

# Poetry Express

The Survivors' Poetry Quarterly News Letter Winter 2007 Issue 25

**Mentoring by Phil Ruthen, Writer and SP Trustee**

**Guest Editor Piers Marter, Writer and SP Trustee**

**Guest Artist Venetia Tompkins**

**DCMS by Dr. Simon Jenner**

*Poetry Broadsheet, updates and more*



*After more than 2 years of crisis Survivors' Poetry enters an uncertain future but thanks to ACE reinstating RFO status our future looks brighter...*

*promoting poetry, prose, plays, art and music by survivors of mental distress*

**S**urvivors' Press is the imprint of Survivors' Poetry, a unique literary and mental health charity promoting the writing of survivors of mental distress. The second year of its National Mentoring Scheme, 2006-2007, sponsored by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, sees an exciting and ambitious programme. The programme is based upon volunteer mentors, mentoring poets for publication. Please see inside or website for further details.

Akin  
Oladimeji

Aerialst



Survivors' Press  
Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Series

Fatma  
Durmush

Clocks Forward



Survivors' Press  
Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Series

Paul  
Murphy

Alone in the Back Café



Survivors' Press  
Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Series

Akin Oladimeji was born in Nigeria on March 13th 1977. At the age of 16 he moved to England. In 2000, his story 'The Boy' was published by Penguin in IC3. This led to a place on the UEA Creative Writing course, where he was tutored by Andrew Motion.

Akin is an extensively experienced poetry workshop facilitator. This is first collection of poetry.

Fatma Durmush was born in Larnaca, Cyprus in 1959. At the age of six she came to England with her family and went to school in London. At the age of fifteen after a short stay in Cyprus with her family she returned to London. She studied Humanities at the Open university for two years.

Her work has been published in the Turkish Language Press and in the Big Issue (140 times), and the Daily Express. Pamphlets published by Hearing Eye and Poetry Monthly Press. She won first prize for poetry in the FATAL Short Story and Poetry Competition for Turkish Speaking Women in 1998. Her collection of plays and short stories, *I Sit in the Light*, was published in 2000.

She gained a BA degree in Fine Art in 2006 and is currently doing her Masters. She has had two solo exhibitions of paintings and 60 group exhibitions; two plays performed in America. In 2006 she was paid £300 for a play by Resonance *fm*. She is currently working on a new play. She lives with her mother, two cats and a dog.

Paul Murphy was born in Belfast, 1965. He studied at the University of Warwick, gaining a BA in Film and Literature. From there he went to Queen's University Belfast to study for an MA on T.S.Elliot and the French philosopher Jacques Lacan.

He has just finished a stint as writer-in-residence at the Albert-Ludwig Universität, Freiburg in Breisgau, Baden-Wurtemberg, Germany. His poetry, literary criticism, book reviews and travel writings have been published in English, Irish and American journals. He has published a pamphlet and one previous book of poetry, and has read from his work in Paris, Cambridge, Galway and Belfast. He is at the moment writing an oral history of the Black Forest, and working on many reviews of contemporary authors.

He also writes philosophy and enjoys working on the interface between poetry and philosophy.

**A**kin Oladimeji was mentored by Dr. Simon Jenner. Director of Survivors's Poetry

**F**atma Durmush was mentored by Poet and Writer Alan Morrison

**P**aul Murphy was mentored by Dr. Simon Jenner. Director of Survivors' Poetry

## SURVIVORS' POETRY

Survivors' Poetry is a unique national charity which promotes the writing of survivors of mental distress. Please visit [www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com) for more information or 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.

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Dan Nelson (Fundraising), Dave Russell (assisting events). Alan Morrison (Mentor), Roy Holland (Information and Editorial), Xochitl Tuck (Events Co-ordinator).

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## Guest Editor *Trustee* Piers Marter

When I was asked to be guest poetry editor for Poetry Express, I was both delighted and daunted. Delighted because I am always pleased to help at Survivors' Poetry and daunted because the standard of the poetry has always been so high. I hope this edition maintains those standards.

I read hundreds of poems and every one moved me in its unique way. Many poems had the underlying theme of survival in the face of hardship and were inspiring. Others moved me with their vivid imagery, startling content, or the way they subverted rhythm and rhyme to create a particular mood. The poems I chose were the ones which moved me the most. In these poems, I believe both mastery of technique and creative insight to come together: the poet was able to communicate his or her emotions with skill. Pain, survival, hope, and happiness were made new to me. I hope the reader finds these poems as interesting and moving as I did.

## Message from the *Chair* Marius Jankowski

It's been a tough year for Survivors' Poetry (SP) but thanks to the tireless work of the Director Dr. Simon Jenner (in whom ACE had enough confidence to support with a 2007-08 salary despite its disinvestment in 2006) and the work of volunteers and board members supporting Events, the Mentoring Scheme, Poetry Express and Outreach activities, SP has come through despite a low revenue. I am particularly pleased we have a new board member join us in 2007 Phil Ruthen, whom has given much of his time towards being a mentor for the Mentoring Scheme. Roy Holland and Roy Birch have both worked tirelessly this year supporting the office, funding applications and Outreach. We have Blanche Donnery back again as part time Administrator and layout artist for Poetry Express. The Mentoring Scheme will continue into 2008 thanks to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and we have office funds from The John Ellerman Foundation till April 2008.

Just before Christmas SP heard the good news that ACE will reinstate SP as a RFO (Regularly Funded Organisation), so congratulations to all whom assisted and thanks to ACE for its continued support of our unique organisation. I will be looking forward to Xochitl Tuck's a new creative Open Mic event at Maggie's Bar, N16 and continuing with the Open Mic at The Poetry Café, see Events pg44.

If you wish to get involved with SP and need any further information about Survivors' Poetry please contact us. I would be particularly keen to hear from professionals in Law, IT and the NHS interested in becoming part of the Board.

Unfortunately we do not have funding to print Poetry Express, that said I do hope you enjoy this PDF version kindly edited by long standing board member Piers Marter.

Finally I want to wish the Survivors' community all the very best of health and happiness for 2008.

# Update from Director Dr. Simon Jenner

## W e l c o m e t o o u r W e b

Hello and welcome to PE 25, which is being hotly pursued by PE26. As I write this and you read it, you can take comfort that the website is fully up, and much in the way of breaking news will be available a click away. There are a host of additional features, including the shop, which now boasts other survivor organisations and their own books. There's also a news section and a latest news section, too, on the central panel. Poem of the Month and a soon-to-be revived Essay of the Month, and several blogs are active and readable. My own blog, on a different system, has been stuck but I hope will be operational by the time you read this. Thanks are due first to Co who designed and re-designed the site, and to Blanche who has added so much recently and created new features.

There's also a forum and a fine moderator from Birmingham with several supportive regulars, one of whom I met at the Poetry Café in December. This element is one that thrives even when the website was undergoing two rebuilds and it looked somewhat nuclear wintered. I take part too... Blanche is taking over from Co whose Brent advocacy duties meant he had to taper off his work for us. We thank him for three vital years from our website's infancy, which he brought into the world. He's still on hand and we're delighted he has a full-time career that takes in all his talents.

## 2 0 0 7 : T h e Y e a r i n P i x e l s

A lot has happened this year, and it's worth telling badly as G. K. Chesterton would say. The first big thing - this February - was a surprise letter from the Arts Council announcing that I was to be awarded a salary for turning round the organisation and fund-raising. This was utterly unexpected and certainly unlooked-for. I'd worked out a modest living of £300 a month! It was thus doubly welcome. What it meant of course was other money would come in. And now, in breaking news, a David Brent moment. We've just (mid-December) been accorded Regularly Funded Organisation status again, after losing it in 2005. It's the same as 2007-08, though, a salary with 2.7% inflation for three years to 2011. Some of this can legitimately find its way to the office. Three elements have been singled out for development: survivor groups, long-

term core funding (as we've sustained since 2005), and website development - though the latter is acknowledged to be well in hand. (For further thoughts on the arts world, see my article on pg36 ). Naturally I was stunned, but extremely grateful and remain so. Apparently my progress over 2006-07 had been monitored, and we seem to have passed!

Well, it was and remains a team effort, but being David Brent I was the one singled out. And it did in fact attract more funding. We've had a very heartening boost from a renewal and uplift at the hands of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, who voted us £60,000 over two years; one of the years to be matched, we hope with another £20,000 from Grants for the Arts. Having found 75% of the monies from elsewhere, we kept our side: more like surround-funding. As our two-year office costs from John Ellerman draw to a close in March 2008, we're grateful for this as a platform to raise more monies against it. So we're back to three paid staff: Blanche Donnery and Roy Birch have returned part-time as yet. Roy Holland as a volunteer is loyally still here in the mornings.

## M e n t o r i n g

This is almost the most important thing and certainly the most active element in 2007's balance. So far another seven poets have been published, and elsewhere - particularly on the website - you can keep track of all the mentoring activities, which might be taking place near you, or with someone you know. The net result has been an even riper crop of poets, because most have been dunked for even longer in the ink byte marinade. I was honoured to mentor two, and others like Roy Birch have continued to champion several poets, in some cases, for nearly two years. Launches are at the Poetry café, and we trust February will be the next one. Look up our website nearer then.

Several other poets have now submitted their tss. Others abide our question, as Arnold said of anyone but Shakespeare. And we can abide yours. The answer is, February 1st, for new applicants. The course is set to run till at least 2010 And I've made no secret of the fact that I consider it a permanent feature of what we do.

## Events

Razz and Xochitl are still going: come rain or shine, the events at the Poetry Café and on occasion elsewhere still happen. Look up the latest on the site. At the moment, the prospect of having far more of this on our website in Podcasts and Webcasts, is really enticing.

We've got equipment enabling us to digitalize P. J. Fahy's old tapes, and place them as a resource. Colin Hambrook, for one (he's my neighbour, living just below me so we often meet up) has said a lot of people will love that. Xochitl's latest idea is an events life-off in Stoke Newington.

## Outreach: BME/Rehab

Even more importantly, however, the prison and BME (Black Minority & Ethnic) elements within SP are developing. As many of you know, our Outreach Coordinator Roy Birch is a superb rehab and prison coordinator. Our Chair Marius Jankowski works in the same area, and helped set up BME bookshops. Marius and Roy liaise, and of course know as much as one can do about diversity and prisons.

Marius puts it simply (I paraphrase, but it's almost verbatim). 'The original meaning of asylum became a dirty word in the 1970s, has become rehabilitated for the poor refugees, and we deal with those who come out of prison or are now 'integrated' into the community. They turn up at my PCT having dropped off our radar and reappear when a brother or partner dies. They're in distress. We give them sugared tea, taxi them to A & E, where they're released quite often to die... The number of prison places has increased in direct proportion to the closure of places of refuge. We needed to redefine asylum, but not to remove care. And the history of Care in the Community should be filed under the Terrorism Act.'

## Disability Conference

I went with Marius to the ACE Disability Conference on Wednesday 5th December. I've related to Sian Williams my own family's relationship with disability (not a happy term) which is an extraordinary mix of the professional and personal, in several people at once, stretching back to 1950. So we're interested in

all aspects of disability. Both of us, recovering from colds in an improvised room at Pear Tree Court (the lift was broken, it was like an aquarium, one said) made lively suggestions in the spirit of the meeting, and targeting the areas under discussion.

There is now a good deal of focus on mentoring of all kinds, and the gaining of support from various bodies. The dark arts of celebrities were invoked by me. I don't like it, but finding someone whose sister has a disability and is thus sympathetic is part of targeting the right kind of person: product placement, I suppose. Naturally that can only be done through networking and gaining some insider knowledge.

## Survivors Underground?

Phil Ruthen, trustee, mentor and poet, had a call from Jonathan Naess, he of 'Stand to Reason' social justice charity - he's met with Poets in the City, and following that he would like to speak to us about the possibility of Survivors' Poetry and associated SP poets being involved in a new Poems on the Underground/Transport for London initiative. Watch this e-space.

## The Past Year in Pixels

My frustrations over 2006-2007 are well known but are now mostly resolved. Suffice it to say that I felt as if I was swimming through treacle. But I couldn't have asked for a better team than I have now. Roy Birch will fairly soon furnish me with a breakdown of Festivals secured for 2008/09. Keep phoning, writing, emailing and sending in poems... Happy Christmas, Solstice, Seasons Greetings and above all a peaceful, creative and happy New Year.



Venetia Tompkins is 58 years old. Her childhood was difficult, especially school, which she hated. By the age of 12 she was involved with “The Watcher”, a powerful and highly moral entity only she was (and still is) able to see, hear, and touch, and who demanded total obedience and punished her verbally whenever she failed to comply. At age 14 she lost her faith (she was part of a large Catholic family), which was extremely traumatic. At the age of seventeen she was diagnosed as being Schizophrenic, sectioned, and given ECT and drug therapy.

The battle against her mental and emotional difficulties has been very hard, and, in fact, is still ongoing. Poetry and Art have been potent allies. Venetia Tompkins is quite obviously a very strong and courageous human being. She is also a wonderful poet and artist.

### To the Stone Tower

Gentle stones, come close and let us touch.  
It was the hands and minds of man  
so fashioned you in that distant place  
and intuition fails me.  
In the stillness  
your union of colours; grey,  
the opacity of lavender indrawn,  
pink, transcending the pigeon's breast,  
all embraced by the enduring down  
of the salt of the sea.  
These illumine my darkness here –  
Yet, your solidity impregnates the present air.

How is it, that, knowing in your mineral visions,  
so much in communion, silently with the underworld  
that you do lend your elemental substance to that damning cause  
which binds me lightless here?  
What is it that you learned  
that I am sightless to encounter,  
blind down all the passages  
that I have in tactile seeing, voyaged for so long?

The dunes of touch, the hands I bring to ask  
are composed without intent to evil  
are as guiltless as the iridescent sand.  
The shifting movement and the changes  
are effected by another cause – here, apart.  
Bestir they in these bonds, my hands  
cannot come close to your primary nature,  
cannot reach your organic judgement, do not perceive.

In some mien, emanate the content of your knowing.  
That sin which brutalizes and confuses so intangibly.  
If you do comply with the workman's value,  
let me at least have understanding of that offence  
which directs your abandonment and sustains your mute remove.  
Come close and let me know. Let us touch.

If you are a poet and graphic artist, and would like to feature in Poetry Express please email: [royb@survivorspoetry.org.uk](mailto:royb@survivorspoetry.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7281 4654

# Outreach by Roy Birch

Since disinvestment, Outreach has been a rather delicate art, and one necessitating the employment of telescopic arms. (The lack of funding which ensued as a result of the disinvestment, made active Outreach extremely difficult, and most of the reaching out has been done from the office).

My main achievements since the end of March 2006, have been:

‘One in Four’, a collection of writings and pictures by survivors of mental distress, which I helped create with Jane Thompson of NIACE, 20,000 copies of which have been distributed nationwide.

The Vale House Creative Writing Project, a possibly unique initiative, combining Meditation, Reiki, and Creative Writing in a single-unit therapeutic activity as part of a residential drug-recovery programme at Vale House Drug and Alcohol Stabilization Services, in Hertford, East Hertfordshire’s only major drug and alcohol treatment centre, an initiative the results of which have been excellent, much better, in fact, than I had thought either likely or even possible, to such an extent that Vale House have decided to include the process as part of the programme at a new, state of the art residential facility they are opening at Passmores House, in Harlow (the old County Museum and a very fine listed building) paid for with a grant in excess of £3,000,000 from the Department of Health. The Awareness Centre in South London, a Holistic Healing and Self-Development project, have also shown an interest in the initiative.

Many thanks to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, who funded the Pilot project from their Small Grants Fund. Thanks also to Vale House, who made the project possible by not only providing space and supervisory staff for the project, but, most importantly, by instituting the first-ever rescheduling of their timetable in order to make it possible for the group to become part of the regular programme.

‘Postscript’, a wonderful anthology of poems by the Creative Writing group at the sadly soon-to-be-closed Felix Post Geriatric Unit of South London’s Maudsley Hospital. This is a partnership project, funded jointly by SP and The Maudsley.

Coordination of the National Poetry Mentoring Scheme, which has continued (and is still continuing) to attract both talented mentees and quality mentors, enabling it to build successfully on the achievements of the first two years with the production and publication of yet more high-quality work. And there is more to come in 2008. Many thanks to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation for their continuing support of this very important initiative.

I also gained SP a presence at the East Living Word Festival at Stratford Circus in October of this year. This has led to an invitation to visit East Living with a view to possibly setting up a creative writing group for their clients.

I am currently working to gain SP a presence at Artistic and Literature festivals in 2008. I have so far gained us a place at the Harrow Literature Festival and a potential slot at the Ledbury Poetry Festival.

In addition to these activities I have, along with Roy Holland and our Director, Dr. Simon Jenner, been doing what I can to keep the office afloat under what have been very trying circumstances for everyone.

SP is currently waiting to hear about the possible return of RFO status. Should this happy circumstance obtain, my reports next year will, hopefully, be fuller and more upbeat.



# Poetry Broadsheet

## R e a l

I've been told to put it all  
Behind me  
But how can I when it's on top of me  
Like a pile of bricks.

I'm trying to think of angels  
And all I can see is the company of men.  
Visualize recovery.

What is recovery  
When I've been told there's  
Nothing  
To recover from.  
That it's not nice and clean  
Enough to be real.

My only reality is pain  
And blood smeared on white sheets.

I remember the doctor's prescription:  
Get myself a nice boyfriend  
'Coz girls don't suffer  
from depression.

What was I wearing?  
What was I doing with a boy that old?  
Would it have O.K for you, daddy  
If he'd been 16 and not 27.

What was I smoking?  
Well I smoked one joint,  
So I must have deserved it, right?

*Rosie Edwards*

## L o s t

What ever happened to my little girl?  
I lost her somewhere along the way.  
Did I put her in an airport deposit box,  
For when it was safe to return,  
Then forgot about her,  
Left her there with no air holes,  
Lost the key, which some guy kicked  
Down the drain.

I'm still waiting for her to come back,  
Doubting sometimes that she even existed.  
I can't remember what her hair smelled like,  
How she walked,  
Who she wanted to be when she grew up.  
What a terrible mother I would make.

I can't even remember the date I lost her,  
Perhaps she died, there and then,  
With the shock and the pain.  
It wasn't meant to happen like this.  
What sort of mother am I?

I found this friend who I could rely on  
Cheap as me. Half litre of co-op value  
Vodka. Drained, empty glass,  
And in it I could see my future.  
Grazed knees, drunken boys,  
Hazy evenings. Safety in the known.  
All this time I didn't realise I'd lost her,  
What kind of mother am I?

All I wanted was someone to hold me,  
Gently but firmly in the darkness.  
To read me a story with a happy ending,  
And say shhh shhh,  
It's going to be all right.

*Rosie Edwards*

M a r o o n e d

The garden is longer today.  
Someone stole the fish pond,  
the garden shed has turrets and a drawbridge.  
The moat is dry and the enemy have come up very close,  
I know, I can see them.  
I have no weapons.  
I wouldn't use them if I had,  
it takes courage to defend yourself.  
I've got a kettle filled with water and a primus stove.  
The plan is to wait it out.  
In time the garden will shrink again  
and I will make it back up to the house.  
The cherry tree is dropping its blossom,  
it must feel that as quite a loss.  
I hope they look after the fish and the tadpoles,  
they've got their back legs already.  
The spring sun is a lean friend,  
bright, but not much warmth,  
that light that shows up all the faults.  
Winter up'd and left a few weeks ago.  
Didn't say goodbye.  
The mice have had the biscuits,  
still, there's sugar for the coffee.  
No one knows I'm here.  
I never know whether to leave the spiders' web  
or brush it down, that always seems a shame,  
all that hard work.  
What right have I to dust it away I wonder?  
Wish I had a friend coming round.  
No. You need friends for that.  
The birds are singing again  
that's a good sign.  
I think I'll try and make it back to the house.



Marooned & Cover by  
Venetia Tompkins,  
Poet and artist,  
see pg4 & 31

# P i c t u r e s   o f V i o l e n c e

The ant rushes madly and busily  
round his hill  
until the unsuspecting foot  
flattens him still.  
This is a violence.

The child heavy with satchel  
and dirt of the day  
waits for his bus in the polluted street.  
It comes, and goes, leaving him there.  
Here is a violence.

I hear the television jingles  
read the press  
walk the neon-signed city street –  
Look, stop, buy, they all cry.  
It is a violence.

The patient lies  
strapped and gagged  
ready to be shocked into 'sanity'  
while the odd brain cell dies.  
All is a violence.

A mother bends to hold her child  
and kiss him into life-long subjugation.  
She smiles and loves  
the young generation.  
Love is a violence.

*Megan Robertson*

(From *Me and Miss Amberstone in Paris*)

### 3. Miss Amberstone says she can't stand the French

Miss Amberstone says it's a disgrace,  
embarrassing for them to be associated  
with us, the English,  
that we should cut off all links.

She says she's developed an allergy to them  
that no treatment can cure, their croissants, cunts –  
their vulgar mannerisms and ways  
are something else;  
making her sneeze,  
bringing her out in an angry, insane rash.

Miss Amberstone isn't interested in the students  
streaming out of the Sorbonne  
in their smart Gucci loafers and trainers,  
the designer boutiques,  
the exquisite dummies make her sick,  
Yves St Laurent mascara,  
the streets of the Left Bank,  
portrait painters  
and the bars Ernest Hemingtwat used to frequent,  
flexing his literary, useless muscles.

*Simon Robson*

(From Me and Miss Amberstone in Paris)

#### 4. Miss Amberstone says she can't stand Paris

Miss Amberstone says she's feeling sad, depressed,  
and she wants to return home,  
back to Aldershot,  
'glorious,' 'sunny' Aldershot  
home of the British Army,  
full of Welsh Guards reeking havoc  
on a Saturday night.

She says she hasn't got the stomach  
for Chinese restaurants,  
bowls of noodles, chop sticks, bamboo shoots,  
sweet and sour, giant prawns.

She says she's confused by the traffic,  
coming at her in all directions,  
buses, cars, scooters,  
the noise, pollution and fumes.

She isn't interested in Paris in the spring,  
in the autumn, in the summer,  
or at anytime, no...

She hasn't got any spirit for adventure –  
whether it's exploring small shops  
of cheese, soft and hard,  
or sampling perfume on her wrists, neck,  
and dimpled knees.

No, she isn't interested in visiting the Louvre,  
postcards, souvenirs,  
or scaling the Eiffel Tower,  
only to be attacked by her worst fears, vertigo,  
falling into an endless sleep.

The architecture doesn't impress her,  
gothic monsters, cathedrals, incense, candles,  
gargoyles, glass pyramids, railway stations,  
all sadden her greatly –  
rubbing her up the wrong way,  
as does Napoleon's tomb.

A guided tour –  
racing around the Opera doesn't grab her no,  
nor do flea markets, book stalls,  
or a stroll by the River Seine,  
hopping on tourist barges to Versailles,  
very fishy, she says, the Hall of Mirrors.

No No.

*Simon Robson*

## Comfort Eating

Fill me up with food so no pain can get in  
fill me up with anything you have  
whatever you can possibly give me  
it all helps to block out the crave

for friendship, for love and affection  
my hunger for success as a human  
my thirst for a satisfying drink  
from the communion cup of man

I can cram it in without chewing  
I can swallow it whole without spewing  
I can pack it in like gold bullion  
I am worthless as weight is my gold - so I am  
told

Fill me up with food so no pain can get in

*Kim T Shroeder*

W a s t e d

I lie in stone-like stillness,  
Foetal, my furled up limbs  
Curled in static defense,

I feel my heart,  
Its bass drum beat  
Keeping time,  
Stealing the seconds away.

I breathe: inhale then exhale.  
My spongy lungs balloon  
Raising a cage of ribs.

I feel my bones  
Beneath heavy flesh,  
Fragile skin  
Stretched over this broken frame.

I float above my body,  
yet feel its every sense.  
Its pulsing persistence.

I feel my hands,  
Balled in knotted fists,  
Clenched so tight  
That nails bite at fleshy palms.

I scream and churn in silence,  
Losing my muddled mind  
To numbing nothingness.

I feel my eyes,  
Their lids buttoned-down  
To shut out  
All these offensive angles.

I long for release from this  
Corporeal encasement,  
This encumbering suit.

I am captive,  
Incarcerated  
In a form  
That is no longer my own.

I am coldly critical,  
Craving the womb-like warmth  
Of my own acceptance.

I feel my wings,  
Straining to be free  
To unfold  
A world of possibility.

I hope the day will come when  
These budding wings will bloom  
And carry me onwards.

But for now  
I will lie  
In stone-like stillness.

*Anna Powell*

## C o n f i d e n t i a l L a d y

I'm £265.00 better off  
from the placing of a paltry £5.00 each way bet,  
disbelieving my luck  
standing there, almost speechless, in Ladbrokes.

When the young woman behind the counter, Chuff,  
counting out my winnings,  
6-1 I said –  
better than that, she said,  
some kind of a mix up, she said,  
between the French, Chantilly, France, the 4.35 there –  
I'm 'chuffed,' I said, smiling, counting out the notes,  
planning my next move down the street.

Wow, Confidential Lady. . .

When I wasn't bothered enough to see the race myself –  
when I'd been at a barbecue, Sunday afternoon,  
with Deanno who'd showed me around his house,  
the Packard computer by his bedside, a design artist.

Deanno the despised Filipino from work who no one talks to  
apart from the managers,  
jealous because he's on a four day week,  
driving me home every morning, fast and furious, his seats,  
once almost trapping my fingers in the automatic window  
while I was lighting a cigarette,  
too bad a habit, he said.

Wow, wow...

After plying me with Courvoisier, Napoleon brandy,  
introducing me to his friends, wife and kids,  
work visas, but none with proper passports yet,  
losing one of my front teeth on a spare rib,  
lots of rice brought in by the other guests, saffron rice.

Thanks Chuff, I said, reading her name badge  
and making my escape.

*Simon Robson*

## Everything Counted

Lights  
Switches  
Buttons  
Doors  
Everything checked.

Daily ablutions  
Morsels of food  
Sips of water  
Everything counted.

Blank faces said,  
"It's happened to us all – at sometime."

Blank male said he felt compelled to crawl  
The last three steps upstairs  
Each night – when he was young.

Blank female  
(Who uncrossed knives and crossed fingers)  
Said "Superstition!"  
Everything counted.

Miscounts and mistakes cost;  
Two minutes, two hours  
Alone in the darkness – eons.  
Checking, rechecking

Once on the street, stuck on a number –  
Two steps forward, two steps back)  
Feigning loss of contact lens or earring,  
Until a crack in thought provided escape.  
Everything counted.

Ten stone  
Nine stone  
Eight stone  
Seven stone and still counting.  
Doctors counted hospital beds,  
Valium, Librium,  
Days, weeks, months –  
A sum total of a living hell  
Where everything had to be counted.

Shocked faces said, "It just doesn't add up. . ."

*L Nash*

## Video Dad

. . . and you appear in the room  
as though a dozen wounded years  
have passed in a fan flick  
and you no older, smiling

from your green chesterfield.  
A quiet heart glisters on your lips,  
eyes chase the conversation  
like a sports fanatic at Wimbledon,

black shoes polished, tie plumb  
hands with nowhere to go  
make a keystone for tented arms  
composed into old age.

Now you are in the garden,  
flattening the world's curvature  
or shocking it from your spade,  
careful not to tread on life.

A quiet pride in your plot: teepees,  
pea sticks, spring cabbage, beetroot,  
parsnips, carrots in strung rows  
and a Calvary of seed bags.

I wait for the throat lump tears  
but the soil is drier than I thought,  
or is it that you never utterly died,  
that the mind has played you back

each day, still frame, fast forward,  
not needing sound to hear your voice,  
and seeing you now after all these years  
is nothing new ?

*Nigel Humphreys*

A nearly anorexic, depressed girl  
Swims furiously ,angrily  
To forget her fears.

*P C Vealey*

## City underground

a parasitic fly descends  
into the bore holes  
of an ants' nest  
where time passes

on a live rail,  
and a spur moralism  
is shunted  
under hoarding bites

he travels  
through the city's  
intestinal tract  
like a metastasis

seeks out the workers  
self-neutered  
in pursuit of  
rot and dung

and males  
adjusting scrota  
to shaft the Circle Line  
another day

and the queens  
cross-thighed  
on mealy seats  
dreaming of wings

he will give them wings  
show them highs  
through a crack  
in the tunnel walls

suck them dry,  
lay his eggs  
in their brains  
for another day.

*Nigel Humphreys*



## Spring (in a little German town)

It's spring, the air smells fresh  
there is a haze of lunch in the air .  
The streets are nearly empty  
here and there a passer - by, a cyclist.  
In front of some closed doors  
man in a white smock  
is sweeping the sidewalk -  
ready for Sunday.

*Karl Farr*  
1979, translated June 2005



## R e m e m b e r s

This morning I remembered  
the war in Vietnam.  
I sat on a bench in the park  
and looked at the playing children.  
Half a dozen helicopters  
with their loud noise  
flew over me.

*Karl Farr*

## B a g d a d March 2003

I lost my humanity when they went to war  
That bespoke a crime that none could sanction  
And none forestall.  
I lost my tail  
And tipped my mind into an insanity  
That quickened the senses into  
A bereavement that knew no recall  
But as a numbed witness  
Of burning corpses which lay unclaimed.  
I lost my humanity when they went to war  
And in another country  
Another place  
I pretended I was mad.  
I sealed my being with music,  
Raucous laughter and silence  
And, when I could hold it no longer,  
I screamed  
And stuffed my fist into my mouth.  
I'm coming back,  
But only just

*Angela Cheyne*





## H o m e   S i c k

When my mother's egg was fertilised, I was reluctant to . . .  
Actively divide and split myself in two.

Nature took her course, though. I resisted her in vain.  
My cells multiplied despite me and I developed a small brain.

Consciousness then followed and much to my surprise –  
I discovered my surroundings were adequately sized.

I floated and I kipped; intravenously fed.  
My life I thought now sorted in the warm, the wet, the red.

The doctor's they had other plans. . . and at week 41 . . .  
I was hastily induced and evicted from mum's tum.

At my mother's breast, I thought that I had found. . .  
A home at last forever in the warm, the wet, the round.

But before a year had passed from her nipple I was plucked;  
No fleshy warm replacement – just a rubber tit to suck.

Soon packed off to nursery from the one that I called "Mum".  
I thought nothing could be worse for me but they'd plans now for my bum!

When once I could just wee and poo whenever and wherever .  
I now had to journey to the loo or risk causing gross displeasure.

Soon big-school came – with home-work too; which I seldom did in truth.  
My mind always preoccupied mourning my lost youth.

The years raced by. . . then adulthood. . . the tedium of working.  
Skilled now at the swift white lie, a genius at shirking.

Too churlish to get married. Too indifferent to have kids.  
My life left just to worry 'bout the things I never did.

Not long now to go though. Time accelerates with age.  
A few more decades left to waste 'til I exit Earth's strange stage.

Perhaps there *is* an after-life? An alternative dimension?  
A home for me in paradise. . . or a couch in the extension?

But whatever fate awaits me. . . 'twixt the stars and sun and moon. . .  
I'll be chuffed if I'm as happy as I was in mother's womb!

*C Robson*

## The past is the letter rack

Caught on the outskirts  
of lovelines  
scattered by dynamite  
kisses  
on a real phone no better  
than photos in wallets  
where stray hairs flaw  
screens holding gloss  
brushing  
to each exposed cheek.

There is more than one way  
to write.  
There is no need to find the  
wallet.

*Philip Ruthen*

## There was a time

There was a time in rose-hued days  
When all was lovely.  
I little knew the petal-stream  
Was finite.

Now I view the prospect  
Of growing up and  
Growing old.

These times are here  
And like the nettle patch  
I pick my way with

Caution.

*Angela Cheyne, 1984*

## Granite

(after Robert Frost, 'The Mountain')  
for Munayem Mayenin

I left him, the questions unanswered,  
about who, what, kick-started the tides  
into perpetual motion -  
the moon irrelevant  
to stir, pound, destroy  
a man's forest of dreams.

Knowing the lava  
will one day smother  
all you call home  
you refuse  
resolutely  
the cajolings of the UN  
to remove to the mainland,  
understanding that dreams  
take the form of good, and bad.

Down  
from the lip  
of the volcano,  
pouring from villages  
all ages form a wide-lined mass  
under luscious filter lights in an open night sky,  
five miles their diameter -  
the circle contracts  
until each person reaches the clearing, the point -  
to catchkill  
a murderous tiger.  
There is no tiger.  
There is a feast.  
Three days later  
a cheetah, large  
for its kind, looks insignificant  
thrown on the oilwash and canrust  
of the pick-up truck. A  
stark stare.  
No answer.

*Philip Ruthen*



## Before hearing you read

It is early. That is unusual. Birthday, red dress, the publican's names don't seem to fit the signs, but they aren't unusual, and the change is pressed as if it's fine to lone smoke the way the power chord lazies from ceiling rose to fruit machine. She said—it's daylight; sounded surprised.

*Philip Ruthen*

# D i a z e p a m - a c a u t i o n a r y t a l e

There is a little yellow pill – it gives you such relief  
A sense of calm and comfort that goes beyond belief  
This harmless little tablet they dish out to help you sleep  
The name of it's Diazepam as upon you it will creep  
First one and then another, a third one will not harm  
Then you need the fourth and fifth, the sixth to make you calm  
Two weeks supply is all you'll need, the doctor will assure  
And in that little pill you trust you'll find a perfect cure  
Just one more will not hurt you'll say as you reach for the packet  
But as it gradually gets its grip you'll find you just can't hack it  
As worry sets into your mind you'll find you just can't hack it  
As worry sets into our mind you'll take your little friend  
As more and more, day after day, upon it you depend  
To cope with all life's ups and downs you'll find you have to pop it  
Until that fateful day comes when you finally have to stop it  
And then the trouble starts as your limbs begin to shake  
You'll feel terror, anger, tension as you're lying wide-awake  
Those dire withdrawal symptoms are just the beginning of the story  
As Diazepam takes its toll in all its dreadful glory  
As days and days pass afterwards you'll feel those awful fears  
And hatred of that nasty drug through all those bitter tears  
Please learn from this as I have, if you want to solve your strife  
Forget those little yellow pills and learn there's more to life

## L o n g D i s t a n c e

*Victoria Gazey*

She said she loved me strong,  
forever!  
we had travelled the map  
to each others heart.  
So strong is our love  
yet so painfully passionate,  
her lips are the shadows of yesterday.

She sends me no flowers  
as I wait she shouts,  
we would fight together  
to be stronger.  
Remembered our plan, believed  
we would make it,  
until the long distance settled into our hearts.

Words were vicious like  
uncaged hell in the night,  
she was cracking my world  
into a humble pile.  
Watch as love became  
a battle of fury,  
on shaky grounds of agony

## *E x i t*

Never will I share a moment with you,  
my tears are unwashed sentiments of rage.  
Never to feel such a kiss so true,  
never will I share a moment with you.  
Minefield of sorrow you have led me to,  
waiting on you to write the final page.  
Never will I share a moment with you,  
my tears are unwashed sentiments of rage.

Never will I share a moment with you,  
my tears are unwashed sentiments of rage.  
Trailing my thoughts in what I am to do,  
never will I share a moment with you.  
Drowning my feelings battered and blue,  
a once rushed heart beat is bitterly swayed.  
Never will I share a moment with you,  
my tears are unwashed sentiments of rage.

*M J Duggan*

# J o u r n e y

He came, this slouching thing,  
Sloth-like to begin, yet momentum gained as  
habit grew.  
At first, a smiling creature, affable even,  
Charming and sweet-perfumed.  
He trailed my tread, ever in my shadow:  
Reliable, obedient, on-hand, like the pup he  
was.  
Slavering as I joked, nodding - star-struck - at  
my seeming sagacity.  
A friend indeed!  
A salve for all wounds, a beast for all seasons,  
on which I sallied forth.

Then came a time when he dislodged me;  
Threw me off, and placed his foot four-square  
upon my neck.  
Leering, "my turn now", he chained me to his  
grip,  
And dragged me on, and down, till despond  
beckoned –  
Our shadows intertwined.  
And thus it was, and so it seemed to be.

One day, as I lay stinking in my filthy cot,  
I caught a glint of en-framed glass, suspended  
from my hovel wall.  
Drawing close, I saw the creature's mean eyes,  
His pinched look, his crabbed features.  
Aghast at such mock, my fist smashed full-  
force 'gainst the tyrant's face.  
The mirror's shards, with blood en-mixed,  
shattered to the floor.  
At this, I trembled, I sweated cold.  
Had the master heard? How would my  
punishment go?  
Seeking refuge 'neath my soiled wrap. I  
waited.  
And I waited.

Nothing.  
Not even a whisper.

Strangely creeping t'wards the scattered  
fragments of once-dread image.  
I began to reassemble, shaking lest my act be  
discovered.  
Yet he did not come.  
At last, my task completed,  
Criss-crossed with rough plasters,  
I stood before this new-formed man:  
Hair a little grey, flesh a little lined, eyes a  
little dimmed.  
Yet smiling –  
Not leering.

*Dave Lawton*

## M i d n i g h t i n t h e h o s p i t a l

It's midnight in the hospital:  
Reception's long-since closed,  
the Cafeteria as well  
has given up the ghost.  
When bed nine (cancer) rings the bell  
ward sister bolts her toast.

Its busy still in A and E,  
the staff close to defeat  
but, five doors down, the pharmacy  
lies vacant, locked and neat.  
Two bodies in the mortuary  
quite slowly lose their heat.

And as the day ends on the ward  
the patients lie in rows:  
some are frightened, some are bored  
and some - well, heaven knows.  
As bed nine (cancer) tugs the cord  
the curtains round her close.

*Kevin Saving*

## The Twins of Despair

A ducked-down duvet,  
A heroin hide-away  
Warming, then freezing,  
The blood in your veins,  
The alcohol anti-freeze  
To get you going in the morning,  
These saving graces,  
The twins of despair,  
They insulate you  
From the hostile stare  
Of a frightened city .  
Loneliness, an ache in your heart,  
Fear gnawing at your soul,  
Misery, loyal as a shadow,  
Pain, a few paces away, hot on your heels,  
Certain it's time will come  
And Death, ever patient, ever watchful,  
Waits on the corner.  
The cold stab of the long night  
Still pierces your flesh,  
The reality of your bare bones existence,  
Laid out on a slab of concrete.  
A nagging need lays down by your side at night  
Insistent, rattling, relentless  
Shakes you in the morning light  
"Is that you mum?"  
No, it's another day.

*Pete Weinstock*

## Ravaged by Time

Stripped by circumstance  
Robbed by poverty  
Driven by urgency & complex need  
Free-will stolen by 'drugs of choice'  
Scars etched in the veins and the lines and the grime of the years  
Wounds open and weeping for lost youth, lost friends  
Mourning every morning for health and happiness  
What's left, the urgent need to stave off pain and misery  
Anxiety and fear of what you know is to come

How long since I last looked out of a window  
I'm always looking in  
The world looks very different from here

The cold yellow light of a street lit night  
So many lives passed this way  
Their names washed from the dust of the city streets  
By the tears of the living  
The broken hearts, the not understanding  
Where are the names of the dead?  
What ancient scroll records their passing?  
Is this a list too many?

The streets are paved with broken dreams  
Heaped with the rubble of ruined lives  
The bodies taken away for sorting  
Return to sender,  
Not known at this address  
. . .or any other, undeliverable.  
Gone astray

The smells, the sights, the sounds of the streets;  
The fights; the fears; the lights; the stress  
No rest

As you step on to the street and leave the home you've known  
Rights are stripped away  
Your right to protection, to relaxation, to security  
Your right to the quiet enjoyment of the moment.  
Pride, self respect and privacy  
Are luxuries you can no longer afford

## Lost ....missing.... Inaction

*Pete Weinstock*

## Half-life

There is a ticking in my head,  
but not a tock  
It's a life half-lived  
    And time passes in unnoticed disquiet

Half an engine falters  
I am lustless for half-life  
Consumed by half-remembered dreams  
    And I can neither stop nor start this earth

I have some moments of lucidity,  
they come to nought  
I am undisturbed by things not done  
    Sentience has evolved to a stagnant  
teleology

I do not detest my lack of axis,  
but the suspension tires me  
Time ticks and tocks, bombs tick not tock  
    I wait to be awoken

*Craig Berry*

## F o r t u n a t e I a m

Fortunate I am with gift of sight  
To see sunrise bring life giving light,  
Fortunate I am just to be able to write  
Of all my fears, in darkest night.  
Fortunate I am to feel at home  
Even when so cold, and all alone,  
Fortunate I am to create dreams  
Both void of pain and void of screams.  
Fortunate I am, lucky to talk,  
Lucky to hear and lucky to walk,  
Fortunate I am to still know you,  
Beautiful friend, I love you.

*G B Wamington*

## B u t t e r f l y

Dancing in her dressing gown  
I'll bet she is  
Trying not to be beautiful  
Failing so spectacularly  
She flutters, I imagine, as she drops  
the note, and with it the dishcloth  
Living, so pacifically

I'm not there  
I'm hiding from some things  
There's one, there he is, the moth  
He won't stop his buzzing  
And I'm so very tired  
of running, of my failure  
To tell my love  
The heart it powers will stop

I'll be gone before I'm gone  
And I know I'll take a piece of her too  
I fear that power  
to clip her wings  
But damn that buzzing  
It's making me insane  
I don't want this chance  
to not do good. To her,  
of all angels. But I'm  
so well hidden I'm lost

*Craig Berry*

## S u m m e r T i d e s

The sea, silently,  
Edges away from the shore.  
More pebbles are revealed  
Slimier as they move away  
Towards the boats  
Until even they are stranded.

Towards the west  
The Sun also retreats  
Leaving only you  
On the wide beach.

On the patches of sand  
Ruined castles stand.

*Vanessa Burgar*

## T h e R e t u r n i n g T i d e

The Wyre estuary at Singleton,  
Where I saw  
A thousand and one secrets  
on its shadowy shore:

A thousand Lapwings – all facing Leftwards.

Obedient? Rebellious?  
Neither can save us from the future.  
(Not even in our- thousands can we save  
ourselves).

Only Time,  
(Our enemy Time),  
(So fun of horrible worries),  
Might see us through,  
to a better shore,  
to a safer mudflat and a denser marsh.

*Carol Batton*

## The Lesson Tree

There's mud in my lungs, a stone in my eye, grit in my teeth, and bark on my thigh. As rotting flesh, the earth devours, wolves at my feet, as in return, there's the fallen meat. These roots grow strong, as strong can be. Not one more single fallen tree. Like black blood down the river flows, the dirty disused oily water, as the killing tools go on with the slaughter. She's an evil marching menacing beast, craving for the feast, as giants fall, giants fall.

The orchestration comes in full swing, as mother nature starts to sing, howling wind and driving rain, the rolling of thunder and men to tame. Like mice, men scurry this way and that, stricken with terror and timidity .

Thor's hammer strikes its mark, as in to the heavens shoots a spark, liquid hot silver spear, stabs with deadly aim.

Leave us now to grieve, for fallen oak and little chestnut, and the countless others you have slain. Go now, before we change the rules of this game.

I sway in your breath, I bathe in your tears, we thank you for life, and the forest cheers.

Now men are gone, and so the song, this place is once again as it should be, without the madness, of man's insanity.

Andrew Joseph Carr



## Fungi and faeries

Three ceramic toadstools  
clanking  
bloody wind got the rest.  
She certainly got the message  
Her descent  
into the realm of garden paraphernalia  
sad reflection of her life.  
But the plums would be o.k.

She really must have a word  
With the grass-cutter guy  
However difficult to spot  
the fairies  
he could get off his butt and try!  
Took one of their wings right off  
last summer - walley!

What is it with magpies?  
Every 'caw-caw' mocks  
They've got their agenda all right  
thieving beggars.  
Surprised they haven't pinched  
the remaining glass dewdrop  
from 'Spring'  
she's looking 'sad' -  
not very elemental.  
Oh well  
at least the wretched wind has stopped

*Sally Richards*

## T o u r i s t

To know London:  
the trick of its excuse,  
every shining alleyway, every unlit street.

I creep inside the London eye:  
the river opens like a mouth of doors.  
On banks of glass I sleep without seeing:  
the sky of offices keeps its windows closed.

Together we unbuckle air:  
I change my name to dreams.  
The wind flirts with dresses, carries on with  
eyes.  
We borrow homes, drink out of exotic tins, our  
special water.  
The smell of blood is like unfired bullets in  
bandages of light.

Wide as the river, the tide changes hands.  
The stone of St. Paul's survives a lack of faith.  
The man passing under Blackfriars Bridge  
is a witness to the death of concrete.

*Austin McCarron*

## S t r e e t   M a p

Drafted by nails,  
gifted by hands,  
drooling over a share of silver pieces,  
I drink with both hands a brew of air .

Swinish the sound of traffic:  
grinned out of days, the heavy lid of eyes.

The iron gate is closing:  
time is a mystery of walls.  
I find a voice, hiding in the approach of night:  
it barks like a mad dog on the other side of the  
sun.

The world is a home of shelters:  
I live in its shell.  
Given away by strangers, I climb up to its  
depth:

home of the homeless,  
streets without language, words without  
houses.

In a city  
of smoking passports, I read out the secret of  
names.

*Austin McCarron*

## Wild beast tamed by humane human

Are brood animals resigned  
to inevitability?  
to the lack of options and choice?

With the steep decline of peasants,  
with the ever-closer approximation  
of farmers and hunters  
to mass-murder machines,  
do animals sometimes ponder  
the wisdom of procreation?

Or do they have an inkling of  
a possibly better world  
for their young to inhabit?  
an alternative free-range world  
whose goal is neither zoo nor pot?

Does no animal ever dream  
of rebellion and escape?

*Anthony Edkins*

## Autumn 04

The birch leaves are bright  
yellow gold.  
I've observed them through  
the seasons.  
Autumn is the most sticking.  
Winter the most stark.  
Spring the most delicate.  
Summer most vibrant.  
Every Year the trees grow  
taller and thicker, only to be  
cut down for space. Yet we  
are still surrounded by them.  
Nest day the leaves were brown

*Keith Murdoch*

## Life goes on

There's this nice American dad  
He's white smart shirted  
42ish with two kids  
and their worrying his  
black socks off about  
the rules of pool.  
I'm standing in a bar  
watching processed people  
trying to be people  
It's late afternoon  
and it's very hot

We get talking...  
Whilst I'm exploring this Texan  
he keeps touching his glass  
to a small dark beer  
sitting on the bar.  
He's tributing his 80 year old  
mate quietly to himself  
in a bar they used to drink in  
before he got married

Now  
I like this bloke for this  
I understand  
I tell him so  
He tells me about it  
Funeral well attended  
He's pleased about that  
I tell him the number of people  
at your funeral is a measure  
of the life you've led  
He lifts his glass first  
as we toast the thought

You see  
I'd said it right  
for this American then  
I see it in the sincere  
shine his eyes give me  
I feel it in his strong  
steady handshake  
then he leaves  
to eat with his kids

I order another beer.  
And I'm thinking...  
I'm just thinking  
Life goes on...

*John Weedon*

## Ascent

The climb was steep and rugged,  
Rocky, winding and long.  
In places cut deeply by  
Crush of feet and water's rush.  
Boulders treacherously polished  
Had to be negotiated with circumspection:  
And yet sharp edges remained aplenty  
On which to risk ankle and shin.  
Obtuse planes there were, and angles  
Rendering no certain foothold.  
With moss and algae the way was strewn  
Where fog and low cloud obscured the view.

Sprain and strain, cut and graze,  
Torn and exhausted muscle - all  
These difficulties to overcome.  
Was it for the panoramic vista,  
The endless pageant county wide?  
Was it to be away from town and  
Enjoying the rarest of air?  
Was it just because it was there or  
For the sense of conquest so achieved?  
Of the party we met on their descent,  
'No Trig Points', said one, fair running by.  
For all of this adventure and for  
Love of life itself. For, though youth bums  
A way too soon, it bums with a fierce flame.

*Philip Beverley*



## **Black Awareness Month Empires and Churches**

**So they built their churches on the bones of others,  
Yes sister's and brother's, mother's and father's, nephew's and niece's,  
All piled on top of another, two foot deep in their own faeces,  
chained, suffocating, blood draining, soul draining, cries of the tortured  
and tormented, and slaughtered**

**Whining away in the deep dungeon of despair, human insanities,  
profanities, rife in the air, flags of the oppressors flapping, beware!  
Whilst pious pirates lift up another prayer to their gods of bondage and  
disgrace, prosperity the priority of the ethnic white skinned minority,  
european race, ruling African gold, oils, gems and sodomy, whilst mad,  
bad, black despotic kingdoms selling their own.**

**Slavery, always with us humans in denial, it takes a lot to be truly free,  
and so smile. Anarchic, not just for the kick but for real, pray these old  
wounds will soon heal, cosmic, conscious chief Wadi-man. . . . .**

**SQUEAL**

*Christopher Kingfisher*

## Belfast

A child cradled in hatred.  
Snatched  
from the womb of St. Patrick.  
The child plays  
see  
saw  
with those who forsook God.

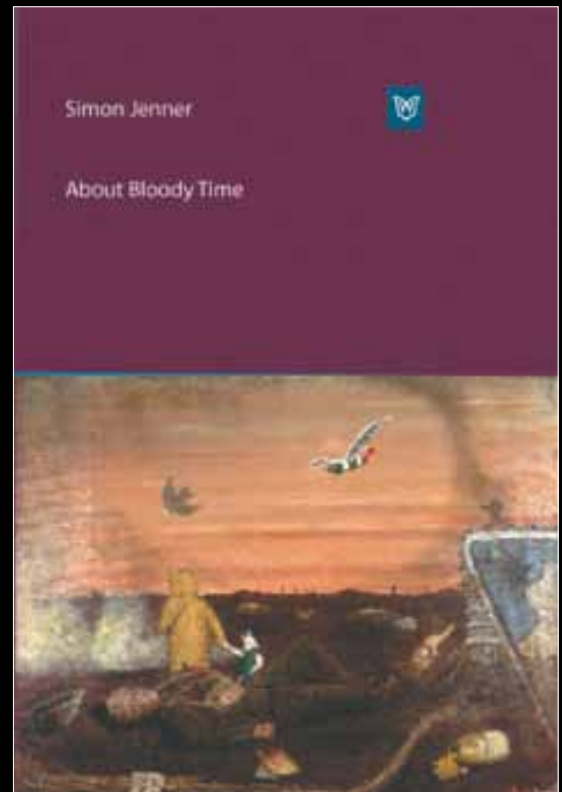
Belfast emerged from her chrysalis,  
vibrant, red for the occasion.  
Swirling, clicking  
life's catanets.  
Innocence stolen.

Now the sophisticated golden girl,  
dancing to her own tune.  
Cultural diversity her flimsy dress  
but  
still  
no resolution  
no solution.

One day arthritic hands will entwine,  
ignoring the pain from ancient wounds.  
Tears will be released from failing eyes,  
which shall strain to see the differences  
that stole sons and daughters.  
Ancient invocations are to be chanted-

Christ within  
Christ around.

*Wilma Kenny*



Selected as one of The Guardian's Readers' Books of 2007

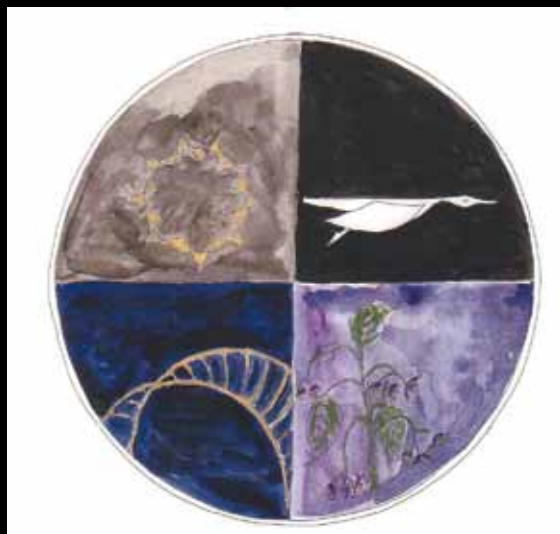
At last an extraordinary poetic talent so far limited to a reputation gained only by word of mouth, can claim the wider readership it deserves. The language here is powerful, subtle, dangerous: involving surprising links that reconsider the specific. This involves a playful seriousness - oxymoron. Each work is often unexpected in its absolute rightness and certainty: once read, no other will do. Jenner plays a game with both words and reader and, although games are serious things whose rules you break at your peril, the secret is to get just this side of the fracture, to make the referee raise the whistle to his or her lips and then, to everyone's consternation, score the goal. Jenner composes fragments of experience. But only because each careful fragment points, while still remaining a fragment, to the whole. The architecture here has the confidence of delicacy: 'The severed finger refers back to the hand'. In this there is the consummate taking of risks essential to poetry.

All this is embedded in an abundant reservoir of knowledge: of poetry of course and literature but art, history and music too - the poet is a lifelong music critic. But more basic than these; the desperate subtleties of mortality and the poetic observation of them. These are scattered liberally at the margins yet always at the core of what is being said. Influences so incorporated that they shimmer on the skin 'The more I find my caveats antiphonal'.

*David Pollard*

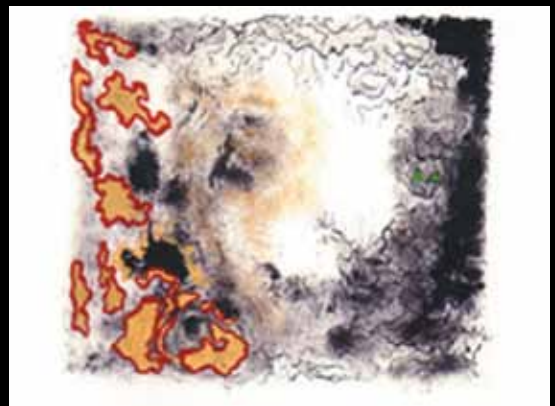
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*Venitia*



*Venetia Tompkins*

# FiisE



# Survivors' Mentoring

**established & origin** - currently in its 3rd year. It is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and established in late 2004 with their help. The programme began running in January 2005.

**who's it for?** New poets from the survivors community in the broadest sense; who for a variety of reasons will have found it difficult either to express their potential or through lack of peer recognition, encouragement or mentoring. It's to mentor and guide new poets with clear potential through the journey of writing, self-affirmation, self-criticism, the craft of poetry and finding an audience to receive this. It's also to help emerging poets gain self-confidence and professionalism in performance, and the publication process. Where appropriate, the scheme encourages mentors – with additional office input when requested – to guide the poets through the process of submission and publication, when specific advice about which magazines best suit their talents can be furnished. Pointing the way to writing careers, in writers' placements, is one we can address too.

**what are the benefits?** Self-confidence, great expressive potential, a far greater professional sense of their poetry and the poetry world in general; performance skills, publishing and self-placement skills – for instance, as creative writers' placements.

**timescales** - We take nine months as a guideline. But it can vary from four months to – in special circumstances - a year.

**the process - mentoring** Once we've matched a suitable mentor with a mentee, we then encourage both parties first to keep in touch with us on occasion, which both usually do. Beyond, this, the tempo of the relationship is left to the individuals concerned, and the time-frame is one which they in turn discuss with the Co-ordinator and Director. Contact is usually kept up via e-mail and letter, and to some extent phone. We've found that though on occasion actual meetings can take place, this is on the whole quite rare, because of the distance needing to be travelled. The Co-ordinator and Director in fact have met all their mentees, which has been hugely rewarding. Many go on to further mentoring, and keep in touch. Some mentees from the first year are now contemplating larger collections.

The culmination is a launch at the Poetry Café at the Poetry Society's premises, 22 Betterton street, Covent Garden. But the process doesn't have to end there, as we've just seen.



# Poetry Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION

## s c h e m e

### how to apply?

Our next deadline is February 1st, 2008. That's not long after the Christmas break. We will always consider later applications (and certainly let applicants know of their suitability), but these might be delayed by nine months. Just send up to 20 poems maximum (six to twelve is perfectly adequate) to :

**Roy Birch,**

**Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Scheme,  
Studio 11,  
Bickerton House, 25-27 Bickerton Road,  
London,  
N19 5JT**

**You can phone us on 0207-281-4654.**

**Alternatively you can submit by email:**

royb@survivorspoetry.org.uk  
or if you have queries - alternatively: email  
info@survivorspoetry.org.uk

**National Mentoring Scheme 2006 publications now available for £4.00 + p&p, on line at:  
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Mentee	Mentor
Neil Hopkins ( <i>not av. on line</i> )	Roy Birch
Bruce J. James ( <i>not av. on line</i> )	Roy Birch
Louise Adrienne Sudnik ( <i>not av. on line</i> )	Paula Brown
Amita Patel	Debjani Chatterjee
Cassandra Scott ( <i>not av. on line</i> )	Naomi Foyle
Paul Murphy	Dr. Simon Jenner
Akin Oladimeji	Dr. Simon Jenner
Stephen James Wilkinson ( <i>not av. on line</i> )	Stephen Marcoff
Sally Richards	Alan Morrison
Fatma Durmush	Alan Morrison
Steve Mann	Phil Ruthen
Marjorie Holmes	Harriet Thistlethwaite

# Ment

“ **C**onverge at the point of touch – Steve Mann, “cui bono?” and experiences of a mentor/mentee writing relationship. By Philip Ruthen.

To review eight months of a mentoring role, faced with a daunting amount of email correspondence – did we really write that much, that often – a new poem from Steve Mann has arrived this afternoon, and there is no fixed rule whether I open the Word file attachment, or save the poem for later. I send a jaunty acknowledgment usually within a short-ish timescale, or by return if time and circumstances are right. The past correspondence – a ream or so, includes the ‘live’ bouncing back and forth of poems’ re-crafting; for example, playing in June with a Japanese form Steve is trying out – his satire is better than mine, I eventually admit defeat, although on this occasion the Dodoitsu is temporarily shelved; the poem won’t agree with either of us. It returns later in the year, the transformation from Steve’s play on dodos and constitutional government’s over-reach has evolved into “11.02am August 9th” – the ‘Fat Man’ poem as I like to think of it, in Steve Mann’s collection “cui bono?” [page 27]. And my part as mentor, in that respect of facilitating a writer’s movement and the poem’s evolution – is limited, I think.

Working with a fellow writer did not require a directorial role, or include an intention to persuade in order to replace the other’s work and its genesis. That we had made clear from the beginning, loose ‘ground rules’ that were to become instilled as the writing relationship began to fashion poems submitted. The collaboration brought back what may have slipped out of view, but was waiting for recall, rather than insertions of my assumptions. And two particular poems in their supposed final proof versions suffered my last-minute panic. Feeling the responsibility of presenting Steve’s poetry to its best

effect, I hesitated, and then made changes. Steve, with his previous mentor Alan Morrison - who also designed “cui bono?” - kindly but assertively didn’t allow my changes, and the poems were returned to their former state of composure. At this stage, in trusting the mentee and his poetry, I needed to catch up and realise my confidence, and trust the judgements made, which would additionally level peaks of complacency.

We worked fairly regularly over the year, with Steve Mann’s poetry spreading into new forests of possibilities, a consummation of essential new growth - the poems quickly learnt to breathe, feed and expand, taking in nutrients from cultures’ forces and traces of history left waiting in the soil. On rare occasions we’d agree in advance a form or particular route to follow – the poem “Dervogenos, His name” [page 20] being an exception, a rite-of-passage challenge to word-design a villanelle. A near-complete draft arrived, tight, pared, striding majestically with enough hints of earth seeping through cracks in the subject’s over-polished veneers. I could see how the great dynasty depicted would decay, despite the poem conveying, stylistically, a sweeping over-confidence. Satire enters, I reckon, via the grammatical structures. You might disagree; whatever view, it’s an unexpected turning of the form.

Sometimes, four or five poems would arrive at once, four might seem to be on first readings the writer’s scaffolding, or diaries almost, of the day’s work and thoughts, rehearsals perhaps. These poems would attract a selection discussion as to which would go forward to work on more closely. Then a single

# oring

poem would show itself with a typically modest introduction from Steve, and for which there were no questions as to its immediate inclusion.

And “cui bono?” itself? The final poem was one I had waited for – we needed, I felt, a poem to draw in the themes, affirm the answer to the title’s question, provide uplift to the previous movement of the collection toward a point where, if the turn occurred, utopia might be a positive state, or if the fissures widened too far, negative. “Narcissus’ shadow” [page 30] arrived a couple of weeks before the book’s London launch at The Poetry Café, Covent Garden. Once read, it had to be included, but “Narcissus’ shadow” needed a trim and edit – arguably it could still be trimmed a little further. Steve and I corresponded with just a few emails on a harsh but agreed new edited version for the collection. The refrain ‘converge at the point of touch,’ is I think the poet’s exact insight into the poem’s production and origins - it’s for me a summation thus far of Steve’s exploration of the senses and cognition – a fusion. As with fusion, poetry can generate as it transforms. This has been, and will continue to be the basis of how I would hope our continuing productive writing relationship will continue.

Being accepted as a mentor by Steve held one regret: the time I was able to set aside for our work. Due to my personal circumstances there was never as much time as I’d have liked to explore literature way beyond the references I revelled in when Alan Morrison handed on the baton in the form of the first sheaf of Steve Mann’s poetry.

My thanks and respect to them, “Survivors’ Poetry” and the sponsors of “Survivors’ Poetry National Mentoring Scheme 2006-2007” for this unique writing opportunity.

©Philip Ruthen. December 2007.

Steve Mann, “cui bono?”

Survivors’ Press

Survivors’ Poetry Mentoring Series

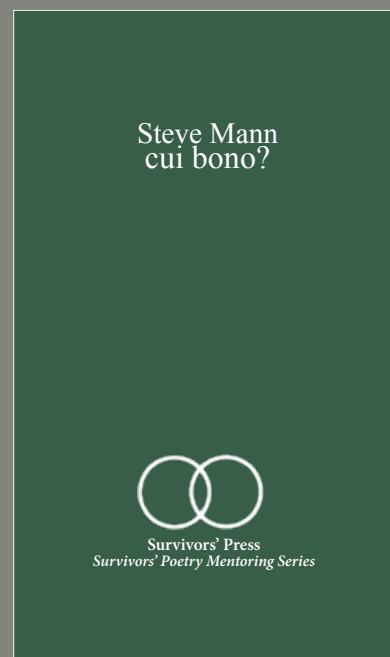
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**DCMS sent a document inviting me to take part in a debate, and I certainly did this. I strove to make my points accurately and prove helpful.**

Peter Hewitt, CEO of the Arts Council fought some of DCMS's intrusions valiantly and perhaps James Purnell, whose name has been invoked in the document, has recognized something. It's also his brief, of course, and might more reflect his and Brown's own agenda; and by signalling a diminution of access culture and ticking, merely indulging in anti-spin spin. Clearly ACE needs advocacy from all of us, beyond the smaller questions of who or what gets funding. So I completed DCMS's rather zippy set of questions where I could hardly resist tweaking their 'risk' mantra.

In truth one area I thought I might have any useful thinking on was in DCMS proving the revenue generation of the arts to all parties; and the possibility of high-level advocacy, especially since ACE's new-ish posts are so strategic in scope. A huge task. This arises from the growing gap between the 'excellence' ACE and DCMS now invoke, and the 'hard outcomes' that foundations and other funders now look to. The difficulty of any such dialogue with the public and private sectors, even at a simple informational level, is of course considerable. And foundations won't like being told what to think. But some framework to encourage arts organizations to diversify their revenue streams, with various consultants and even fund-raisers exemplified, might help too. This is effectively what the new strategic posts under the new CEO (Alan Davey) are doing, they report upwards, as it were, rather than downwards, though still as specialist advocates in their particular field. That has obvious advantages and disadvantages over the old system. Thus enabling arts organizations in some measure might help DCMS and ACE to punch above their weight, and prepare for lean times.

I've mentioned 'excellence' is back, and it's closely heeled by 'innovation' (partly audience and youth pull) and 'risk' which I irreverently suggested to DCMS came in black leather. I'm not sure what's meant about risk, or the right to fail, which might in some quarters be viewed like the police kindly regard the right to silence. Clearly there's a balance to be struck along the fault lines of each art project's strengths. The fault lines of policy change more swiftly than the ethos of an organization; so the latter has to check it's robust enough not to straddle one and fall in.

Another focus was on the DCMS question of capital investment. I suppose persuading the Crown to part with some of its ad hoc acquisition of intestate-derived property (usually residential) for housing associations, shelter projects and arts and community buildings, is too simple by far. But the Prince's Trust ought to lobby for it and bowl HRH a friendly googly. He takes an interest in such things.

Anyway, my point about capital projects and the reversion of intestate property (with no traceable heir) to the Crown, has been - surprisingly - very well-received. Several have said it wasn't at all a naive formulation and one suggested I might be eligible for a grant to develop it. As it was he'd get on to his CP lawyers, which also happen to be the Queen's and put it to them. He's one of those already investigating frozen bank accounts. Naturally, I'm neither an expert in these fields nor have leisure to take him up, but it bodes well for a future renewal of our relationships in this sector. I've also taken it up with Housing Justice, who have approached us for a gig involving Andrew Motion.

It's more difficult for the Treasury to argue for an intermitted or slightly irregular form of reverted property and income, however regular it in fact is. We'll see. Shaming the government with a good cause is often the best policy. Naturally it would have huge implications for all capital projects; though I suspect many of the actual properties might be limited in scope. But we all need to think strategically out of the boxes of our own charities, and I'm glad I've had just that bit more leisure to do so.



We've been lucky and have regained RFO Status, though not at the level we enjoyed to 2005, which was extremely high. We simply weren't ready for it. Despite the £50 million increase to £467 p. a., ACE have, it seems, acted cautiously with RFOs, and doubtless I'll be told why. The papers report over 200 losses of RFO status, and more interestingly, more reductions – which is more humane and something by coincidence I argued for at the time. In effect we received a kind of drastic overall 'reduction' from 2005-08 since we had been told to keep in touch, and the door hadn't been shut. But my February news, and this latest instalment really is a restoration when none might have happened.

Now the appointment of Alan 'Keep your critics closer' Davey to ACE CEO is bold, clever and possibly inspired. Davey, designer of the Lottery and already with a stint in the Department of Heritage in the '90s under his belt, has been more than a thorn in the side of ACE since 2001, when he again led the charge at the slamming 2005 Peer Review. So you see what I mean... The new hymn sheet the non-digital James Purnell, Arts Minister, was singing from in July might even have been written by Davey at DCMS, since he's singing from it now. I'm still chagrined (like many ACE London people I imagine) over the downsizing of departments in March '06, with all that entailed. The loss of Literature chief Gary Mckeone, for one. And one of his successors in the completely new strategic role outlined above, has already left.

But Peter Hewitt, outgoing CEO 1997-2008 did stand up for ACE. We enter a world of advocacy, which can be of enormous benefit. I, for one, lament the passing of the Age of Specialisms and doubtless the two elements will co-exist, at different pitches. Davey's CV is extraordinary in a mandarin so young. As Berlioz put it of Saint-Saens, all he lacks is inexperience. We live in espresso times. I need to lose more weight to keep up with them.

**if you wish to**

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

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## Author

## Book

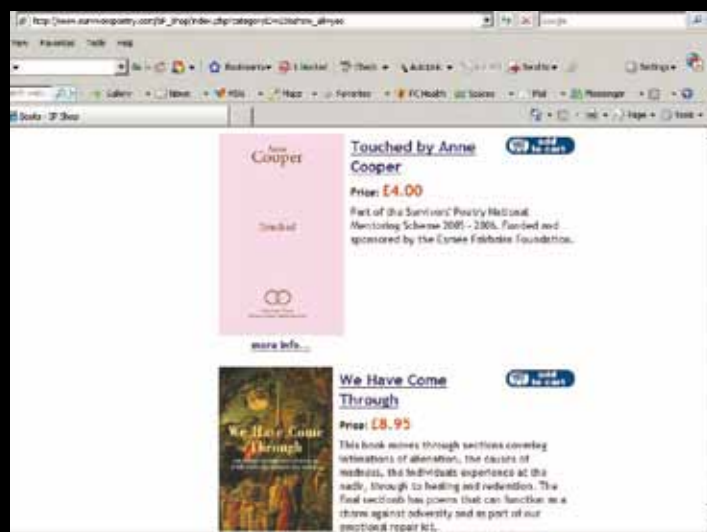
Akin Oladimeji	Aerialist
Amita Patel	Paper Road
Anne Cooper	Touched
Barry Tebb	Collected Poems
Barry Tebb	The Great Freedom
Barry Tebb	The Fiddler and his Bow
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# Reviews

MIND's Annual Conference at Bournemouth - 27-29th March 2007.

Delegates at MIND's annual conference were very lucky to come to Bournemouth's International Conference Centre on the warmest days at the end of March, with swimsuits visible on the beach below. After the introductions, Patricia Hewitt, the Secretary of State for Health, spoke. She had personal experience of mental illness in her family and did something to allay our fears over the mental health bill. She described the compulsory treatment orders in the community as affecting only those who would have previously been compulsory in-patients. She also announced a new facility for cognitive behavioural therapy on line, but some delegates were sceptical of the value of CBT and felt that money should be put instead into supporting long-term psychotherapy or other talking treatments.

Of the other official delegates, I found Graham Thornicroft, Professor of Community Psychiatry at Kings College London, the most interesting. He has just published a book on stigma from a survivor perspective. What I will remember most however were the fringe events. Shaun Gastall and Pat Moore from Waltham Forest gave a session entitled 'Taking risks: Whose risks? Our risks on our terms - creative writing for mental health'. They described how they had come to set the group up and exhorted anyone present to do the same in their locality. Part of their workshop involved writing a list with the hand one does not normally use, which for most participants showed how a threatening procedure can be overcome in a safe space. Also, as they emphasised, it is really important to go through the ground rules at the beginning of a workshop if you have new people coming.

The second fringe event I went to was on horticultural therapy, focussing on the project at Meanwhile Gardens in North Kensington. This space has a wildlife area, only a few yards from the Westway and high-rise housing. Ambra Burls, Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, made a plea for a higher

professional status for horticultural therapists amongst health workers. Their very varied skills are not recognised. It would have been good to hear from users of the Gardens. I remember visiting in the seventies, when they were first set up, for a concert, and recently they have had a composer in residence.

In the session 'Breakdown or Breakthrough' Caroline Lucas, facilitator of the Spiritual Crisis Network, spoke. The idea is to gather several people, including therapists and those with spiritual experiences, round the person who is going through the crisis to be with them on a regular basis. Apparently groups have been set up in nine areas of England. My worry would be finding the necessary manpower to cope if this was to take place on a large scale.

There was an exhibition space at the MIND conference. Apart from the MIND bookstall stocking all their publications, for example on hearing voices and on self-harm, the stall that drew my attention was that of the Social Perspectives Network (SPN) which works 'to ensure that social perspectives are put at the heart of the evolving mental health policy, practice, research and legislative agendas'. Their website may be accessed on [www.spn.org.uk](http://www.spn.org.uk).

MIND does make bursaries available to service users relying on benefits to cover the cost of the annual conference. But this does not cover accommodation, food or travel. MIND chooses prestigious conference facilities and recommends hotel accommodation, and I wonder why they cannot use student venues, which would be much cheaper and enable more service users to come. This is my only query about what was a very enjoyable two days.

Roy S. Holland.

Editorial & Information Officer,  
Survivors' Poetry.  
[www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com)



*Writing Works : A Resource Handbook for Therapeutic Writing Workshops and Activities. Edited by Gillie Bolton, Victoria Field and Kate Thompson. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 2006. ISBN 1-84310-468-7. Paperback £14.99. Reviewed by Roy Holland.*

As we know from Survivors' Poetry's work, creative writing can have a powerful therapeutic effect. *Writing Words* is a guide for writers and therapists running workshops and includes practical suggestions and exercises. The editors have experience within clinical, health and criminal justice settings and Victoria Field, a former Director of Survivors' Poetry, was the first person from the UK to train as a qualified poetry therapist in the USA. All three editors, and some of the other contributors, have been closely involved in our sister organisation, Lapidus.

It is interesting that, whereas we often hear from mental health service users, who have written for years and are wondering about publication, it is equally possible that a writer may start with the idea of getting published and through participating in a workshop may want to learn more about themselves. The tutor will need at times to care about the writer as a person rather than just the development of the writing. This is in tune with Survivors' ethos of providing a supportive atmosphere and with the ground rules of our workshops. We are advised : 'Every writer's writing is to be handled with respect'.

The book contains extensive sections on writing about place, writing from objects, writing from published poems and writing in form. The latter ranges from sonnet to haiku to ghazal. The use of the form can release rather than restrict the emotions.

The section 'Why People Need to Write' throws up stories from one's past and sometimes even rage. What I find very dangerous is when ideas are put into people's heads. I remember one workshop

where all participants were assumed by the leader to have a background of childhood sexual abuse, irrespective of their reasons for writing, and were asked to write a poem based on the pamphlet by the workshop leader on abuse. It is always dangerous to project one's own feelings onto others, and the contributors to *Writing Works* have a much more sensitive approach.

Victoria Field has edited a chapter on masks, which she introduces with the idea that 'arguably, one of the goals of therapy and therapeutic writing is to encourage better integration of the different personae – or masks – that all of us wear during daily life'. Reinekke Lengelle uses Jung's exploration of the shadow to give insight into the practice of 'owning our whole story'. Geri Giebel Chavis suggests selecting colours, but I am a bit sceptical when she suggests that 'blue' automatically means melancholy and 'yellow' sunlight.

Gillie Bolton has edited the section, *Life's Journey*. This includes reminiscence work which can give great pleasure to the elderly. It is a pity that she does not extend this to well-researched autobiography which can actually increase the number of options available to the writer, as they observe all the parts and events in their make-up. This section is developed in the following one, devoted to *Loss and Change*, and I can only recommend that you buy the book to read Gillie Bolton's closing story, entitled : 'Twenty Doctors Visit an Enchanted Abbey – A Story for Children'.

Editorial & Information Officer,  
Survivors' Poetry.  
[www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com)

# Reviews

REVIEW OF MOTHER'S MILK A SEQUENCE  
OF POEMS BY W.G.SHEPHERD

This book is published by Menard Press and chronicles the poems written by W.G Shepherd. (Bill) Shepherd who has had three collections published by Anvil Press, and a translation of Horace's odes and epodes and Propertius' extant poems by Penguin. However this is a very personal, fraught and at times lyrical sequence of thirty poems written over a period of thirty years. They chart a psychological renewal from a time when he was alcohol dependant to his release from this drug and chronicle a move from depression and despair to a point of reconciliation and independence.

The title of the volume appears to be derived from a poem entitled 'Nth Attempt at Weaning' whose first line encapsulates the hold alcohol had on him 'I gather my treasures, my bottles'. He goes on to equate the contents of these bottles 'triksey milk form an absent breast' and the sense of childhood is developed to culminate in the spiritual couplet 'perhaps because I sense and deny/the impossible presence of God the Mother'. I found in the ten lines of this sonnet the raison d'être of the sequence and perhaps the voice of the poet struggling to define his life and the causes of his addiction.

However to discover Bill Shepherd's skills many other poems must be relished. The opening poem is a delight in the way the first stanzas tell of the birth of Dionysus, then the reader is brought up short by the personal twist which reads:

*I have before me a bottle  
of Châtraine du Pape 1977  
opened, potent fragrant, breathing  
and a tear shaped litre of Perrier  
water, in misty condensation  
because it is chilled.*

The poem then reverts to the classical Gorgon, (does Bill stare at her?) Before concluding with

the couplet:

This was Hippocrene the Muses spring  
of inspiration, cold pure, crystalline water.

It prefigures many shorter heart reaching poems in this section and the longer poem The Word in which Bill uses 'Shavaster' to construct a long poem on the meaning of place, language, spirit, being intoxicated and poetry that is so full of twists it become a masterpiece.

After the furore of the earlier poems those in Part 2 of the book bring relief, indeed hope. Fresh Start is an exquisite rebirth as childhood and a sense of self is re-discovered while The Gift is an ultimate love poem in that it starts with self 'Ego' and moves onto the beloved the 'Angel' All that has been subjected by despair and addiction is revealed and celebrated in many superb yet poignant poems with a skilled simplicity that the reader knows is genuine because even though the poet is now an old man, he was born in 1935, the old hunger will always be with him.

by  
Carolyn O'Connell

.....  
Thank you to all contributors  
particularly Roy Holland whom helps  
out in the office as well as finding time  
to review, and trustees' Phil Ruthen and  
Piers Marter.

.....  
If you wish to submit a review please either email:  
info@survivorspoetry.org.uk  
or write to  
The Editor  
Poetry Express  
Studio 11 Bickerton House  
25-27 Bickerton Road  
London N19 5JT  
.....

## Latest Survivors' Poetry Translation Press Publication

**DINO  
Campana**

**SELECTED  
WORKS**



**TRANSLATED BY  
CRISTINA VITI**

**Survivors' Press  
Translation Series**



Ostracized by his contemporaries for the subversive visionary power of his imagery and the volatile mix of deep sensitivity and antagonistic violence that characterized his personality, Dino Campana (1885-1932) has been steadily gaining recognition as one of the most significant poetic voices of the 20th century.

During his brief life, the last third of which was spent in silence behind the barbed wire fence of an asylum, he published one collection, *Orphic Songs*, which dealt a deadly blow to the literary conventions of his time with its dramatic intensity and stylistic innovations.

His other poems, written on odd scraps of paper during years spent travelling the world in flight from the forces of the status quo, were published posthumously thanks to a few friends. Several appear here in English for the first time.

Survivors' Press  
Translation Series  
£9.00

ISBN: 978-1-874595-02-1

Cristina Viti's versions of Apollinaire and Cendrars were published in *Modern Poetry in Translation*. Current work includes research on less well-known Italian poets, readings and poetry videos.

Cover image:  
Michelangelo, *The Night*

Date	Event	Place	Featuring
10th January 2008	Open Mic	The Poetry Cafe	Heart Song
24th January 2008	7minute wonder Open Mic	Maggie's Bar	Sylvia Rox
14th February 2008	Open Mic	The Poetry Cafe	TBC
28th February 2008	7minute wonder Open Mic	Maggie's Bar	TBC
13th March 2008	Mentoring Scheme Launch	The Poetry Cafe	TBC
27th March 2008	7minute wonder Open Mic	Maggie's Bar	TBC

Open Mic is a wonderful opportunity for new and more experienced poets 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 7pm-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 sharp. We do not have a finish time for the event and this very much depends on the amount of people who want to do floorspots. There will be a break half way through. These events are organised by Xochitl Tuck, volunteer Events Coordinator.

We are a Nationwide Literature and Performance Organisation dedicated to promoting poetry by Survivors of Mental Distress through workshops, performance, readings and publications.

**For further information contact or updates visit:  
www.survivorspoetry.com/events or email:  
info@survivorspoetry.org.uk or  
xochitl@survivorspoetry.org.uk**

**Maggie's Bar  
98-100 Church St.  
Stoke Newington  
LONDON N16 0AP  
tel: 077321 77553**

**The Poetry Cafe  
22 Betterton Street  
London WC2H 9BX  
tel +44 (0)20 7420 9880  
fax +44 (0)20 7240 4818  
http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk**

## FEEDBACK

Survivors' Poetry always welcomes feedback or reviews about our work. We are particularly interested to receive reviews about our mentoring pamphlets; please either write to our office or email: info@survivorspoetry.org.uk

**S**urvivors' Press is the imprint of Survivors' Poetry, a unique literary and mental health charity promoting the writing of survivors of mental distress. The second year of its National Mentoring Scheme, 2006-2007, sponsored by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, sees an exciting and ambitious programme. The programme is based upon volunteer mentors, mentoring poets for publication. Please see inside or website for further details.

Sally Richards  
Stained Glass



Survivors' Press  
Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Series

Marjorie Holmes  
Keeping the Balance



Survivors' Press  
Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Series

Amita Patel  
Paper Road



Survivors' Press  
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Steve Mann,  
cui bono?



Survivors' Press  
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"Sally Richards' poetry is a true emotional shot for any reader, rinsed from the murkier of human preoccupations: death, life, love - and the fear and rapture of all three. Perennial themes yes, but expressed by Richards in a surprising and refreshing way.

Her poetry is scored with subtle musicality, a popular lyric sensibility, most typified by her haunting refrains. Above all, Richards' poetry shares itself with us, as true poetry should.

Stained Glass is a deeply rewarding debut from an unassuming but talented new voice".

- Alan Morrison, mentor.

Marjorie Holmes was born near Durham in 1938, into a mining family.

The family then moved south to Hampstead in London. She has been rhyming words since the age of eight and through her teens she spent much time in a world of her own on Hampstead Heath, exploring and writing poems. She left school at 17. She married in her late twenties, and had four children but began to feel trapped in her unhappy marriage, even though as the children grew she was able to go out to work. She is no stranger to depression, and thus her poetry developed as a means of release from painful realities. After divorcing her husband, and engaging in a happy partnership, the poetry began to blossom, and she finds she has managed to retain her sense of humour. Marjorie now lives in Sussex, where she joined up with the Downland Poets and contributes regularly to their in-house magazine, distributed through the county's libraries. Also she was a founder member of Underground Productions whose zany mission appears to be to put alternative comedy in Eastbourne.

Marjorie Holmes was mentored by Harriet Thistlethwaite

Amita Patel has been an SP Camden workshop facilitator for many years. She also founded an SP group in her local burrough of Lambeth in co-operation with Lambeth MIND.

In 2002/03 she was granted a student elective by The Wellcome Trust.

Amita Patel was mentored by acclaimed Poet Dejeni Chatterjee

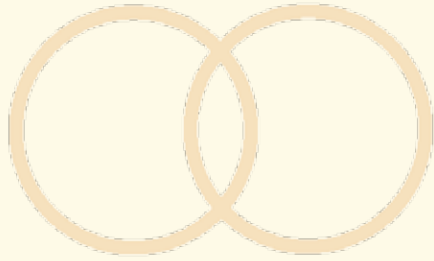
Steve Mann began to write following a breakdown of his health in May 2004. Post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety led to his early retirement on medical grounds in 2005. Already in his fifties, with two adult children, his career to date was based primarily in England, with brief postings in Kenya, Israel and Eire. Inspiration for poetry stirred from many years' work within prisons, hospices, schools and colleges, with the police, and in the community. His first published piece appeared in Poetry Express 21; further work soon appeared in a number of journals, magazines and anthologies.

Steve won prizes for both prose and poetry, including the Poetry Prize in Earlyworks Press 2006 High Fantasy Challenge and published in the winners' anthology, The Sleepless Sands. He was also awarded first place in the Carillon Short Story competition 2007 and published in the journal Carillon. His first residency (jointly with Sally Richards) was for Shrewsbury Central Library, with further opportunities under discussion. Steve Mann lives and works in Shropshire.

Steve Mann was mentored by Writer Phil Ruthen

Sally Richards was mentored by Alan Morrison, Poet and Writer

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