening, to puns (soldiers and solders) the inversions 'banks as victim' and the raveling up of words and gods – Dionysius being the latest avatar from Greek myth. If a whole island is shaped like a gun, its destiny is violence,

and dangerously, people are their own dreams, the image of what their image-making leads them to. It hardly exculpates the poet. Or the reader. It does though suggest a process, a recognition of the hallucinatory life – literally the hallucinated automata that Wyndham Lewis dreamed humanity in one of his benign moments. But that there are 'electric possibilities between words', is charging up a hope of some kind of linguistic redemption. It's as faint as a tracer on one of Burns' dreaded scans.

This, and much else as political commentary from a managed person, is what Burn invokes as well as evokes in this extraordinary sequence. This work really owns a terrible beauty, and its knowingness is also a shock, since its generation seems spontaneous and clearly traces the magic hand of chance across an iron frame, ringing.



*People are their own dreams* by Sean Burn is available from our online bookshop, cost:£5.00 + P&P <http://www.survivorspoetry.org/bookshop/>

**Poem 30/3** was performed by Simon Jenner, as part of **Survivors' Poetry's Celebration Videos for National Poetry Day 2011.**

# Graffiti Corner

## BLACK DOGS by Patrick McManus

BLACK DOGS  
BLACK  
DOGS

he was  
feeling  
dark  
down  
very low  
depressed  
and so he  
decided  
to take  
his black  
dogs  
out for  
a long  
walk  
in the  
sunshine

pmcmanus  
q917

## SIMON by Tony\_Demoney

### Simon

My Brother is so practical  
But has a heart of gold  
The Midas touch with motorbikes  
He's caring and yet bold

He's loving to his children  
And loyal with his friends  
He's careful not to spoil them  
There's not much he can't mend.

He works a lot of hours  
To provide for those he loves  
He holds a special power  
When taking off the gloves!

And for his little brother  
He does all that he can  
But I can be so hard to  
reach  
I hope he understands.

Regardless of my problems  
We share a special bond  
And though I love to see  
him  
I'm often not that strong

It's hard for me to go  
outside  
To see my kith and kin  
So I stay at home most of  
the time  
To reduce sensory din

So to my older brother  
I love you very much  
There'll never be another  
I look up to so damn much.

05/06/2011

Thu Aug 11, 2011 8:12  
pm

sammy1977  
Members

Joined: Mon Jan 25, 2010  
5:09 pm  
Posts: 193  
Location: Cheshire

Re: Simon  
Lovely sentiment

---

Sammy L @ <http://soul-snapshot.blogspot.com>

Sat Aug 20, 2011 9:17  
pm

patrick  
Joined: Thu Feb 22, 2007 11:38 am  
Posts: 437  
Location: London

Re: Simon  
Tony is this autobiographical ? have  
you shown it to him?  
bests P

## SPRINGS by Patrick McManus

SPRINGS  
2011

Arab spring  
Arab youth  
Arab uprisings  
applauded  
wonderful!

British spring  
British youth  
British uprisings  
condemned  
terrible!

pmcmanus  
q903

# Letters & emails

Dear Dave Russell,  
... I downloaded the Summer 2011 issue of *Poetry Express* and have read it through. I was particularly interested in your article about John Sinclair and I also like the poetry by April (Fynn) Stuart, Angela Morkos and Dave St. Claire's prose-poem, starting 'This is not a world, in which I exist.' Peter Mackie

Thank you Blanche  
    Speeding  
Like a  
    Steam  
engine  
    slow down  
David  
    Put on the breaks  
no reason  
    to hurry  
it will all work  
    out in the  
        end

Any comments  
are always  
appreciated  
My thanks  
for corresponding  
with me  
It makes more  
sense to communicate  
than remain  
silent

    A frozen  
heart melts  
like butter  
    on toast  
A knife and fork  
cutting thru  
The pages of a billion eyes  
**Dave St. Clair**

## Competitions

Poetry Kit Poetry Competition hold regular monthly competitions and listings of other writing and poetry competitions. Check their website. Do note they have varying fees: <http://www.poetrykit.org/comps.htm>

John Tripp award for Performance Poetry | Closing Date: 07-Oct-11  
Competition to find the best performance poet in Wales. Heats will be held on Wednesday 12 October at The Drill Hall in Chepstow, Tuesday 18 October at Carmarthen Quins Club, Tuesday 25 October at Venue Cymru in Llandudno and Saturday 5 November at Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff. The Grand Final will take place on Tuesday 29 November in Swansea Grand Theatre's Depot Studio. Open to all poets born in or currently living in Wales. In addition to the First Prize of £500, two further prizes of £100 each will be awarded at The Grand Final. Entry Fee: £7.00 Contact: Entry forms can be downloaded from the Literature Wales website: [www.literaturewales.org/johntripp/](http://www.literaturewales.org/johntripp/), mail: [post@literaturewales.org](mailto:post@literaturewales.org)

Second Light Poetry Competition for Women | Closing Date: 01-Nov-11, Details: Two categories: long (over 50 lines) and short poems (up to 50 lines). Prizes in each category: first £250; second £100; and third £50, plus books prizes for commended. All winning & commended poems will be published (in full or extract) in ARTEMISpoetry and poets will be

## ... items of interest

invited to read at the adjudication event in London. Second Light members are entitled to submit one free entry.

Entry Fee: £4 per short poem, or £8 for 3, £12 for 8. Fee for long poems is £6.

Contact: For further information go to [www.secondlightlive.co.uk](http://www.secondlightlive.co.uk)

Yorkshire Open Poetry Competition 2011 | Closing Date: 10-Nov-11: Prizes: £750, £300, £150 + 10 @ £20. Yorkshire Prize £50, (for poets who live or work there. Mark manuscript 'Y'). Sole Adjudicator: Philip Gross. Length: max 80 lines. Adjudication on York Day of Poetry, Sat 25th February 2012 (Programme and booking form available from YOPC 2011, The Word House, 3 Post Office Row, YO41 1QY. Please send SAE), Entry Fee: £5 then £4 each or £15/4

Contact: Cheques payable to: Yorkshire Open Poetry Competition 2011, Entries to: YOPC 2011, 32 Spey Bank, YO24 2UZ

### Schizos Care - Full-Shilling-Club

Schizophrenic Salvation Network

"Can't you see buried within all that wreckage he's craving for freedom." Malcom Lowry

Our **disability** could be a diabetes of the mind, caused by a traumatic disbelief?

**Solidarity** very often invalidated and demonised, and often both together. Could become the modern Jews? Over half of, discharged from old asylums, died within a year of dislocation, neglect, cold! The inadequate, friendly simple schizophrenic, the devastated, emotional hebephrenic, the intense, wordy paranoid schizophrenic... We are **not** told about them! Also probably, 'guinea pigs' for secret state experimentation - psychotropice, mind-policing and short wave radiation etc.

**Fellowship** - must associate to counter loneliness and stigmatisation

**Local Groups** - needed for fellowship, mutual therapy, political initiatives

**Full-Shilling-Club** - hope to have regular Central London meetings.

**Tel:** David 020 77900269 or Joe 020 85750250

### "Reaching Out Monument Story Project"

@: [http://www.irvingstudios.com/child\\_abuse\\_survivor\\_monument/GiveUsAHand\\_StoryProject.htm](http://www.irvingstudios.com/child_abuse_survivor_monument/GiveUsAHand_StoryProject.htm)

John Harrison-survivor poet has had: his poem

"Our Silence" included in the project "Reaching Out" Child Abuse Monument.

**Celebrate World Mental Health Day with CoolTan Arts New Exhibition:** Live & Kicking 6th October to 13th January. At The Independent Gallery, CoolTan Arts, Unit B 237 Walworth Road, London SE17 1RL

**A exhibition of works for sale** by CoolTan participants exploring the power of creativity, in mixed media

**Private View 6th October 6-9pm**, refreshments available -everyone welcome! To RSVP, please contact Suzie Ragab [suzie@cooltanarts.org.uk](mailto:suzie@cooltanarts.org.uk) or 0207 701 2696

Celebrate **World Mental Health Day** by joining CoolTan Arts Largactyl Shuffle, 'No Health without Mental Health' Saturday 15th October 2011, 11.30am. Starting at Maudsley Hospital Main Entrance, Denmark Hill, London, SE5 8AZ

Join **CoolTan Arts' BIG Largactyl Shuffle** from Maudsley Hospital (mad house)to(power house) Tate Modern, a fun guided cultural walk with poetry readings and other surprises raising much needed money, please donate to <http://www.justgiving.com/CoolTan-Arts>.

[www.cooltanarts.org.uk](http://www.cooltanarts.org.uk) E: [info@cooltanarts.org.uk](mailto:info@cooltanarts.org.uk)

## Network

### Leeds Survivors

Contact Tom Halloran:  
Tel: 01924 820 779  
Email: tgh52@talktalk.net

### Bristol Survivors

Contact Steve Hennessy  
email: cd2007g8825\_2@blueyonder.co.uk  
www.steppingouttheatre.co.uk

### Manchester Survivors

Every Mon 4-6pm workshop  
Common Word, 6. Mount St.,  
Manchester M2 5NS  
Contact Jackie Hagan  
email: jaclynhagan@hotmail.com

### GROW-east sussex

Meet every Tuesday except during school  
holidays at The Children's Library  
Robertson Passage  
Hastings

Contact: Ashley Jordan  
email: jordan72uk@gmail.com

### High Peak Writers

Works in association with The Grapevine - a  
local mental health charity. Located in Buxton.  
Contact: TBC  
email:

### Stevenage Survivors

Meets up every other Friday at The Friends'  
Meeting House, 21 Cutty's Lane, Stevenage  
7.30-9.30pm  
Contact: Roy Birch  
email: royb@survivorspoetry.org.uk

### The Bread is Rising Poetry Collective

<http://www.thebreadisrising.org/index.html>

For info; contact: thebreadisrising@excite.com  
or 001-347-534-5715 [USA]

## Events

### The Poetry Cafe

The Poetry Cafe (The Poetry Place)  
22 Betterton Street  
London WC2H 9BX  
Tel +44 (0)20 7420 9880  
Fax +44 (0)20 7240 4818  
<http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk>

### 7.30pm Start

- 13th Oct Copping & Musgrove (singer-songwriting duo)  
10th Nov *Founders' Night (original music and poetry by the founders of Survivors' Poetry)*  
8th Dec *Alain English (performance poetry)*

Dave Russell & *Razx* feature on a regular basis

Open-mic is a wonderful opportunity for new and more experienced poets and musicians to have their work heard in a friendly, and supportive atmosphere. If you want to read or perform your work you need to arrive between 7.00pm-7.30pm in order to book your floorspot. The doors will open to other audience members from 7.00pm and the performance will start at 7.30pm ish. Finish time for the event dependent upon the amount of people who want to do floorspots however, generally around 10.30. There will be a break half way through. These events are organised by Xochitl Tuck, Events Coordinator.

### Tottenham Chances



399 High Road  
Tottenham  
London  
N17 6QN  
Tel: 0208 365 0653  
<http://www.tchances.co.uk/>

### Open Mic Dates: 8pm start

The Fourth Thursday of each month: 27th October,  
24th November and 22nd December

email: [xmtuck@hotmail.com](mailto:xmtuck@hotmail.com)  
Tel: 07796 831 935



# SP Bulletin

*"Thank you to all our volunteers, supporters and to the organisations that fund our work."*

<http://vimeo.com/survivors>



Survivors' Poetry has vacancies for **new trustees** to join our current Board of Trustees.

We are particularly interested to hear from individuals with business and arts project management experience. You may have an interest in poetry or literature, or have worked in a commercial enterprise. Whatever your background we'd be interested in hearing from you.

**Please contact;**  
[info@survivorspoetry.org.uk](mailto:info@survivorspoetry.org.uk),  
or telephone the office on  
020 7281 4654

We are always happy to receive your poetry, reviews, short story or articles.

IF YOU'VE FOUND INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING TOWARD SURVIVORS WITHIN THESE PAGES, PLEASE WRITE TO US.

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**if you wish to**

make contact and respond to anything you have read or if you wish to contribute, please either email [info@survivorspoetry.org.uk](mailto:info@survivorspoetry.org.uk) or write to

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## Performances

To Celebrate  
**National Poetry Day**

Simon Jenner performs  
Survivor Poetry

go to:

<http://vimeo.com/survivors>

A word from Simon Jenner on National Poetry Day  
*Hillside, Llangatock* by David Kessel  
*Father's Song* by Venetia Tompkins  
*30/3* by Sean Burn  
*19 Keere Street* by Simon Jenner  
*Autumnal Garden* by Dino Campana  
*Dragonfly* by Bruce James