

Poetry Express

issue 27 Summer 2008

Roy Birch on The Vale House Creative Writing Project

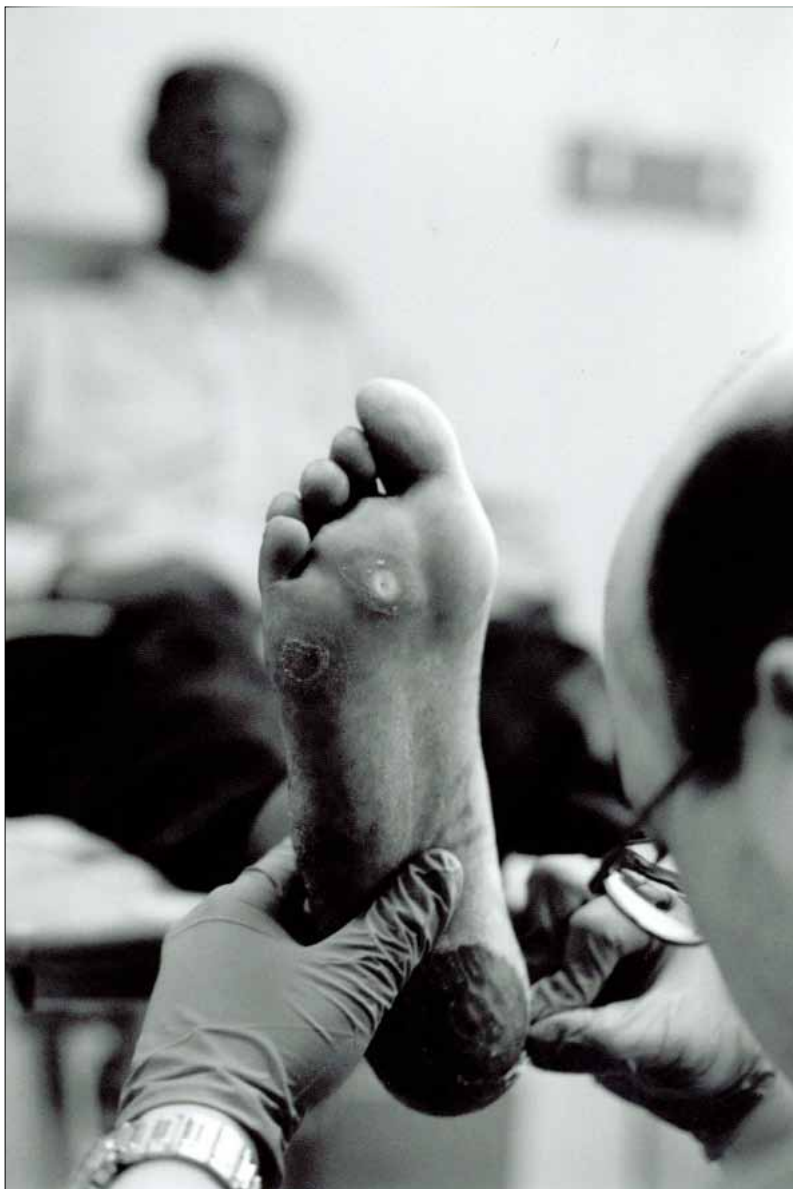
Haiku & haibun poetry by Diana Webb

Peter Street on photography

An  article - The Whitchurch Project, **Cardiff**

A Horton Sequence by Peter Carpenter

Reviews



events

The Poetry Cafe - open mic

Maggie's Bar - open mic

documentary photography
'Devon - A Sound Mind' living with
Paranoid Schizophrenia -
by photographer kris allan

Image by Kris Allan


Supporting the survivors'
of mental distress

P o e t r y E x p r e s s

Special Feature by Roy Birch...

Untitled

Listening to you breathe
As you lean closer
Inhaling your scent
I wonder how you taste?
If your soft lips
As they flatten against mine
Would feel as soft as they look.
I think of how it would be to
Be inside you
As you move passionately
Beneath me carried away
On a wave of lust.
I see you toss your mane
Of tinted red hair
A strand falls into
My hand. I squeeze it
And draw it to my face.
The smell of fruit lingers
With my tobacco aroma.
I wonder who loves you
I wonder who you love
Who fills your heart and mind
In moments of solitude
I long to take you to the river
Bathe you in its dark waters
Wash you clean of the world.
But you think of another.
I retreat back into my world
Of dreams and illusions
Where loneliness echoes
And I am invisible.

Goodnight sweet angel.



see pages 30+31

from an unnamed participant in the Vale House Project

SURVIVORS' POETRY

Survivors' Poetry is a unique national charity which promotes the writing of survivors of mental distress. Please visit 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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Survivors' Poetry
Studio 11, Bickerton House
25-27 Bickerton Road
London N19 5JT
Tel 020 7281 4654
info@survivorspoetry.org.uk
www.survivorspoetry.com

Staff:

Simon Jenner (Director)
Roy Birch (National and London Outreach worker),
Blanche Donnery (Administrator)

Freelance Staff/Contractors:

Co Wright (Website Design), Andrew Devon of Wootton George (Professional Fund-raisers). Mary McCloglan.

Volunteers:

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

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The rare opportunity to be guest-editor for a poetry magazine as infamous and widely appreciated (and read – unofficially it's the largest circulation poetry magazine-download in the UK- I'm reliably informed) granted me a certain amount of indulgences. There's a loose theme of 'recognition-possibility-transformation' – people, structures, ideas – but that didn't shut us in too much. It's a pleasure to present work from poets I've met and respected over a number of years and the work of writers, musicians and artists in different media I never would have come across if I hadn't been involved with Survivors' Poetry, and Poetry Express. One day, the aim of having a printed version of the magazine available will be achieved. Not yet though. If you're a philanthropist, spare us a thought, and a leaf or two from the hedge-fund. The returns will always be worth the investment. To the team at Survivors' Poetry, especially Blanche, who made the pages happen, despite my disorganisation, likewise Maggie for her patience and support and cups of coffee, and to you who fill the spaces, sending work from several continents, not often seen or celebrated for the fact you're there and should be heard – thank you, and, enjoy!

Phil Ruthen. August 2008.

message from the chair *Marius Jankowski*

From the Turret

After our fruitful discussion with ACE in May, I did wonder if we could afford a little bit of self-congratulation. Yeah, we can. Well, for two lines at least. We'll aim to include a more permanent coding for congratulations in the annual accounts. Things happen fast at SP, amply summarised by Simon and Roy's openers. SP's launching into another round of fund-raising, intensifying this September, and big plans are afoot. Many of these revolve around Roy Birch's astonishing work at Vale House, which has ramifications for the NHS as well as ACE and SP, and the new relationship recently and perhaps quietly announced between arts and health. The results Roy has achieved have been amazing, and the developments will effect my professional practice and personal approach to rehabilitation and enabling the rebuilding of lives'.

Talking of which, it's high summer, as Simon puts it, and I'm one for basking – or baking – at the back of this patio'd Victorian house with an iced drink and thinking of something else to put on ice: what someone at the Home Office referred to in my hearing as Cheap Persecution. The generally Cheap Persecution of people who can't fight back. The supposed progressive practice of pushing two thirds of people off Incapacity Benefit and into work of some sort – and this not been carefully reflected on during long quiet moments of summer recesses – what work, for who, and where? So many employers are prejudiced that either you're seen as fit for work, or for shipping off to the lost out-of-town 'psychiatric unit' – there's not a lot in between for those companies.

SP continues to get political (when did we ever get off being political?). But then again, it would be a funny old world if we can't allow all, including Government ministers, their say. SP and Poetry Express is one route to demolish cheap persecution by pushing on many fronts the art and worth of the survivor community - sometimes in a subtle way – to say 'you might be wrong. I'd like a second opinion on your policies'.

Happy summer folks.

update

by Simon Jenner

High summer means Stephen Fry, or it did a month ago at St. Queen's Anne Gate where most foundations seem to congregate, cluster even. This was the *Stand to Reason* launch and promotion where Stephen Fry was due to speak. This nascent charity seeks to promote bi-polar City people as desirable employees in high-flying firms. Quite what we were doing there, then, remains a fragrant mystery. Its founder Jonathan Naess was most gracious, and we succumbed – and to the wine, canapés ('another canapé, Mr Panther?') and the jostle of cuff-links. Actually those were mine. But we were already in contact with Stephen Fry's PA and she confirmed that he was happy to receive some of our books. If you're one of the mentees reading this, you might reflect that Stephen Fry could be reading you at the same time. It's up to you whether you think that's good, but I think so!

Stephen Fry launched all 6' 6" into a 'hello Maddies everywhere' and improvised for twelve minutes. He was commanding and moving. He made quite a few sexual jokes and likened stigmas of mental illness to his experiences as a gay man in Stonewall, with brief ribald references to his birth ('I won't be going up one of those again') as something like being a maddy you're born with. He also paid tribute to the organisations assiduously courting him, the key workers who alerted him to developments; and to the tremendous creative flair brought by bi-polar people, most managers and creative entrepreneurs being bi-polar. In fact there's an organisations et up to promote them as making more profit on highs than anyone else can, and more breakthroughs. He also paid tribute to the downs. All in all, moving, modest, impromptu, very effective.

Jonathan Naess who presented the *Stand to Reason* Event as well as founding it, was clearly fund-raising and clearly focused on bi-polarity. All well, but perhaps he didn't welcome two points I raised. One, that with mental health organisations springing up like mushrooms like the new cooking, we needed to form a united front about what *WE* wanted. It was no good him – and even Fry – talking about *Comic Relief* focusing on mental health. They're focusing on campaigning groups primarily, not experiential ones who also campaign, which form the majority of the franchise. And the other extreme lies with foundations who want 'hard quantifiable outcomes' employability or making a difference in legislation. We need the conference he was calling for. He eventually steered me to a harmless poet. I don't think this was what they had expected to hear. Of course I was affable, but this isn't the way to develop. I did mention the ACE initiative, but briefly. I'll leave ourselves to develop that one. Jason Pegler of Chipmunka had been in early talks and as expected but didn't show. Perhaps Fry and he in the same room would have proved unduly competitive. Be that as it may, I will be in contact with him at the end of June.

Nutan Modha, who was there and very kindly offered us podcast services, was reflective on these hot-headed points of mine. She opines rightly that 'if the work can be measured in terms of producing a clear indication of benefits gained and outcomes realized, then it's a step in the right direction.... I think... what constitutes beneficial organizations within mental health service provision will be re-examined in the next round of NSF, which comes to end next year.' She adds that we might like to 'suggest, the ethos of {SP}, is a pivotal part of the recovery

process, etc and other related outcomes.' But she adds that for the moment towing the line is the most likely outcome, 'unless there's an organization out there that can provide some voice for the movement as a whole.'

Bi-polarity however is just one strand of mental health, though for the moment I'm going to stay there. The next day at a Royal Literary Fund Fellowship meeting, I was talking to Sarah Wardle, whose own wonderfully disciplined poetry set me thinking nearly two years ago about the relationship between bi-polarity and formal virtuosity. Sarah agreed with my suggestion – which relieved me somewhat, and frees me up to explore its suggestiveness, and return indeed to Stephen Fry. Think *The Ode Less Travelled*, and Fry's astonishingly erudite formulations of formal verse patterns. Add to this poets like Wardle, Elizabeth Jennings, John O'Donoghue (our ex-Chair and formalist fiend), Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell (before 1967) and John Berryman; and earlier poets whose virtuosity broke with eighteenth century norms, like Collins, Smart and Chatterton, and the list of formal virtuosity and some degree of bi-polarity is remarkable. Byron is an interesting borderline case. Swift, Cowper, Clare and Gurney deviated from their earlier selves at key crises in their lives, and from the current poetic practice too (either in blank verse, looser rhythms – quatrains for the 18th century couplet, or in Gurney's case deliberate Whitmanesque free verse taking over from his earlier tight schemes). But it can't be pushed. Other formalists like Gray, Graves and Auden certainly like Geoffrey Hill encountered acute distress, but this was of a different nature. And poets like Keats – even if he did 'always live in extremes' as he put it – cannot be reductively commandeered. Nevertheless, the list could be extended, and the point needs to be made, links forged, and the ineradicable texturing of verse and emotional distress explored further.

This is necessary for another reason. Recently a survivor wrote to a magazine

thanking them for printing a poem and glossing the 'therapeutic' word in it. I understand the poet received a chilling reply, stating that if they had received the letter before the poem their decision might well have been different. They did not like therapeutic writing linked with poetry, and they disagreed with the Survivors' Poetry ethos. But these things have to be challenged.

It's good that the Arts Council would certainly find such a view disquieting, linked as they are with the NHS in new initiatives that could well include us. And of course in their continued support for us, which they re-affirmed in December, and again in May when we met them at Pear Tree Court. We've travelled a good way from Osnaburgh Street to Bickerton Road, by way of Farringdon, as it were. But I'd like to recall high summer, Stephen Fry, and people who like him understand what poetry is, and how intimately it's linked with distress, experience, and life-affirming moments, such as writing it, that lend a vibrant shaft of yes to the mugginess of a London July.

if you wish to



make contact and respond to anything you have read please either email simon@survivorspoetry.org.uk or

write to

Survivors' Poetry
Studio 11 Bickerton House
25-27 Bickerton Road
London N19 5JT
Tel: 020 7281 4654
www.survivorspoetry.com

Outreach and Mentoring Report, April 1st – June 30th

Since disinvestment, outreach has been extremely difficult and has taken place largely through the medium of the mentoring scheme and other publishing ventures, with the Vale House Creative Writing Project as the major out-of-office activity. This continues to be the case, but there is more to report than in the two previous quarters.

Publications

The Maudsley anthology is now in print. For those who have either never heard of it or have forgotten about its existence, here is the story. Early last year, Nik Maroney, who coordinates a poetry group in the Felix Post Geriatric Unit at the Maudsley Hospital, rang to ask if I could give her any advice on how to go about getting an anthology of the group's work into print. I asked her to send me a selection of the work. She did so, and I was so captivated by it that I asked our director if he would agree to SP publishing the volume through Survivors' Press, if the Maudsley would share the cost with us. He agreed. The Maudsley also agreed, and **Postscript** went into the mixer. Unfortunately, it turned out to be one of those. Everything that could possibly go wrong did – a number of times – right through to the Maudsley's share of the print run being lost by the hospital on delivery. What began as a labour of love became a near-nightmare. Happily, the project eventually surmounted all its obstacles and a wonderful volume appeared which has been praised (and rightly so) by all who have seen it.

At this point I feel I need to say a heartfelt thank you to all the people who combined to make **Postscript** a reality. Our Director, Simon Jenner, whose faith in the project never wavered, in spite of the continuing catalogue of seemingly insurmountable

difficulties; Blanche Donnery, who designed the book, and had to deal face-to-face with those difficulties; Nik Maroney, for her infinite patience in the face of seemingly endless delay; and last but by no means least, Steve White of One Digital, who must have felt that he would spend the rest of his life producing unusable proof copies. Thank you.

Mentoring Scheme

While I am on the subject of books, I had better report on the progress of the mentoring scheme.

The mentoring scheme is in good health. As last year's mentoring did not begin until the second half of the year, not all of last year's publications are yet in print. Which is fascinating, as some of this year's already are. But then again, this was virtually inevitable, as mentoring (and **menteeing** also) is far from being an exact science and the perceived nine month gestation period was never more than an informed hope. What matters most is that the scheme continues and is continuing to flourish. Not only has this year seen a very strong mentee intake, enquiries about next year's scheme are already arriving at the office with some regularity. And happily, the standard of the submissions continues to be high.

New Groups

Disinvestment effectively put an end to the creation of new groups. There was simply no money to enable the setting-up of networking events. But there are suddenly possibilities of new groups in Wales and Birmingham and I hope to be able to bring them into the SP network in the very near future.

Festivals

My attempts to get SP back onto the festival circuit this year have failed miserably. A booking at the Harrow Literature Festival

was cancelled after the festival had its Arts Council grant withdrawn, and an event in Liverpool to which we had been invited as part of the European City of Culture festivities simply petered out.

Other Activity

At the beginning of this report I mentioned the Vale House Creative Writing Project. In order that the remainder of this report shall have a chance of making sense I need to return to the beginning of the project and work forward to the present day.

The Vale House Creative Writing Project held its first session at Vale House Drug and Alcohol Stabilization Services in Hertford on November 25th 2006, as week 1 of a 20-week pilot. Funded by a grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the project was an attempt to combine Meditation, Reiki, and Creative Writing in a single-unit therapeutic activity in a group setting as part of a residential drug recovery programme.

Initially there was suspicion from the staff, who had never encountered anything remotely like it, and bewilderment and a certain resentment from the residents, not least because the group took place on Saturday afternoon, which they regarded as 'their' time, being officially part of the weekend.

The project could easily have failed, but it didn't. It not only survived its 20-week trial period, it was, at the end of the 20 weeks, moved to Friday afternoon and incorporated into the mainstream recovery programme, where it has remained ever since. Staff suspicion has disappeared to the extent that staff members now join the group for Reiki when their stress levels are inordinately high, and members of the management team avail themselves of the peaceful atmosphere the sessions create. Resident resentment has also gone. Residents now openly make comments such as "I pray for Friday afternoon. It keeps me sane."

So far so good. It works. But saying so is mere vanity. Working once may well be just that. A one-off. I personally don't think it is, and neither do others. Those who know Vale House accept that even getting the project accepted as a pilot was an achievement, and that its integration into the regular programme fully validates its existence. We are all aware, however, that it needs to be proved in what is

now being referred to as 'a community pilot' – in other words, day services or an equivalent setting. Three organizations – Mid-Herts MIND, Viewpoint, and the Stevenage Mental Health Partnership – are currently working to create the opportunity (including funding). There is strong support for the protocol in principle, and a burgeoning belief that if the next phase can happen and succeed the project may well expand both dramatically and rapidly.

Although this is not traditional SP territory, Paul Hamlyn were courageous enough to fund the initial pilot as an SP project – and now MIND are involved. If the next phase of the project is successful, the Vale House Creative Writing Project could well become an important part of the SP portfolio.

Summing-up

I wish there were more to tell, and less of it with my ego stamped across it. Hopefully, by the end of the next 3 months there will be.

"And if there are potential poetry mentees who would like to explore further haiku or haibun forms particularly, please do get in touch with me regarding the National Poetry Mentoring Scheme."

If anyone reading this would like to be the featured artist for an edition of Poetry Express, please send examples of your work (tiff files only 300dpi resolution) to:



e-mail:

royb@survivorspoetry.org.uk

or write to

Roy Birch

National Outreach and Mentoring
Coordinator of Survivors' Poetry.



Survivors' Poetry

Studio 11 Bickerton House

25-27 Bickerton Road

London N19 5JT

Tel: 020 7281 4654

www.survivorspoetry.com

The Whitchurch Project

Cardiff

past, present and future



Image by John Briggs

Whitchurch Hospital has been an important part of the community in Whitchurch for many years and as a way of commemorating its past, present and future Academi - the Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society for Authors - is working with the Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust on *The Whitchurch Project*. This is a creative writing project to mark the closure of Whitchurch Hospital and reallocation of modernised services. It will provide a written and visual record of the long history of the hospital, its current practices and community involvement.

Writers Phil Carradice and Briony Goffin were appointed to lead the project and to encourage the production of people's written and oral memories and thoughts on the emerging change within the hospital. Over the course of the hospital's relocation and modernisation they will be talking to individuals, liaising with community groups and running creative writing workshops.

"The aim is," said Phil Carradice, "to record people's memories of the hospital. How the writing manifests itself doesn't really matter. People can produce poetry or stories or simple anecdotal memories. We are happy to work with individuals and groups. The important thing is to record people's work and their impressions of Whitchurch Hospital."

The two writers are currently working with patients and staff at the hospital as well as people from the community of Whitchurch. "We are inviting relatives and carers to take part in the project as well," said Briony Goffin. "We recognise that they, in their own right, hold a unique and

valuable perspective on hospital life, perhaps through visiting patients or through stories shared and passed on down through the family."

Both Phil and Briony have extensive experience in facilitating workshops for adults and young people and are aware that people's writing has the ability to amaze and inspire. "I always feel that it's a great privilege to share in people's stories and poetry," said Briony. "I know that I always feel a richer person because of it."

The management of mental ill health has changed beyond recognition since the hospital was first built outside the boundaries of the then town of Cardiff. Today the hospital is firmly integrated into the modern city of Cardiff and the village of Whitchurch. The Whitchurch Project will help to record the passing and change of this important institution.

The Whitchurch Project is now in the first year of what will be a three year project. Academi is actively looking for individuals and community groups who would like to participate. Details of up-coming workshops can be found on the Academi website www.academi.org/the-whitchurch-project/



Academi, The Whitchurch Project
029 2047 2266 / post@academi.org
www.academi.org

Article supplied by Holly Aldridge

The Lady Dressed In Red

Exhibition extended to mid-August 2008



John Weedon presents an exhibition of his paintings and poetry in collaboration, featuring poets of distinction from amongst his friends at The Poetry Café, London.

The Poets:	Heather Taylor	Danielle Hope
	Kim Lasky	Ken Champion
	Philip Ruthen	Baden Prince
	Graham Buchan	John Weedon

Venue: The Poetry Café, 22 Betterton Street, London,
WC2H 9BX (Nr Drury Lane Theatre).

Tel: 020 7420 9887 poetrycafe@poetrysociety.org.uk

Nearest tube : Holborn/Covent Garden

A Horton Sequence

by Peter Carpenter

'Horton' is the central sequence from my 2007 collection 'Catch' (Shoestring) and is an oblique form of homage to those who lived and died in the Epsom hospital cluster. I was brought up in Epsom and Horton hospital was the best-known and most mythologized of this group. After WWII, when Horton was requisitioned by the forces, my father, who had served in the RAF and was very ill indeed, was nursed there; my mother worked for many years as a secretary at a local doctors' practice: both of them tried to heighten in me a sense of care and understanding concerning patients past and present. They both showed me the paupers' graves (see Iain Sinclair's 'London Orbital') on Hook Road opposite St. Ebba's Hospital, adjacent to a mass grave holding around 4,000 unmarked bodies. It was a bit like Pip being turned upside down by Magwitch in the graveyard – the experiences keep their imaginative hold on me.

The poem seeks to offer a series of voices and fragments, some from the dead, many from those unable to speak for themselves, those incarcerated first in an asylum and then buried, uncared for or unknown. It is a lyric composed of cries, prayers and whispers from a variety of sources (one of them the writing of William Hayward, to whom I'm literary editor, who was given ECT during a six week spell in Horton). The poem does not attempt to judge, but behind it is a suppressed scream of horror at neglect and injustice, or what I termed in another linked poem, 'St. Ebba's', 'the forcible restraint of lives'. At its heart therefore is some kind of debate about what it is to be human.

Biographical

Peter Carpenter is a visiting fellow at the University of Warwick and was last year's Creative Writing Fellow at the University of Reading; he has published four collections of poetry including books with Arc and Shoestring, and contributed to 'London: City of Disappearances' (Hamish Hamilton). He is co-director of Worples Press

www.worplepress.co.uk and lives and works in Kent.



garden seating Horton's Grounds by Phil Ruthen

Horton

for Iain Sinclair and Renchi Bicknell

'Go before me, and show me all those dreadful places' (Dickens)

'jumped out the window – flipping crazy' (clapping song)

i

down an avenue

make your way

as best you can

dark on

the far side of town

along the slips

(dwelling near a ruined building)

lines of barred windows

over the wall

our camps

(*Help me Lord*

When I would

Fail Thee)

in the fires at night

Help me Lord

gather the stones

ii

whereas recognition
of the inherent dignity
and of the equal
and inalienable right

in the fires at night

there are no rules

there's darkness

iii

from 1947 'c' and 'd'
were also used on some
plot numbers suggesting
that the plot might now
accommodate four bodies

young woman
arranging her hair
(another rests on the bed)

Article 3: everyone
has the right to life
liberty and security
of person

(*when hope would surrender
to dark dispaire*)

advice: read

nothing and make
for the sea

iv

that way barbarism
prevailed – down an avenue
dark nameless

beneath our feet
an underground

London

a hidden

Eden

from the Latin

for garden

angels in the trees

right there

v

in painting
there are no rules –

young boy-poet
with asthma

(another in the padded cell)

young woman
taking a siesta

(another removes chamber-pot)

inmates at the door

lacuna

we arise and sing

vi

however according
to a memorandum
1 Feb 1932 from
Chief Office LCC
Mental Hospitals
to Farm Bailiff Horton
now inserted in
6336/1 the cemetery
was not consecrated

Domine Dirige Nos

vii

what is important in a man
is his individual share in
what is common to all men

what are we then

(Deposited by the Patients' Service Manager)

viii

the men had been trained
to read Shakespeare
and continued to do so

OmletOmlet dis is dein
Vater spook

zanezanezane

questionable shape

what are we then

(please re-instate commas to the original)

ix

the smell of the land
from the Latin
lost plots past plans
for garden cities

fresh-tarred pavements
soft in the head

paupers' graves

the cemetery is clearly shown
on Sheet XIII, 13,
4 Apr 1902 – 29 Mar 1955

the memory's still strong
there's darkness

x

visions
angels in the trees
heads on fire

water-towers
(all those cold baths)

young women flying
with a rope

jumped out the window
(she went thatta way)

railings
tippers
the articles

the lime

xi

ancient
admissions

bricks
to
dust

(*when night comes down
and the stormes
are raging*

*fill my soul
with the strength
of prayer*)

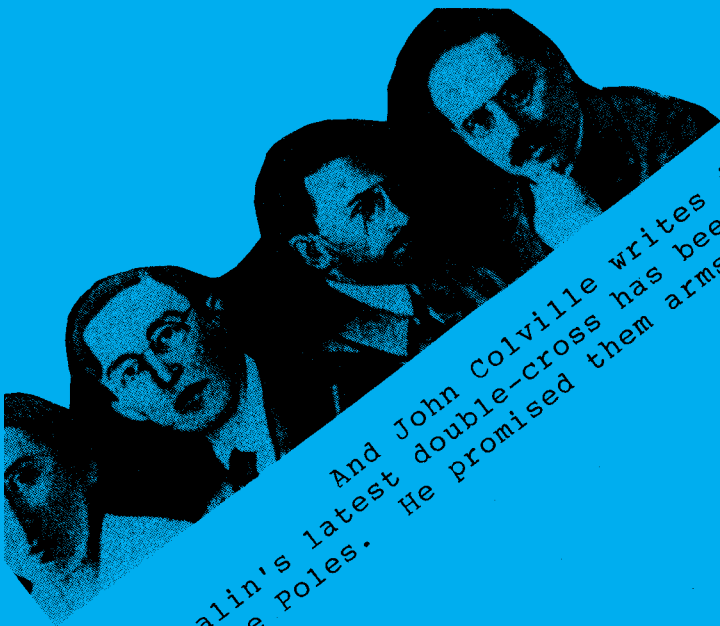
scatter us

lord
to the four winds

Constructivism is one
of the first avant-garde
art movements of modern Russia
in which the elements attack
each other in the frenzy
of revolution causing
not dissolution
but new
shapes

and now he says that the entry of Great Britain and
France into the war has altered the situation and he
can no longer supply any armaments at all.

In the smudge and smoke of cities
metalworks fill.
Avert your gaze
from the burden of sorrows:-
the ominous men rummaging
with a political theory of dustbins
behind the backs of Commissar's hideaways.
And the familiar
wife and four daughters Chernyakovski
doubling their expenditure,
cheaping themselves for Party men.



And John Colville writes in his diary
"Stalin's latest double-cross has been at the expense
of the Poles. He promised them arms a short time ago,

Broad Sheet

Hour of Prayer v2

One man walks towards the mosque,
hem of white robes flapping against sandals,
hands swinging loosely at his sides;
face serene, remote, focused on the minaret
and the holy message coming from its spire.

Later, three friends walk towards the mosque,
each man hurried and unspeaking,
arms flexing slightly as if he'd rather run
were it not undignified;
the hour grows nearer, time presses on them.

A lone man struggles to fill a borrowed taxi
with massive sacks of rubble,
working against the clock,
but the muezzin grows ever more insistent.
Ruefully locking the taxi, he goes to worship

leaving behind a street that's almost
motionless:
just one cat arching its back and leaping up
walls
to scan for rats, two dogs sniffing the taxi,
fascinated by the sewage scent of rubble,

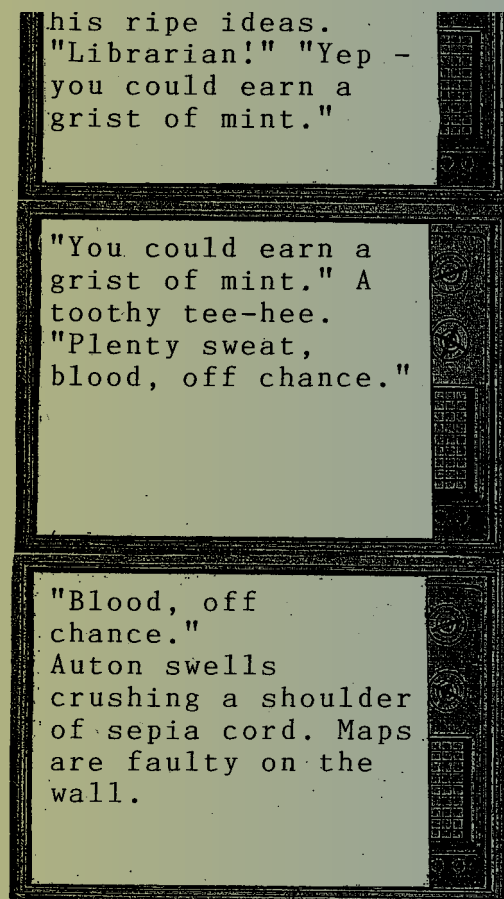
and stray bougainvillea bracts,
torn by wind from the mother plant
and blowing along the pavement,
their slender violet profiles
vulnerable against the steel-grey asphalt.

So many men have passed my balcony today
with footsteps slow or quick,
with sandals, boots and flip flops,
and the scuffmarks that their heels make in
the dust.

Now that the muezzin has fallen silent
and the hour of prayer is passing,
I ask myself, in all this public sharing of
devotion,
was there an element I missed?

Camilla Reeve

FILM-MAKING (pirates screens 35-37)



by Christopher Barnes

E x a g g e r a t i o n s

She looks down at guilty ankles,
she cannot lift her head.

He tells her mania is bad,
but she doesn't think

that's the type she has: because
hers is being the sun at midnight.

Abigail Morley

The meaning of beads

One bead at a time, she crafts them - glass slurry and saliva,
cast overnight in salvaged sardine tins - then sells them;
kiffa beads that richer women string together for their daughters,
colours sequenced by tradition, though she doubts their meaning:
red-yellow-black-yellow-red-white-blue-white

Her husband wastes whole days and nights with friends,
must be a man thing, she thinks, such foolish talk and drinking.
In the market, dusty wind from the wrong quarter veiling faces
cannot hide people's fear, Saharan climate changing places.
Month on month, Nouakchott prices for bread and fish climb higher
and there is nothing she can do but what she knows
one bead at a time, she makes them
red-yellow-black-yellow-red-white-blue-white

Constantly supervised, in workshops with no air-conditioning,
fingers stained, throat more than once too sore for laughing,
pay that's always far too low but safer than earned another way,
one bead at a time, she fashions
red-yellow-black-yellow-red-white-blue-white

Ten more today, she murmurs, fingers tired from repetition,
keeps the children's happy hungry happy faces in her mind's eye,
she can only craft their future one bead at a time.

Camilla Reeve

Postcards from Darkest Albion

towering sky of scrap-yard blue
high washing lines lynched like velvet flags
On tomb-stoned crescents of nightly curfew
urban shipwrecks parade derelict paths.
A roaming underclass of exiled genes
dwell in separate wastelands of rising dust.
A blackboard menu of conitinal cuisine,
BOTOX creatures in bistros of solace
under a uniformed cameras glancing path.
Mannequin shoppers of the metropolis
pass through the tall shadows of an underpassxxx.

MJ Duggan

Shuffling the Cards on the Fridge

With the alarm man coming
to install two eyes in my ceiling
I move my psychiatrist's
and psychologist's appointments
behind *Mr. Alarms*, with their rival's quote
secreted, in turn, behind that

Not wishing to alarm my brother
when he visits, I hide all the cards
- including the lawn mower man's
after he said my sister was lazy
for not doing her own grass cutting
and the Take-Away pizza menu
since he doesn't believe in junk-food either -
behind the *Local Service Guide*

When my niece says she's calling
I put all the cards and appointments
behind the *Quit Line* brochure
and the *Emergency Chest Pain Instructions*
because I've had stents inserted
and she's just given up, finally
after so many attempts
and I don't want her harpy-ing on
about how fast I'm killing myself

When my girlfriend calls
I hide the *Suicide Help* card
Life Line card, AA card
the *Nurses' Drug Line* number
and my VISA statement
saying I now owe \$21 304.47
- minimum monthly payment \$120 -
and that it's due tomorrow
covering them all up
with the menu of a great
little Thai restaurant
which delivers for an extra
couple of dollars

I hide my electricity, gas and rates bills
behind the pizza menu
so that I can't see them

When my painter friend calls, however
I scatter them all out
like *52-Card Pick-Up*
but still pinned against the door
by every magnet I can muster
and with each card
paper-clipped to another
and that to another
and another
because none of it
is his bloody business

John West

The moth-trap

They come to his light
as moths *will* to a flame but linger there unharmed -
the mapwing swifts, flame-shoulders, ruby tigers,
the spectacles and burnished brass and cinnabars -
drawn to the glow, nestle in egg box havens
folding their wings for a cosy peaceful night.

Then the naming of names
for each name reveals the creature's niche on Skomer -
white ermine, striped lichen and a heart-and-dart,
dark sword-grass and setaceous hebrew characters -
the cautious lifting of each box of treasures
not to dislodge the moths hung underneath or clung on top -
the diamond backs, striped wainscot, viper's bugloss -
scanning the book to match up any new ones
blown here by violent winds or on migration.

They come to his light
that beckons green and ghostly through a misted glass,
are trapped to be identified and counted
and new ones kept to have their photos taken
then safely tipped on nearby vegetation -
one beautiful yellow underwing I saw unfurl,
two brightline **browneyes** and a **chinese** character -
and those I didn't see whose names enthrall -
chamomile shark, conformist, merveille du jour -
it's clear; I must come back another year.

Camilla Reeve

The Memory Game

The toes of her socks are bleached,
Her fingers red and cracked, her **knuckles sore**,
strands of image, white as an old woman's.

He can see in her noon appointment
how she spent last night in manic **splendour**,
the day lost, the memory gone.

The only evidence is at home:
clean walls, the smell of swimming **pools**.

Abegail Morley

ask what dark

it is freights those clouds
processing massy flotsam be-
yond my window – their endured

silence worse than passing
bells – for even shadow-light here
below grows tarnished with each god-

damned particle charged and
cast brilliantly as brain with its many
parts to shutter sun-thoughts entire with

indeterminacy (as yellow squares
stretch and steer across grassless sward
so wise to time this dial of eyes i turn towards

them thinking golden lights a god – a mind
i crank regular with full plates to spin
these electric flosses deep inside

my cream little vat of stainless bone – see
how i am set on my way to rain & ruin
but let this thought persist: cloud

could if dark enough with self speak
o rain o ruin o ruinous rain let this
thought persist and orbit here

behind a face my shadow burns
even as the shadow stretches
even as the shadow

thins and fails

this my brownchalk face

time has rained upon
to release soft soil of neck
into first bulge of dewlap &

(what rain can never
do) lay three arid cracks in
that forehead which deepen as i

watch with first signs
of bashō round the eyes – so
my weather changes one drop at

a time (as slow weathers
change) until the very time
within me pipes up to ask what

spring this is i thaw to-
wards through mirrors whose
poppysed rise to spot cheeks ch-

urned by love & pale with
hope to germinate each tight-
lipped morning one folded bloom

dark with blood?

4 who shape

will know – have seen
what looms to blot screens
of car or PC as you plunge with

it through night – have felt what
wells beneath the sole in any
half-warm dusk whose

light feints at life but all
the time sends sense of world
as hen-sick shell so pressured with

yolk as to have no white & all
yolks black – o i have
only now begun

to cool – as earth
that presents to self ex-
terior green & brown yet

yearns to blow self egg-like
from within – yes – you
who have dug there

with me down to ma-
gmas & felt tremble of feet
trampling fathoms above – sink

deeper into that black heat – let
others make hay of selves &
line with straw the eye –

instead make shape of
it in clay so hallowed as to
walk – make shape in jaw with

brazen winds of word – make new
shape of self in stepping out
of same – make new with

thought as body does
on body or as palm must lie
against palm – o make shape in

cavern of impossibles & sleep
for eachly must we shape
the other – must make

or die

flesh fingers clasp to

recast wonder as
gripping – one hand
making space in dark for

another – why do atoms thus
flesh themselves in us
just to allow one

hand to recognise
in dark another? – is it
same as what rumbles bellies for

meat or makes lung tremble in
its cage for one more br-
eath? – hands as

bone extrusions
world-made to gather self
to self or be consumed in the trying?

– o we have dark & have these hands
which know one another al-
most: soft matter

chewing pencil of
spine to place its bet on
lengthening odds of us then unable to

look – hunching on the finish in case
these thin winnings we are (so
soon returned) are

returned

Café El Jarocho

These walls seep a flavour
and drip a blaze of colour
that eyes drink to the last
whilst grubby children dirt their way through
the stringed hoards, strumming chords
of their flourishing among
ancient women with antique skin
wrinkling past crowds,
as old as the trees
hanging over this coffeed air
that couples share, feasting
on their hearts' brimming rims
spilling over, bringing
from their lips
an urgent stillness.

Paul Offord

Border States

Border States

choosing realities

no shape at all

shape size shape.

Border knock down

flood in attention to self

BORDERS - SHUT DOWN.

cut out by rulers - again

occupied. Occupied.

Stave reality. Gone gone away

Border-border states.

Victoria Chapman, 2007

Metropolis

On an iron street
to a triplet city
down a sanitized walkway of pristine chalk,
Gentle white rain
covering man's pities
where cold
timeless memories once walked.
Aluminium board
in the clearing skyward breeze,
leaves
its cloudy trail of purest salt
The cheap and lean
cities of human prey
primed and makedted
on cloned road of grey.

MJ Duggan

Genevieve,

you were bright
as winter light on water, quick as a deer startled

under the quivering leaves of the forest and running for
your life
when they caught you

You couldn't stay
as you were ensnared and doped; high

above the dull earth on the narrow walk-way you caught
sight of

a dazzling whiteness brighter even
than winter light on water

and leaping, left behind

this world of ours
it was not enough to keep you

Neither your mother's pleas nor the earth, sun and moon
in all their glory

were enough to keep you

Perhaps you misunderstood when they said you could go
home -

I don't think so.

Vivienne Tregenza

THE LIFE OF WOLVES

Do you have a choice in the journey when, under a full moon, you tend wolf? As you go along the paths, which are faint by any standards, you have a savage tongue between your teeth, while the vegetation around you might be construed as a jagged savannah.

There are pools here and there along the way, and these are luminous, and full of stagnant water. And your wild and hungry eyes are set on your destination – somewhere you have thought about long, long ago, when you were hunting with that nebulous pack in the forests of your mind and your mysterious birth.

And this sudden, ruined terrain appears to you. It is born of the dawn. And as you walk through the wasted landscape, *you know* you have been here before, yes, you *know* it was from this very place that you started, years before. And now again you hear a voice, with its strange chant or incantation, and *you see it there*, that vision, once again before you.

It is a vision of an egg, complete with the stones of your own consciousness, a snake, the hanged man, a wonderful field of human breasts growing from the ground, the mind, your own footsteps burning in snow, a spider, the mirror of an emperor, marble eagles stricken by loving kindness, and a cathedral constructed from death and from steel.

And the last thing you see is a molten ruby river, down which you are drifting in a small canoe. And in the sky above, shining down on everything, is the full moon, in the light of which you are searching once again for the wild and nebulous pack you hunted with in the ruined forest of your birth, long, long ago.

A A Marcoff
(first published in 'Wayfarers' magazine)

The Wave

I find a way into the grove of my eye - & the present grows dark with oils like an olive.

Mosaics or mascara fall with the twilight into the face of the night, & there is a distinct & vital shadow-play on the wall of experience. There is a transformation of the world, the fragments of drama, & a darkening. My lips are rouge & potent. I speak of God in the time it takes for the earth to turn as the moon gives way to light in the halt & the image of now, light shorn of dogma, & fractured. Time is a changed spiral.

Columns of dust rise from the world like moments, lovely & expressive.

I know the life of the moment.

I know the white star, & the wave & weave of words - "When all is said & done".

Let me speak in the movement of the hour.

I will speak as if my tongue were the white of a star in a sky becoming old.

How light is soft & fragrant!

As dawn begins to move with the dust into light that is local & fascinating, I stand fast in an ancient empty amphitheatre surrounded by the blue Aegean & whisper the word 'God' ninety-nine times in the sun that is radiant with meaning. The word remains - the word remains imbued in the stone like some mysterious spell.

Last night the stars fell from the sky like wishes, gorgeous as surprise & light & gleaming.

Now I stand in the olive grove of my vision & gather into my being the light of God, which is difficult to behold - "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light".

Everything rolls into a wave, & thought, & rises - immense with time. This is the possibility of a world yearning for worlds. This is God calling for God to be heard in the core of experience, as the word expresses this great empirical presence in the light of the wave of the moment.

AA Marcoff

Amongst the tombs
I hug myself
Because I am alive

I am alive
in this long-living grass
My legs feel the grass
My brow the sunshine
For my spirit is quick

The Quick and the Dead
Do not belong together -
The dead have no bodies,
For life on earth
Is Physical.

All Hail.
Thou wonderful world!

by Ruth
June 1995

L i g h t

Waking early to depression. Inner darkness. Want to curl back up to sleep. Mornings are brighter now. But I preferred them dark. Darkness and sleep.

I get up and dress. Walk out along the road. Want to lie down again quite soon. A need to focus. Focus on the moment now, never to be repeated.

Birdsong somewhere close.

(writing this from memory a small black insect crawls across the page)

I look up. See the bird. Hold that fleeting image in my heart, my head. The cloud inside shifts slightly. Later I sit in sunshine, playing with image, word. I write. My inner sky has cleared.

High in the tree
an early blackbird singing
light on the bare bark

Diana Webb

first published in 'time haiku' issue 25:
2007 Reprinted with kind permission

"Oh, It's Just Her Bed on Fire Again"

'it was snakes under the bed before
or a man, threading a needle up each toe wiring them together;
it's her Parkies drugs; she's deluded, paranoid and hallucinates...'

John West

A Morning's Touch

Not Opening the Door

Not listening for a voice
when the street lights came on
and the other children ran
but going in anyway

or seeing in the dusk
outside, into yellow kitchens
with all their golden furnitures.

Not believing that the kiss
was ever on the face, when I
had turned away for a moment

Not hearing shouts in the night
when i mirrored my lowered gaze
next morning, for the grown ups

or shutting all the doors
one by one when I sat up
in bed with tears on my hands.

Not opening the door and running then
to the coloured lights when they shone
through the unblinded windows

or knowing how to touch now
in front of golden light
at the welcome door
opening behind my body.

Marion Tracy

The stinging suck of air
spilling down hot fleshy throat,
winging up nose and slipping, with threshing ease
to a soft, tender lung
shocked into delight
or fright at pricked breath.

Into the eyes it flies
teasing out beads of icy awe,
such a sense claws out
a crisp brittle dawn,
where hot pillowed breaths
rise up over shivering frames.

Paul Offord

"I'll have a port and lemon!"

You arrived in Worthing with 3d in your pocket,
Wednesday 3rd of August 1927.
You sat on the seafront to contemplate.
A pub down a side road enticed –
Harbour lights allure a tired vessel.
The wanderer entered The Rambler Inn,
Three pence in his pocket.
*A pleasant faced woman
wished me good morning
with a good old Brummagem accent*

They brought you clocks and watches to repair,
Rented you a room, free from Saturday night,
Your last night sleeping rough a summer storm broke,
You burrowed beneath a hay wagon left out in the field.

You have not told us which day it was
You walked into the Rambler, sat opposite
A woman at a table near the bar,
Asked 'What would you like to drink?'
'I'll have a port and lemon!' she replied.
In that moment your storm torn trawler came to berth –
To that port and lemon I owe my life.

Lydia Hill (current SP mentee)

Little A m e r i c a

In the corridors of a city
beneath butterscotch
sky of mirrors.
Crashing onto
concrete meadows
a greenbelt of sugary
malls. Endless
procession of silent rage
builds
in the hearts of many.
Nicotine dens hidden
by dawn,
sickly **little America** beckons.

MJ Duggan

The F e m i n i n e

Thick hair flowing,
arched back,
white sheets cling in comfort,
wrapped in her skin:
a ruddy glow in tired morning warmth.

I draw her in, slowly,
whilst her rising thigh
presses into my dawning shivers,
and her every breath brings a soft hum,
quieter than silence,
melting the air,
for this is the touch of the feminine,
my soul's nourishing.

Thirst

The carpet fitter came to me
with no underlay for my thoughts,
left my soles raw and bare,
my bones' marrow bruised
and as he left he said:
'I hope yesterday will be like tomorrow.'
So I walked forward into my mirror's meniscus
thicker than ever.

My quick is a laden dam
with her gone (my soul's masseuse)
words drop to the floor
and my iron lung breaths weigh me down.
There is nowhere to go but here and now.

She is like quicksilver
to my viscous core,
teasing my heart
to reveal itself
in this dry storm that's
battering my windows
with tis dense, hot air;
choking my eyes
from speaking moist words
in this four month drought,
and with a gaping ocean
I can do without.

Paul Offord

'Photography for me is more than pictures'

by Peter Street

...it's another form of poetry, an extension of my art form. It's what I do when I've exhausted my writing or when I've submitted a piece of writing and am waiting for an outcome. That's how it started. But it's become more than that...

Photography has become one of my best friends. It's a best friend who never wants anything from me. Yet it's there,

whenever I need it. And there are times when I really need a friend who I just want to be there, not to talk too; or for them to talk to me; or again - just to be there. Friends, who I can share moments with, be it at a civil rights demonstration or a party when custard ends up all over my grand child's face! Those moments I can carry in my camera and leave there until I AM ready. This could be for six days or six years, because my camera has the patience of a god!



My poetry is very different. It nags at me, in the nicest possible way. Until I start to write, and then it sometimes nags at me even more, because I may not have been true to the poem. Or, I may have been lazy, settling for a first draft. There was one poem, which nagged at me like this for twelve years, (see below). It kept raising its head, teasing me, maybe even daring me to write it how it wanted to be written, and yes, maybe I was hiding away from it. But that's my choice, isn't it? It isn't so with my camera. It doesn't seem to be as demanding, at least not yet. Maybe that's because I can't cheat or be lazy like I can with my poetry. There again, I am still relatively new to photography and perhaps I am waiting to recognise another side to it that is just biding its time - we'll see!

OK, there's the poem swap idea, but, on the whole, poetry for me is very solitary, personal - a 'putting your heart on your

sleeve' thing. As opposed to photography? Yes. Some of us try to make photography into a solitary thing, but it's not a natural process for the photos themselves that are screaming out to be alongside each other to show off to their brother/sister photo! That's their job.

The purpose of each photo is to show off, to be at its best for all those hungry eyes. So, this begs the question: why are we not helping in this process by bringing them together in the only way we know how? And that is - networking and sharing our skills. This, I'm sure, will not only be good for the photos, but will also help us to be part of something bigger and better!



Please do contact Peter Street or Survivors' Poetry if you would like to explore the ideas posed in his article and photography.

Bomb Damage by Peter Street

Something was itching my eyes to stare
over at the machines .

Only I seemed to hear the bleeping
yet my whole family was standing there
and everyone who had ever lived,

the whole universe even, all screaming
not to look. Yet the bleeping seemed

to bounce off every childhood picture
and get-well card
in the Zagreb hospital:
like a ball to my feet.

Then I made my mistake
and looked at a face,
a kind of no-face with holes for eyes
nose, mouth,

legs missing from the knees down
still stuck to all those bits of shrapnel
somewhere, which banged her life apart.
A little girl, bandaged

in mummy, almost pretty.
Some nurse had taken an age
getting each lap perfect
so proud that when we look

we might still see a person,
someone whole.

Have you a poem, anything
on Kosovo?

You know –
something to capture

the mood of the Nation?
Like Bosnia?

We want to air what
an artist has to say –

something bold, but short?
By Thursday?

Mario Petrucci

Dull Flat and grey
The English light.
Is a Killer

Perhaps I will
Retire to bed
To escaped that light

For I dare not
Go out
Into that winter world
Which silences
Even the birds

by Ruth

CLICK HERE TO VIEW MOVING IMAGES BY PETER
STREET.

YOU WILL NEED QUICKTIME~FREE DOWNLOAD
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Mission not always impossible

Haiku & Haibun Poetry

by **Diana Webb**



in recent times most haiku poets have seen their task to be that of writing 'sketches from life (shasei)'. Currently some haiku readers feel that many poets are now tending to write sketches from what they perceive as the accepted stuff of memorable haiku from the past, chiefly derived from nature, rather than from the immediate surprises of their own life experience, leading to the production of boring work.

for me the repeated sight of say a kingfisher skimming the stream, an isolated poppy or the light of the rising sun on a gull's wing always surprise as if for the first time, sparking an urgent impulse to celebrate that momentary thrill in words rather than just to rehash a version of something lauded before.

the challenge is to communicate my perception in a way that puts its freshness across. What is celebrated in a haiku may come as picasso puts it 'from all over the place, the sky, the earth, a scrap of paper, a passing shape, a spider's web.' or again as einstein puts it, haiku can communicate 'everything as a miracle'.

so haiku poets have a double mission; to banish feelings of apathy normally elicited by commonplace things and to banish a sense of ennui arising from things conventionally deemed 'poetic'. on this mission they are not alone.

it was shared by a physicist and a painter both already mentioned and also by a writer not renowned for brevity, a film maker and another painter, to name just a few:

the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes. (marcel proust)

in a flash we can see a dog, a cab a house for the first time. What is special mad ridiculous beautiful in them is overwhelming. but immediately afterwards habit rubs out this powerful image with its eraser. (jean cocteau)

right now a moment of time is fleeting by. Capture its reality...put all else out of your minds...become the moment, make ourselves a sensitive recording plate...give the image of what we actually see, forgetting everything that has been seen before our time.(cezanne)

suddenly a leaf
still on the willow twig
turns kingfisher

(concluding haiku by Diana Webb, first published in 'shamrock haiku' june 2008); also to check out - 'Contemporary Haibun Online' <http://contemporaryhaibunonline.com/> is 'A quarterly journal of contemporary english language haibun'

HOLY WEEK

He tells me how a fellow patient used to call the walk to the room where they carried out electro-convulsive therapy, the Via Dolorosa. My friend is a pianist who moved out of the long stay hospital fifteen years ago into this shared house in the community, also occupied at that time by an artist now deceased. On the wall opposite the piano one of that man's drawings. A mother and child hand in hand. Light plays on the tones of one of the many faces of a woman harrowed. Notes of a waltz.

asylum corridor —
a sudden window
blossom

Diana Webb London, England. First published by 'haibun today' reprinted with kind permission of the author and publisher. [Http://haibuntoday.blogspot.com/](http://haibuntoday.blogspot.com/) Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Diana Webb added: the above poem is very personal, about how writing a haiku helped me one particular morning.

NOT THE BUTTERFLY HOUSE

'The Butterfly House closed last year,' someone tells us. So Beachyhead becomes the focus for this late spring day instead.

'It returns you want, not singles?' the bus driver asks drily as we state our destination.

He drives us to a point high on the downs from where we walk to look down the precipitous drop to the red and white lighthouse far below, against chalk and spray.

on cliff edge posts
rose bunches bound tight
wind through the grasses

Outside the nearby pub-restaurant, under a cloudless sky, people talk of the hazards of full fat foods, cholesterol levels.

'Samaritans
are always there'
this small pink cranesbill

Note: Beachyhead is a cliff-top beauty spot on the south coast of England notorious for suicides. A Butterfly House is the equivalent of a greenhouse for butterflies in which exotic species breed, develop and live in conditions like those of their natural habitat.

Diana Webb
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'Light' on pg22

first published in 'time haiku' issue 25: 2007
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The Vale House

Project

by Roy Birch

THE VALE HOUSE CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT

The Principle

The Vale House Creative Writing Project held its first session at Vale House Drug and Alcohol Stabilization Services in Hertford in late November 2006. Funded by a grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Small Grants Fund, this partnership between a residential Re-Hab and Survivors' Poetry, one of the country's leading Mental Health Literature Charities, was, among other things, the opening gambit in a serious attempt to add a radical new initiative to the existing canon of drug rehabilitation practice through the use of Reiki, Meditation, and Creative Writing as a single-unit therapeutic activity as part of an abstinence-based programme with recovering addicts in a residential setting – something not previously attempted.

Once this idea had established itself as the principle from which a healing/recovery protocol could be built and launched, it very quickly became obvious that its value potential was not simply limited to drug recovery but that, as a principle at least, it was capable of successful application across the full range of recovery, care, and self-development activity.

So what of the protocol itself? Quite simply, to undertake an empirical study over 20 weeks of the viability of the principle and process through the medium of 20 co-creative group sessions of approximately 2 ½ hours duration, displaced as follows:

Mindfulness Meditation – 20 minutes
Creative Writing exercise – 30 minutes (Exercises set by me for the first two sessions . Thereafter by the participants)
Read-around of work produced – 30 minutes
Refreshment Break 15 minutes
Reiki – 1 Hour

During the Reiki session all participants to write a reflection of the session. Those awaiting Reiki to do so while waiting. The others to do so after receiving treatment.

The Process

The logic underpinning the structure of the sessions is both simple and profound, existing, as it does, on a number of different levels. At the most basic level the structure operates as follows:

Recovering addicts live under conditions of constant and often unbearable stress. Which means they bring that stress to whatever activity they undertake. In order that a reasonable measure of the true person within the addict is available to take part in the creative writing exercise, it was essential to begin the session with an activity which would promote personal relaxation and inner calm, leading in turn to a mitigation of the “Small Mind” within us, from which we all suffer a certain amount of agitation and unease, and addicts especially so.

The writing exercise encourages and enables participants to confront themselves and their deeper issues in a manner which is simultaneously challenging yet safe, which is, of course, the very essence of creative therapy.

The read-around exposes the participants to the scrutiny of their peers in ways they would not normally encounter. It requires a huge amount of courage for people who have been so long hidden from themselves, and whose basic self-esteem is at such a very low ebb, to expose their deeper emotions to each other, the staff, and outsiders (something most of us would find extremely difficult). In so doing they take a significant step forward in the process of personality regeneration, without which recovery cannot hope to succeed.

Reiki is a gentle, natural system of healing, a derivative of Qi Gong, the High Spiritual Healing Art of ancient Tibet, woven into a simpler (and thereby more accessible) form by Japanese Buddhist, Dr. Mikao Usui, at the turn of the 20th century. ‘Reiki’ means Universal Energy of Life. Briefly, all life is energy, all energy is vibration. The essential energy within each individual, the ‘Life –Force’ is prone to blockage, leading to conditions of physical and psychological ill-health. In addicts, the essential energies are extremely badly blocked. Reiki energy exists at a substantially higher vibration than our normal energies, giving it the ability to penetrate

those blockages and restore the energy flow. Channeled through the hands of the practitioner, its most obvious uses in the context of the project, are the regeneration of energy consumed by the writing exercise and the read-around (recovering addicts become tired very quickly) and the bringing of hidden traumas closer to the surface, where they can be worked on more easily.

something about a past experience they had that was very confidential and upsetting for them. It must have taken so much trust in the group to be able to write it down and then share it with the group. For me, moments like these are special and are very healing for the individual and the whole group'.

For me, incidents and comments like these validate the whole experience. Even if the rest of the project didn't.

The Reality

The philosophy was exact. But, as everyone is aware, reality does not always conform to the demands of philosophical exactitude. As a result of which, a number of potential barriers stood in the way of the project's fulfillment and ultimate success.

First among these was the fact that the sessions took place on Saturday afternoon, during what the residents regard as 'their time,' and which caused a certain amount of resentment. Second was the fact that mindfulness meditation requires a skill most westerners, and addicts especially, find difficult to acquire – sitting with oneself. Thirdly, Reiki. Because of its capacity to bring traumas closer to the surface and reflect them as physical or psychological discomfort (sometimes even severe pain) some participants feared it, and there was a very real possibility that their fear would adversely affect the attitude of the others toward a wonderfully beneficial process. Happily the reality was far more amenable. There were battles, there still are battles, but by and large the project has run remarkably smoothly.

With regard to the Reiki, one group member, nine weeks into the project, reflected that he was only now becoming comfortable with Reiki, despite being in Vale House for some 20 weeks, and receiving Reiki consistently through that time. Another group member, who has now entered third stage, meditates daily as a result of being part of the project.

One who claimed the project did nothing for her, and stated that she resented the fact that it was held on Saturday afternoon, later admitted that it had given her the confidence to write in ways she would never have been able to and that having something to do on Saturday afternoon was better than sitting around watching TV.

The creative writing has produced an amazing body of work. One group member who, sadly, can barely read or write, has actually set two of the most telling exercises we have had, and which have produced some utterly compelling compositions.

I would like to conclude this section with a quote from co-facilitator (and Vale House counsellor) Justin Durrant. Justin wrote this about one of the group members.

'I have experienced listening to a resident reading out

Hidden Metaphor as a Therapeutic Tool

I have already said that the creative writing experience is the pivotal function within each session and the project as a whole. This is because there is, within the use of the written word, a deliberate sub-text – validation of the use of hidden metaphor as a therapeutic tool.

Anyone who writes is aware that whatever we write is in fact a statement of who we are. But all too often the things we write intentionally say less about us than the things we either write unintentionally or don't write at all.

While the metaphor of the unintentional statement has received little literary exposure, the art of the unmade statement has found fame and favour in both Western and Eastern writing. In the West, the best known exponent of the unmade statement is undoubtedly the late Ernest Hemingway, probably the most imitated writer of the 20th century, whose famous novel 'A Farewell to Arms' was described as 'a masterpiece of dramatic omissions.' In the east, the technique has been even more profoundly applied. Japanese Haiku, a poetic form which expresses the eternal moment through the medium of the temporal moment we are currently inhabiting, has reduced the whole process to a mere 17 carefully textured syllables. The precedent quite obviously exists.

The way the precedent was applied as part of the project was quite simple. I assessed each group member's psychological and recovery status through the simple expedient of examining their written pieces. In order to keep the process authentic, I took great care to know nothing about the participants' case histories, so that all I had to go on was their written work. As the project progressed and the group members became more confident and opened up this obviously became more difficult, but the hidden metaphor remained. All that changed in fact was the way in which it remained. Fascinating.

As part of the process I handed my findings over to Chris Dawkins, my liaison with Vale House, who believes in the power of hidden metaphor as intensely as I do.

Chris then assessed my assessments. Amazingly, the conclusions I drew from a thirty-minute creative writing exercise equated favourably with what the counsellors know about their charges from being with them some fifty to sixty hours each week. Bearing in mind that I am neither a counsellor nor a trained psychologist (though I am a writer and have at least a reasonable understanding of the way words operate) I feel this is proof positive of the value and usefulness of the hidden metaphor as a therapeutic tool. My observations were uncannily accurate, though obviously in a generalized way and sometimes by default. One observation, however, was quite chillingly accurate. I offer it as verifiable evidence.

During the refreshment break at one of the sessions, the duty staff-member spoke to me about an important breakthrough which had occurred with a group member he had counselled that very morning. He later wrote this about it as part of a piece validating the project: "The value of this work was also immediately apparent to me in the light of the work produced by A who I had counselled earlier in the day. Within this short piece I was able to see the enormity of how A had absorbed recent emotional and behavioural changes into her inner world."

Sadly, my observation of the piece in question and the piece she wrote the following week, caused me to observe (notwithstanding the obvious behavioural changes she was exhibiting) that the changes, though profound, were superficial, and that, in my opinion, her chances of achieving a sustainable recovery had diminished rather than increased, so much so, in fact, that she now needed a miracle. Two weeks later, and only three weeks short of her admission into Third Stage, she abruptly left Vale House, relapsed within hours, and attempted to take her own life.

Summing Up

There is considerably more to this project than I have been able to convey with this report. What I can say quite unequivocally, however, is that it works. In fact, it works so well that Vale house has agreed to integrate it into the mainstream of its programme with immediate effect. The sessions will henceforth take place on Friday afternoon, with the Friday afternoon activity now taking place on Saturday afternoon. This is the first change to its therapeutic structure that Vale House has allowed since it opened over ten years ago.

And this is not all. A grant of some £3,000,000 from the Department of Health has enabled Vale House to take over Passmore House in Harlow (the old County Museum and a fine listed building). Passmore House

will open in approximately 18 months as what will undoubtedly be one of the very finest residential re-habs in Britain. It has been agreed (in principle, as no-one knows what availability structures will be in place at that time) that the writing project will be included as an integral part of the Passmore House recovery programme. Validation indeed for the project and the vision and courage of all who made it possible.

The above was culled from my closing report to Susan Blishen of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation at the end of the original 20-week pilot. Let me now summarize the project since its incorporation into the mainstream Vale House programme.

While the project was a bolt-on held on Saturday afternoons, the staff (with the exception of two who are themselves Reiki practitioners and took part in the sessions when they were on duty) bore it with a silent fortitude. Once it had become an integral part of the regular programme, they began to view it with suspicion, a suspicion which adversely coloured the perception of some of the residents regarding the value of the therapy.

Exorcising that suspicion was not easy, but eventually it happened. Staff suspicion has disappeared to the extent that staff members now join the group for Reiki when their stress levels are inordinately high, and members of the management team avail themselves of the peaceful atmosphere which the sessions create, relaxing in the room when the sessions have ended. "Soaking up the atmosphere and chilling out," as the deputy manager recently told me. Resident resentment has also gone. Residents now openly make comments such as "I pray for Friday afternoon. It keeps me sane."

So far so good. The project works. But saying so is mere vanity. Working once may well be just that. A one-off. I personally don't think it is, and neither do others who are in a position to judge. Those who know Vale House and its high standards accept that even getting the project introduced as a pilot was an achievement, and that its integration into the regular programme (it is, in fact, the only new initiative introduced since the re-hab was set up) fully validates its existence. We are all aware, however, that it needs to be proved in what is now being referred to as 'a community pilot' – in other words, day services or an equivalent setting. Three organizations – Mid-Herts MIND, Viewpoint (a Hertfordshire-wide organization which helps mental-health-based therapeutic groups to set up in the county) and the Stevenage Mental Health

Partnership – are currently working to create the opportunity (including funding). There is strong support for the protocol in principle, and a burgeoning belief that if the next phase can happen and succeed the project may well expand both dramatically and rapidly. To which end they want me to build a training element into the protocol, accepting that if it should enjoy a rapid development, I would quite quickly need to cease being a hands-on local coordinator and begin training others to assume that role.

On Tuesday last I was a guest of Viewpoint at the Home Office-led National Drug and Alcohol Strategy conference – The Hertfordshire Dimension. The conference itself was traditional fare. The Keynote speech set the tone and the standard for the day, Ian Martin, Head of Drug and Alcohol Strategy at the Home Office giving a bland waffle filled with undeserved self-praise and a thinly-veiled promise to continue failing. The reason for my invitation, however, was not solely to partake of this diet of lip-service to social concern. Of more relevance was my introduction to one of the Hertfordshire NHS Commissioners, a man with his hand on the financial pulse. The manager of Viewpoint, who made the introduction, feels confident that funding can be obtained.

Although this is not traditional SP territory, Paul Hamlyn were courageous enough to fund the initial pilot as an SP project – and now MIND are involved. If the next phase of the project is successful, it is possible that Paul Hamlyn could be persuaded back on board. With Paul Hamlyn and MIND backing it, the Vale House Creative Writing Project could well become an important part of the SP portfolio. Dreams at the moment, but dreams do sometimes come true. And at the moment, certainly, some concerned and influential people want it to happen.

Project stats

14 residents took part in the original 20-week pilot of the Vale House Creative Writing project.

8 completed their 6-month recovery programme

6 did not complete their programme

Of the 8 who completed their programme, 4 are known to still be completely abstinent

Depending on how we choose to evaluate these figures, we have either:

4-14 (participants) still abstinent (32%) or

4-8 (graduates) still abstinent (50%)

24 residents have taken part in the project post-pilot

8 completed the programme

10 did not complete the programme

6 are currently part of the programme

Of the 8 who completed the programme, 4 are known to still be completely abstinent

Depending on how we choose to evaluate these figures we have either:

4-18 (participants) still abstinent (23%) or

4-8 (graduates) still abstinent (50%)

This gives us overall figures of either:

8-32 (participants) still abstinent (25%) or

8-16 (graduates) still abstinent (50%)

With a government-admitted national average post-rehab abstinence figure of 3%, this is a wonderful result. Even if the figure drops to 15%, it is still five times better than the national average.

While I cannot claim that the Vale House Creative Writing Project is the only - or even the principal - reason the results are so good, it is accepted by all concerned that the project is now a significant part of the Vale House recovery programme.

When we then consider that one of the original pilot group still meditates on a regular basis as a result of the project, and that one of the post-pilot graduates has (also as a direct result of her participation in the project) become a Reiki practitioner, we begin to see just how significant the project is.

events



A Kevin Coyne Tribute, at the Poetry Café Covent Garden. 5th June 08

The idea for this tribute evening grew out of conversations that I had with my friend Dave Russell. We were discussing Kevin's books of short stories. We both thought that it would be a nice idea to celebrate Kevin's literature. I also felt that as Kevin died before his last ever book *That Old Suburban Angst* was published, it would be good to give the book a little bit of promotion. *Survivors' Poetry* seemed the ideal group to approach about this.

Kevin Coyne will be known to some of you for the interesting records that he made on the Virgin label in the 1970s. Kevin was often on the John Peel show, John Peel being a friend of Kevin's and an admirer of

his music. Kevin was also admired by some of the punk artists that emerged in the late 1970s. However, Kevin carried on making intriguing records until his death from lung fibrosis at the end of 2004. He also perused alternative careers as a painter and as a writer. These later careers started in 1991 with the publication of *The Party Dress*, an interesting collection of short stories. Kevin made Germany his home in 1985. As such, some of his books were published in German. But, along with *The Party Dress*, his 1993 book *Show Business*, and his most recent book *That Old Suburban Angst* were published in English. I often find myself returning to these books, discovering new things. This is happening with *That Old Suburban Angst* at the moment.

It was an eclectic evening at The Poetry Café, with a number of artists tackling Kevin's songs and stories. It became a bit more music orientated. However, a number of Kevin's stories were read out. Kevin has said that the ideas in his stories, songs, and paintings are linked. People chose their contributions from throughout Kevin's long career. For example, the opening act The Tilley Band ended their set with *I Hear Voices* - a song that came from Kevin's 2004 album *Donut City*. This was the last album that Kevin himself released. (In 2006, *Underground* was issued. This was a collection of recordings Kevin made shortly before he died).

The Tilley Band features two contributors to the *Whispers From The Offing* tribute album - Big Maher and Joey Stacks, plus Mick Hobbs from the *Life and Living* project, and Joeys nine year old daughter Tilley, who as the name suggests seems to be the band leader. The next act was Goodie Sweeney. She read extracts from Kevin's book *Teddy Bear Diary*, which she translated from German into English. It was great hearing these stories for the first time. They were very entertaining.

Kevin Coyne's friend Clive Product lives in Berlin and with his work commitments was unable to be there. His friend Barry O'Brien, who is part of *Stumble On The Valves*, read out some of Clive's memories from the last time he met up with Kevin. It was very moving to hear these memories. Barry also read out Clive's other contribution to the evening, a story from *That Old Suburban Angst* called *Getting Better*, while being accompanied on guitar by his friend Daryl Mitchell.

Stumble On The Valves performed *I Believe In Love* from

Kevin's 1974 album *Blame It On The Night*, and the old spiritual *Lonesome Valley*. This was one of Kevin's favourite songs. Kevin recorded it on his 1973 album *Marjory Razorblade*. They were great in an untidy fashion.

The evening continued with another old friend of Kevin's, Nigel Burch. Nigel's friendship with Kevin started in the days before the album *Millionaires and Teddy Bears* came along in 1979. Accompanying himself on ukulele he played a fine set. It included moving versions of *Black Cloud* from Kevin's 1983 album *Legless In Manila*, and *Jackie and Edna* from the album *Marjory Razor Blade*.

Following Nigel came Razz. He read some short stories from *The Party Dress* – the ones Razz chose helped to show the diversity of Kevin's writings. I found the story *Photographs* to be particularly moving with all the memories going past. Many of the memories are portrayed as going past in black and white. Like that of a woman in ugly post war spectacles staring into a cot. They look back to a bygone era. It is a story that puts me in mind of *Flashing Back* from Kevin's 1982 album *Politicz*. The book belonged to Razz's late partner Sam, and had been signed by Kevin. Those of you who remember the early days of *Survivors' Poetry* may remember Sam for her violin playing at gigs we did in places like the *South Western Hospital* in Brixton, and the *Friday Club* at *St Georges Hospital* in Tooting. During the 1990s, Razz and I often went to Kevin Coyne's gigs together.

Next came Veronique Acoustique who played *I Only Want To See You Smile* from Kevin's 1978 album *Dynamite Daze*. She then tackled *Fun Flesh* also from *Politicz*. This is a song about an old man who is obsessed with pornography and out of touch with his feelings. A man who also treats his son really badly. It was a brave choice of song, and I was grateful to Veronique for doing it. It comes from a much-overlooked period of Kevin's work.

The evening finished with Dave Russell. He started with *Strange Pictures* from *Life Is Almost Wonderful*, Kevin's 2002 collaboration with guitarist Brendan Crooker. This song deals with the subject of hallucinations. It also speaks of the experiences of someone who had a childhood during the Second World War, showing the damaging effect these experiences had on people. Kevin's elder brother Arthur features strongly in the song. He then did a performance poetry version of *Good Boy* from *Marjory Razorblade*, and two of Kevin's short stories -

Bulges from Show Business, and *Thin Walls* from *That Old Suburban Angst*. Both these stories deal with life in seedy lodging rooms. They also show what incredible insight Kevin had into these situations.

My job was to introduce the acts. This gave me a chance to say a little about how much Kevin's music, art, and literature has meant to me over the years. And what it will continue to mean to myself and many others. There are a lot of us fans out there.

One drawback was the expensive food and drink in the venue. But this is Covent Garden, which of course is now a tourist attraction. Not the *Fruit and Veg Market* where cheap cafes used to exist. It was also a warm night and some people found the basement room where the gig took place to get a bit hot and stuffy. But we did our best. Hopefully future Kevin Coyne events will happen. If you want to know what Kevin Coyne meant to me and many others in the 1970s, check out *Marjory Razorblade*, and *Dynamite Daze*. They can both be found in West End branches of HMV record shops, for a reasonable price.

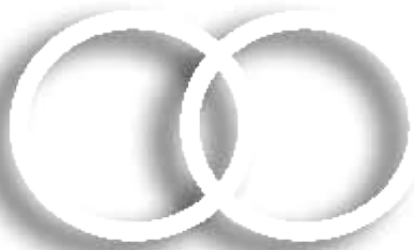
God Bless
Frank Bangay, July 08



Look out for Kevin Coyne as featured artist in the next issue of *Poetry Express* due out in the Autumn



The editor of *Poetry Express* 27 would also like to thank Kevin's widow Helmi, and family, for their kind approvals and assistance." Kevin Coyne's official website is www.kevincoyne.de
Pascals fans website is www.pascalregis.nerim.net
For *That Old Suburban Angst* visit tonydonaghey@kevincoynebooks.com



Poetry and visual arts merge in a tribute to light for “The Lady Dressed in Red” – an exhibition of collaborative art inspired by John Weedon. Reviewed by Júlia Sorribes, Journalist and Editor.

Poet and visual artist John Weedon unleashed his two passions on Monday 16th June in the Poetry Café, Covent Garden, during the opening night of “The Lady Dressed in Red”, an exhibition inspired by light which stems from the powerful embrace between verse and painting. As he says: “The close relationship between Fine Art and Poetry is a deep interest of mine. The metaphysical experience is the same.” And it is this that has made him place a series of abstract paintings baptized “Poetic Visions” alongside poetry.

In this series, using unique paint mixes combined sometimes with crayon and pastel pencil the artist creates vibrant colour and light on black board. The planet-like images carry not only an ecologist message but also one of togetherness. “The human condition has to resolve its differences,” John Weedon resolutely states.

This self-taught artist with a keen interest in photography unknowingly proved that it is possible to create bridges when he brought together seven radically different voices to read poems related to his art and share other examples of their work in literally an underground space with little light and a lot of comradeship.

Graham Buchan, author of *There is violence in this vapours*, (tall-lighthouse press) opened the reading with poems that were both nostalgic and beautifully macabre. His verses,

blunt and potent like staccato notes flowing out of an old piano, spoke of a barely contained anger.

Far more at ease but not less critical was the organizer of the spoken word event ‘Speakeasy’, Baden Prince, whose poem *Bare feet* reminded the audience of the powers of brands and marketing. Fragments of an African song sneaked into his verses and his deep voice, soothing and a touch unsettling, held an unarticulated reproach.

A subtle but strong discontent also leaked from the serene and almost ceremonial tone of Danielle Hope’s reading, who chose poems with references to painters Vincent Van Gogh and Joan Miró as a personal tribute to John. The most intense moment of her performance came when she denounced through her verses the disregard for the patients at a secure mental health hospital.

The annoyed energy that Hope had kept at bay poured out of the microphone when Canadian Heather Taylor, author of *Horizon and Back* (tall-lighthouse press) took over the impromptu stage at the cellar-like space in the Poetry Café. After reading poetry relating to the Tate Modern and the artistic theme of the evening, the words flew out of her mouth like a torrent, dissecting failed relationships in a biting and scathing tone.

The public left their guffaws loose with Ken Champion, a lecturer in sociology and philosophy who has published his poems and fiction both in the UK and the US. With pieces like *Interview* or *Party Line*, he twisted ordinary life situations into an absurd angle, leaving the satire floating in the air.

The secrets of empty space where the focus of Kim Lasky’s contribution to the evening. The poet, currently carrying out a residency at Sussex University’s Physics and Astronomy departments, offered John Weedon her *Eclipse*, in which she captured with great attention to detail the different perspectives that artists and scientists share concerning the magnitude of the universe.

In a much more concrete scale, poet and mental health campaigner Philip Ruthen read *Sustain- Flowers for Kefallinia*, a piece linked to perhaps the most impressive of John’s studies of light refraction carrying the same title. Its broken verses, full of lyricism and sprinkled with playfulness, defy conventions in much the same way as his unconventional love poem *Pin ≈ Point*.

John Weedon was the last to step in front of the microphone to read his poetry, which is often the resulting form of a sudden inspiration whilst painting; “I find the creative process of engineering a new idea very exciting. This is where the challenges are realised. Meeting these challenges well is the real fulfillment...,” he states. The artist’s verses - short and condensed like his artworks - left much unsaid, prompting the audience to consider where the artist’s and their own inspiration would take them.

With the invisible subtext still floating in the air, the evening finished much like it had started in a space that John qualifies as “unpretentious”: with a quiet drink between friends and colleagues.

John Weedon's poems, artworks and the collaborative texts will be exhibited in the Poetry Café, 22 Betterton Street, Covent Garden, until mid-August 2008.



REBIRTH:
You who
cut into me
Smacked at
that fear of mine
waiting for the light

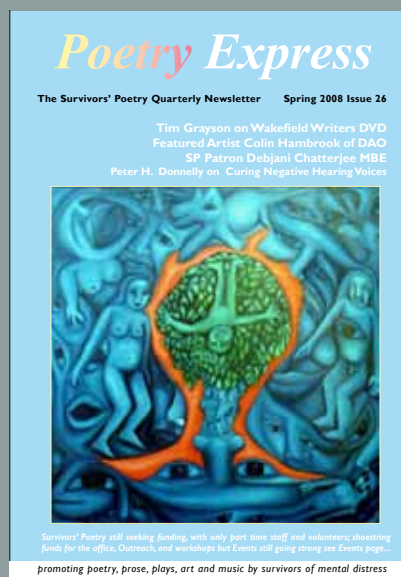
Later
the moon stepped into me
came a tidal rearrangement
anger left
Then I wrote again
Barrelled through
my heartyears
and became a friend

Amid the rejections
before my new beginnings
I designed in 3D
a structured tree
Constructed and rebuilt
with logs stripped of bark
cut with a logsaw
bolted into an angular silhouette
upright and organic
To be lit
new every morning
with sunlove

In the handshaped crutch
I placed a golden sphere

I named it
:REBIRTH

John Weedon. March 2008



We neglected to mention publisher in John Mackay's review on pg32 of PE26, for which we apologise.

Maggie Sawkins "The Zig Zag Woman"
Two Ravens Press 2007, www.tworavenspress.com
Price: £8.99 Pages: 70
ISBN: 978-1-906120-08-5

In the introduction to her first full collection, Maggie Sawkins invokes Philip Larkin's 'coastal shelf' when she talks about 'the difficulty of breaking away from the weight of the past'. Larkin's poems, often too narrowly read as merely pessimistic and gloomy, are shot through with veins of hope and optimism that confirm his humanity. So in Sawkins' poetry, where the 'weight' is leavened by inspired moments of wit and the surreal. to read the rest of the review go to PE26, available to download from our website:

space



Moniza Alvi

Europa (Bloodaxe Books 2008);
ISBN 978-1-85224-803-1; £7.95

Split World: Poems 1990-2005 (Bloodaxe Books 2008);
ISBN 978-1-85224-802-4; £10.95

To describe the range of these two works as 'universal' would be no exaggeration. Moniza Alvi explores the full complexities of cultural interaction, observing Western culture, and her roots in Pakistan, from a dual perspective. This perspective is further multiplied by the cross-referencing of inner and outer worlds. Her poems are works of scholarship, displaying, among many other things, a deep knowledge of surrealist painting and literature, a strong sense of comparative linguistics, and a first-hand understanding of poverty, of medical and psychiatric extremities: a true Survivor indeed! They are also uninhibitedly speculative.

Europa consists of three sections. The first could be called 'The Poetry of Medicine (as per the anthology *Signs and Humours: The Poetry of Medicine*, for which the opener, 'Post Traumatic' was commissioned. This poem explores states of stress disorder, and the tension between mind and brain, reinforced by the symbol of a snake (very prominent in Alvi's work) and violent physical impulses. In 'Her Symptoms', the serpent theme is reiterated: reptilian tormentors have filled her precious jewel box. The box is freed, but found to be empty; it holds no jewels. Convalescence, both from physical and from mental illness, must be full of feelings of emptiness for the patient. 'Memory, Memory' is double-edged; memory can be both a blessing and a curse; it is also independent and elusive. 'Key Words' is one example of Moniza's preoccupation with linguistics: it highlights the gulf between medical/psychiatric terminology and real experience: the real extremes of experience go beyond words – "dread words have abdicated". 'The Sleeping Wound' explores the long-term effects (including after-effects) of stress disorder. 'Mermaid' is an extraordinary synthesis of the mythical, the erotic, the medical and clinical. The influence of painter Tabitha Vevers was crucial for this poem. In Vevers' words: "My recent Cape paintings feature human and sea life in a metaphorical embrace where land meets sea." Vevers' painting 'Trouble in Eden' also seems inspirational for Alvi's preoccupation with snake symbolism. The legendary creature is sliced, as if on a fishmonger's slab; she feigns unconsciousness while being raped; the assailant flees in terror. The slicing of the mermaid's tail

is both aesthetic and sadistic, and raises the question of sadism underlying aesthetics; the powerful cover picture reinforces this impression.

'Europa and the Bull' is primordially tactile. It explores the dynamics of fascination, and being in thrall to the elements. Europa transcends herself through her involvement. Jupiter steps out of his guise as a bull, as an elemental power.

I am Jupiter, lord of all bulls,
King of the gods,
and you, Europa, a continent
full of undiscovered countries.

Jupiter (the bull) is a creature of enormous strength but extreme tenderness. If the reflective conclusion to this sequence, *Europa* has an alter ego, 'her ravaged twin'. She finally observes her earlier self. With 'King Agenor', she adopts the persona of an aggrieved father – a male alter ego, a theme fully developed in the 'Carrying My Wife' sequence in 'Split World'. In this poem, as in the previous, 'Not Exactly', she switches from the third person to the second person. She rejects the stance of a single, omniscient observer and speaker to reflect the true diversity of experience. Tactile sensation lies at the core of her expression; there is a common denominator of sensation which highlights the affinities between all aspects of the physical and emotional spectrum, from the monocellular to the astral.

'Night', 'The Trees Outside my Window', 'War and Peace on Earth', 'Fish Swimming', 'In the Forest' and 'To My Posthumous Self' are credited 'after Jules Supervielle'. The references are as follows: 'Night' – 'Nuit en moi'; 'The trees outside my window' – 'S'il n'était pas d'arbres a ma fenêtre'; 'War and Peace on Earth' – 'Guerre et paix sur la terre'; 'Fish Swimming' – 'Les poissons'; 'In the forest' – 'Dans la forêt sans heures'; 'To my posthumous self' – 'A moi-même quand je serais posthume.' *These two poems are featured in *The Penguin Book of French Verse*.

"Supervielle rejected the automatic writing (that the surrealist ones well quickly gave up themselves) and dictatorship of the unconscious, without disavowing the assets of modern poetry since Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Apollinaire, like certain fundamental innovations of surrealism. Attentive with the universe which surrounded it as with the phantoms of its interior world, it was one of the first to recommend this vigilance, this control that the following generations, moving away from the surrealist movement, put at the honor." (Wikipedia)

This influence has indeed enabled Moniza to embrace, and fuse, the psychic and the political. Far from submitting herself to 'the dictatorship of the unconscious, Alvi has grappled with it, to make it a criterion of comparison, a basis of dialogue with the conscious. 'War and Peace on Earth' embraces the essence of total war, where the beautiful and the fascinating can melt into the horrific: "a bunch of roses suddenly went mad, exploded, bit you to death." "Under all the layers of suffering, the word 'victory' had disappeared from the language. The animate becomes inanimate, and vice versa; the boundaries between them are blurred and melted. Churches can be considered as having an epileptic fit. 'I Hold My Breath in this Country with Its Sad Past' reaches all immigrants and refugees – the distinctions between whom are blurred, as in real life. 'The Crossing' evokes the theme of the Exodus. 'My Posthumous Self' is a salient example of Alvi's preoccupation with self-projection beyond mortality. 'Island' highlights her sense of affinity between an individual personality and the physical (geological?) world: she would 'turn herself' into an island 'and from this vantage point I'd dream of what it might be like to be human. One must project oneself into a larger mass, and thereby expand perspective, in order to observe oneself fully. 'Upholding the I' explores the mathematics, architecture and symbolism of alphabetical signs.

Split World is a comprehensive cross-section of her work, from 1993 until 2005, in chronological – and subtly thematic – sequence. As stated in the preface "This book includes all the poems which Moniza Alvi wishes to keep in print from her previous Bloodaxe titles". (reinforced by its highly evocative cover – complete with stigmata) emphasises Moniza Alvi's dualism, radiating from the obvious mode of the interactions inherent in her Anglo-Pakistani background to all areas of experience. The title has some resonance of the Partition of India, as referred to in 'Half and Half'; she felt as if she had been surgically cut in two by the Partition. There is also a metaphor of global fission in 'How the world Split in Two'. The sequence opens with reflections on childhood. In 'Pilgrimage', a child's shock at unexpectedly seeing a pile of excrement conveys a sense of awe at possible deeper significances.

'The Country at my shoulder' portrays the experience of someone who was subjected to migration and cultural transference in her formative years. Such experience must be intrinsically bi-focal. One is removed from one's childhood roots as one grows, one is distanced from roots in locality as one grows; when one arrives at one's new location, one sees the parallels and contrasts with one's old world. Particularly moving is the poem 'Presents from my Aunts in Pakistan'. She reflects on the exotic Eastern clothes which have been sent to her, "I could never be as lovely/ as those clothes/I longed/for denim and corduroy. Her

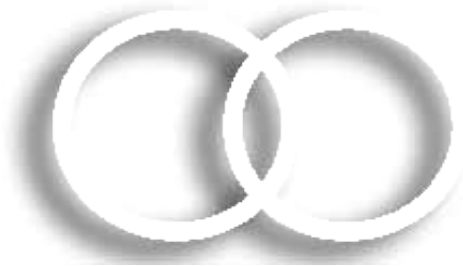
former home became 'a fractured land/throbbing through newsprint'. The opening poems of this section are overall childhood foci. 'I would like to be a dot in a painting by Miro' is the first introduction, in this collection, to her passion for the visual arts. She verbalises like a painter; she would like to get inside paintings, be paintings, take on the identity and tactile attributes of phenomena represented and abstracted in paintings. In 'Oh Maharani' she was in a painting, and 'stepped out of a frame'. The world of the painting had been a sheltered environment: it was "difficult to know how to cope/away from the painting". 'Hill' and 'Dream of Uncle' show both directions of her transference between personal-universal and organic-inorganic. In the first, a hill becomes like a person, gaining meaning and vitality; in the second, a person becomes like a hill – as if, presumably, to represent some solid, reliable personal qualities? 'The country has become my body; soon it will burst' ('Pakistan'). In 'England, I am gazing at your body', the poet has a tactile relationship with her new, adopted land. Parts of the body can also be incorporated into this process, as in 'My Prehistoric Name': "I'm pulling myself out of one of my lives/as if I were an old tooth." In 'Burial', the body is transmuted into earth (soil).

Man's destructive potential can emerge at birth, as in 'How the Children were Born': "There, embedded in each infant palm/was the barrel of a tiny gun". In her vision, the Eastern and Western worlds can even melt into each other, as in 'The Double City', where two worlds melt into each other, this impression being reinforced by the image of 'fluid Streets and solid streets. She does not flinch from the background of terrorism and persecution. Interesting to compare this with 'Sunday' in 'Europa: "The peace treaty is hiding in the darkness/like a grown-up/not wishing to be found'. 'Flight' faces the issues of terrorism and suicide bombing with total courage; one of the most outspoken efforts ever in this direction. The stowaway froze to death in the aircraft; he body seemed to be summarily ditched. He acted in that way because of sheer, grinding poverty: "his family's debts,/were as high as Mount Mankial". It was a tragic, futile death – more so when put in the context of religion:

*"Allah gives and Allah takes away
said his father.
He was meant to die
at this time.*

*But the son who had fallen
to earth groaned
It was the wrong time,
The wrong way."*

Women's issues are to the fore here. 'Blood' touches on the theme of menstruation. 'The Wedding' highlights the



oppressiveness of an orthodox Muslim marriage, and of the marital institution generally: “I wanted to marry a country/ take up a river for a veil”. ‘The Colours of the World’ portray the thoughts and reveries of a woman confined by the strictures of Islamic domesticity. She thinks of women in the red light area, she wants to be “conspicuous, like a Western woman and radiate her soul through purdah, “when the colours of the world/rush out to meet her.” In ‘Women of this World’ she shows she would like to influence and to liberate, leave her fingerprints on them. ‘Eine Kleine Nachtmusik’ should be read in conjunction with viewing Dorothea Tanning’s famous painting. In some ways Moniza is opposing, challenging the mythology of the painting, limiting the power of the chaperone/sorceress: “There’s no way of keeping your daughters in at night . . . if you follow them down the path – you turn to stone”.

The medical and the gynaecological are also leitmotifs. In ‘The Sari’, she can even envisage herself as a foetus. ‘Colposcopy’ is outstanding in her poetry of medicine. With the figure of ‘patients in the sky’ physical pain and medical extremes are related to eternity. The theme of childbirth is explored in ‘Enormous’. It both portrays the pains of labour and describes the birth of a monster. She explores the many dimensions of pain. The body can be personified as a bully.

The fairy tale themes of Little Red Riding Hood and ‘Daddy Goes Hunting’ are reworked here – there is a twist to the former, with the mother taking her own heart, and television being the wolf. In the latter, the dark implications are explored to the full: the rabbit skin is “dangerously soft, troubling fur”. Hundreds of rabbits are killed to make the blanket; their flesh is stored in the fridge; the blanket can be almost suffocating. ‘Incident at the Zoo’ handles the folk-tale theme of a baby being seized and destroyed by a ferocious animal. Alvi does not in any way idealise childhood; she treats it as a phase of life. In ‘The Child Goddess’, she celebrates the ‘perfect child’ becoming a real human being through routine wear and tear: “One day, inevitably/she’ll graze her knee, prick a finger,/lose a tooth – her goddess status/disappearing with her first drop of blood.”

The ‘Carrying my Wife’ section involves radical experimentation with gender inter-reaction. Moniza assumes a male persona to observe his wife (herself). She objectifies (reifies) herself to reach a deeper level of self-knowledge. Grammatically, the First Person becomes the Third Person, and become more self-aware through the distancing perspective of an exterior observer. She makes this construct in order to be able to see the wood

for the trees. The device of an outside observer/annotator is common in fiction, particularly in that which approaches autobiography. It remains rare in poetry, but doing gender-swapping with it is rarer still. This approach certainly adds savour to the expression of the author’s themes. A woman’s sash can become a snake. The surreal rules; houses can swell and contract; a job can expand into an astral body. The perspectives of prose fiction are present in her verse. Her feelings about this are highlighted in ‘You Are Turning Me into a Novel’; she feels she is the subject of a novel, and is terrified at the prospect. Throughout her work, there is a sense of overall fear of being a passive object of observation, and a consequent compulsion to take over the positive aspects of observation in multiple guises.

‘So Much Goes on’ is credited ‘after Jean Rhys – a novelist, whose famous work ‘Wide Sargasso Sea’ is considered as a ‘prequel’ to ‘Jane Eyre’.

The power of language exerts an extremely powerful influence; she can feel the need to throw out her father’s dictionary, and feel fear of inscribing her name. In ‘Hindi Urdu Bol Chaal’ she reflects on her own multiple linguistic roots. She is conscious of language as a tool, a means of expression to be constantly honed, not something to be passively worshipped: “my senses stir with words/that must be reinvented.” ‘Lovers’ explores the relationship between language and sensation: “fortunate souls have countless lovers . . . The alphabet loves them, even the rarer letters/ and the vacancies between words, the heroic titles of books love them.”

Alvi explores the nature of perception. An outstanding example of this is ‘Of Chairs and Shadows’. This poem is dedicated to painter Professor Eileen Hogan, whose observations on her own work show why she was so inspiring to the poet: “. . . it is a memory or recollection of a scene, which is also a whole event, that concerns me. A painting is made from many such events, rather than one; and in fact its sources are many layered and can be quite distant in time, and are rarely if ever direct.’ In the poem, chairs and shadows come alive, and challenge each other’s reality. Remember that our routine perception of a shadow is largely inference, which is ultimately questionable!

With the penultimate section, ‘The Further Adventures of the Souls’, Moniza makes brave attempts to write from a spiritual standpoint, embracing eternity. In ‘Without Them’ there is the hypothesis of souls functioning as detached observers, and of conscious, sentient being without souls still functioning, vitalised by a substitute. ‘Lost Souls’, humorously but also profoundly, touches on the idea of a mismatch/

disharmony between souls and the bodies they inhabit . . . “as if our faces were portraits in galleries.” ‘Who Can Blame Them?’ is thought-provoking indeed. Given the relentless growth of the world population, each body will need a soul, and so, in a sense, souls will have to be bred “. . . as fast as possible – let’s call them chicken souls” – all the gruesome horrors of battery farming transferred to the spiritual realm! ‘Immortals’ raises the question of whether all souls are intrinsically ‘lost’. ‘In Space’ validly compares souls to astronauts “. . . they . . . make for deeper space . . . They mock us gentle –/our brief space flights,/the music we try to clothe/with flesh and bone.” Souls are depicted as fallible living entities, capable of “forgetting how to fly” (‘The Worst Thing’). They can be a physical swarm, the can “marry the crowds’ (‘The Marriage’)

As an expansive soul, Moniza Alvi longs to break out of the straitjacket of individuality, of one mortal life-span. In ‘My Father’s Father’s Father’ she longs for her life to span several generations: “I have aged thousands of years./I am older than the oldest tree in the world.” Challenging, complex, disturbing, Monia Alvi’s work deserves all the acclaim it has so far received – and much more. It requires patience and tenacity on the part of the reader to attune to its depths and complexities.

Dave Russell



**I’ve Done Nothing Wrong Today
by Alex Ingram**

ISBN: 978-1-84747366-0
Published: 2007 Chipmonk Publishing
Price: £5.00
Key Themes: photography and poetry

Alex Ingram is a member of CORE Arts and a member of the creative writing group at CORE. This book is an interesting collection of poetry, and photographs. I can see that in Alex’s creative process both these things have equal importance. It is a book, that while being Alex’s own creation, and highly individual. Has the same spirit about it as CORE Arts “Not Your Average Type” Anthology. The first half of the book has a series of photographs, and every so often a page with some typed poetry text. The photographs are inspired. Sometimes they appear to be a little hazy, other times they are clearer. Among them are photographs of people, or parts of people, the rest of the person being

obscured, or out of the picture. There is domestic imagery. Chairs, skirting boards, wallpaper, window frames, light switches, light bulbs, tea cups, toy dogs, and the sea. I am currently very impressed by a picture of a tea cup, milk jug, and sugar bowl on a table, outdoors in a night time scene, at what looks like a fun fair. The use of lighting in this picture is very impressive. I can’t explain the meaning in all the images, But they do communicate. In one of the pieces of text called Blackout Bob, Alex talks about sections of Bob’s brain being sliced out. I don’t know what he was referring to. But it made me think of Psychosurgery. (A controversial psychiatric treatment, where a part of the brain is cut out to change a person’s behaviour.) (I don’t know if the treatment is still practiced. But it was in the 1980s.) Anyway, I don’t want to read into things.

The latter half of the book is made up of poetry. All of it is hand written on notepaper. This gives it an exciting work in progress feel. Some of it is very short like the three line poem Sinking Man. Some of the poems have a Zen like quality to them. Displaying a Zen like sense of wisdom. Like in Spring Sprung, Fire Exit, or High Seas, Red Clouds. Some of the poetry has a surreal quality to it One of the longer pieces, The Young Man Who Cried Clouds, has the quality of a children’s story. I am sure it could be expanded that way should Alex choose to do so. Occasionally a few words become hard to read. But most of it is easy to read. It was an inspired idea presenting poetry like this. The handwriting I feel would be mostly accessible to someone with poor eyesight. There is a closing photo of the front of a cinema with the words “The Cinema Is Closed” where the films would normally be advertised. I don’t know where the photo was taken, but the

Surrounding houses remind me of the poorer parts of Notting Hill. In the foreword that appears at the back of this book, Alex describes the creative process as making a mess and tidying up again. That is how the creative process is. Splashing paint about before the final painting evolves. Writing thoughts down on bits of paper before the poem finally evolves. I hope Alex will feel inspired to produce another book like this. I also hope he will again find someone interested in helping him get it published.

To buy a copy of the book visit www.chipmunkapublishing.co.uk or Alex’s myspace site at www.myspace.com/alex_ingram

Alex Ingram - studied at Glasgow art school [BA (Hon) degree in sculpture 2/2] from 1991 to 1994 and 1996 to 1997 and at Central Saint Martins College of art and design [MA Fine Art] from 2000 to 2001. He has exhibited at numerous exhibitions.

Frank Bangay

The Survivors' History Group – building an archive for the future'

<http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm>

Information about the website, and the safekeeping of people's narratives, books artefacts and documents about the mental health service user/survivor movement.



Historian Andrew Roberts by Phil Ruthen

Who we are

We are an independent survivor-led group archiving the history of mental health survivor movement and the personal history of individual's lives and experience of the UK mental health system.

What we're doing?

The Survivors' History Group, (our shortened title) in association with the Mental Health History Timeline, wants to build a history of the campaigning organisations and individuals involved in this movement that is as broad as possible. This is intended to be preserved for at least one hundred years.

To do this, a website, as it is created, will be preserved by the UK Web Archive, and we are investigating other ways of making sure the history cannot be lost.

We want the website to catalogue the movement's history and include details of records that exist in paper form. We would like the website to also contain as much material as possible in online (digital) form that can be read immediately by website users.

To do this, historic material will be saved as part of the website itself. Computer copies will be made of paper records, and items gathered items, with permission, which people have already posted on other websites or are willing to add from their personal computer filing.

Why do this?

The Survivors' History Group brings together mental health service user/survivor history. It plans to add to the history of survivors before more is lost, in particular their lived experience of the psychiatric system. The aim is to save, value, and celebrate the contribution that mental health service users/survivors have made and are making to that history.

Another aspect of the group's work is to enable service user/survivor history to be accessible to all who are interested in or studying mental health.

The digital records will be preserved as part of a time line story. As website-users read people's narratives, they will find links to the relevant records.

The Website:

More information about mental health and survivors' movements can be found on the website: <http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm>

The website includes, or will include:

- * The story of the movement in the form of a timeline.
- * Information boxes about particular features, such as Survivors' Poetry
- * Reviews and summaries of books, articles, and other printed material that record and discuss the story
- * Copies of articles about the movement and its history
- * Copies of documents from the movement's history
- * Lists of paper records about groups in the movement that individuals and others have preserved
- * Book and pamphlet lists
- * Records of where papers, books and pamphlets are preserved.

Building this collection has to be a collective effort, and we hope you will help us.

A recent conference - our own history

Members of the Survivors' History Group, historians and allies met at the charity Together's offices, central London, on May 29th. The discussions ranged through thirty-five years of mental health system survivor/service user history, with a view to adding further detailed material to the Group's archive, currently under development.

Professional historians accepted the importance of listening to and including service users' experiences. New Group members spoke about the relevance to them of discovering what others have done over the decades in conjunction with the 'mental health survivor movement', and how what they are doing now is part of a living history.

An illustrated report of the conference, and more information about the work of the Survivors' History Group, can be either downloaded from

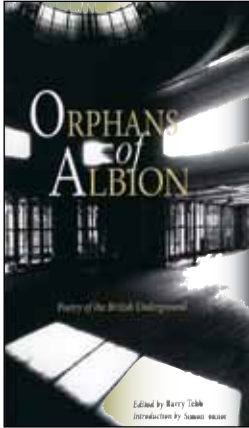
<http://studymore.org.uk/mpu.htm>

or can be requested, again free of charge from:

The Secretary, Survivors' History Group, 177 Glenarm Road, London, E50NB.

Publications

survivors' press 



Orphans of Albion
Poetry of the British Underground
isbn: 1-874595-09-7. 9781-1-874595-90-0
£9

Barry Tebb's 21st century response to Michael Horowitz's ground-breaking 1960s anthology, *Children of Albion*, and its successor, *Grandchildren of Albion*, re-addresses our contemporary notion of a poetic mainstream, revealing the vast array of talent present today, much of which is inexplicably under-represented, or even ignored.

The first section presents the revival of some remarkable poets: Martin Bell, Thomas Blackburn, C. Day Lewis, David Gascoyne, John Silkin - as well as two writers in need of no such thing: Angela Carter and Stevie Smith. These poets feature alongside contemporaries whose sometimes comparable gifts did not win greater recognition. The displacement of fine late Romantic poets like Darley, Beddoes and Emily Bronte after the 1840s, furnish a close parallel.

The second part of the anthology catalogues poets who inherit this similarly haunted tradition; and whose work has no clear alignment with the mainstream. Poets such as Adrian Mitchell, Kevin Crossley Holland, Debjani Chatterjee and Jeremy Reed are showcased here alongside some newer discoveries, such as Mark Floyer, Steve Spence and David Kessell. All in all, they form a distinct alternative.

This is a jarring, often challenging book. Like its editor, it has a cussed way of asking the dangerous question of what British poetry is, and compelling you into a different answer from the one you might have opened the book with.



Postscript
The Creative Writing Group of The Felix Post Unit
isbn: 1874595-20-8, 987-1-8745595-20-5
£7.50

The poetry group at the Felix Post Unit began as a means of trying to address a more holistic approach to mental health. We, as nurses, instinctively knew the value of creativity, and the value of writing creatively, but were uncertain how to put this into practice.

The group evolved from reading poems to writing poems. Our members had very strong ideas of what a poet was, and felt that whatever it was, it wasn't them. However, this changed as confidence grew within the group, and members began to see their poetry written and read out.

This volume is the result of a collaboration between the Felix Post Unit and Mental Health Literature Charity Survivors' Poetry, and came into existence as the result of an initiative created by Nik Maroney of Felix Post and Roy Birch, National Outreach Coordinator of Survivors' Poetry. Pictures by Mich Maroney - Mich is a painter and print maker living and working in London. and music have always been an influence on her work.

The Poetry Group is only a small part of the therapeutic portfolio of the FPU, but it exemplifies the range of highly therapeutic interventions currently available to service users. Our group enables people to express themselves and explore their thoughts and emotions fully. To do this and accept the moment and what it brings. Through acceptance of ourselves, learning not to avoid situations, we can begin to discover that one way to happiness comes from experiencing what may be difficult emotions and learning to let them go. The actual act of writing is a powerful release. Our members have surprised themselves, and, more importantly, surpassed what is expected of them by people in the system.

Unfortunately, current political thinking means that day hospitals are no longer seen as being of integral importance to the canon of older adult services, which means that the poetry group, along with all the other innovative treatments, will be lost to future users.

[click here to buy books at SP Webshop](#)



'Devon - A Sound Mind' photography by kris allan

A social documentary on Living with paranoid Schizophrenia

Produced over a 4½-year period, the exhibition was a documentary on the daily life of a sufferer of paranoid schizophrenia. The photographer and subject hope that viewers came away with a positive feeling about someone who is suffering from this illness; and to further help, in some small way to break down the

Wigan The Duffell Centre

Springfield University Hospital,
61 Glenburnie Road,
London SW17 7DJ.

31st July - 22nd August 2008
from 4.30pm-8pm



Photographer's comments on the project

"Over five years ago I was introduced to the Sound Minds project, based in Battersea. This is an organization that uses music and the arts as a form of therapy for sufferers of mental health conditions. It is a charity that has gone from strength to strength and become more and more well known. Devon, along with Paul Brewer, is one of its founding members.



Sound Minds currently have over nine different bands, playing different styles of music; Devon is involved with seven of these! He is himself a singer/songwriter, and plays the guitar and the drums; he's also an actor. I took some pictures at Sound Minds for a magazine, and got to mingle a bit with some of the people there, and I particularly warmed to Devon. I made the suggestion to him then about doing a form of documentary on his daily life. He agreed with the idea, and hence this project was born. I'm privileged to say, that I think I can now call Devon a true friend....."

Kris Allan is a freelance photographer based in London and can be contacted on:

www.krisallan.com / kris@krisallan.com

Sound Minds

Charity Reg. 1079521020 72071786

bookings@soundminds.co.uk

www.SoundMinds.co.uk

images

top left: Devon with Lenny Henry

top right: Devon on Drumsticks2_5

small left: Devon on Drumsticks1_8

far right: Devon on Guitar_18

PE27 cover image: Devon Foot_34

Dates:

The exhibition is running for the first 3 weeks in August 2008 in Tooting at Springfield Hospital in conjunction with photographic artist Jeremy Walker, and there is also general public access to the Daffodil Art Room by appointment on 1 day per week.

F o r t h c o m i n g v e n u e s

WESTMINSTER reference library - 35 St. Martin's Street, London WC2H 7HP, Saturday 23rd August-- Sat. 6th September.

PUTNEY library - 5-7 Disraeli Rd, London SW15 2DR,

Sunday 28th Sept--Sunday 11th Oct

St. GEORGE'S hospital - Blackshaw Rd, Tooting SW17 0QT,

Wed 1st April--Fri 10th April 2009.

Other venues around the UK are being sought - if you would like to discuss the possibility of staging the exhibition near you, particularly before April 2009, please contact Kris Allan

BIOGRAPHY

My name is Devon Marston.

I am a survivor of the Mental Health system.

I went to school in South West London, then went to study electronic TV and radio repair; that was short lived.

My parents are from the West Indies. I was also born in Jamaica and came to the UK in 1965. Millie Small the singer was no.1 in the Top of the Pops charts in England. It was the swinging sixties.

I grew up mainly in the borough of Wandsworth; I worked and lived in the now 'old' Battersea. I used to go to the cafe to have breakfast. In those days I was working for small general companies, for instance, a dry cleaning company.

I have one brother and one sister. They have their own families and they seem distant as I get older. But I am married with a great wife and a beautiful family, and I'm still doing what I do best, writing and playing live music. I've been doing this for the last four decades for young people in Wandsworth.

The main organization that I'm involved with is called 'Sound Minds'. This was founded back in 1993 by myself and three OT's from the West Battersea team, who came to a meeting



in the local library. At that time I was a deacon at the Battersea chapel. I was also vice chair of the Kambala estate resident association; I was one of the leaders in the community.

After spending years of performing my own songs and singing and acting on stage entertaining people, I also taught students with physical disabilities, with Spina Bifida and so on, music and therapy; that was very rewarding for me. I also went on to work as a volunteer with young adults with learning difficulties, running music workshops and social activities.

Finally, there's the Anansi Web show. This is my own creation of an up date of the folk tales of a West African character who was mischievous and cunning. This show gives a platform for service users of our community to perform and speak out to an audience in a safe environment.

I will continue such work for the foreseeable future.
Devon.

events

link to forum:

http://survivorspoetry.com/SP_Forum/index.php

The Poetry Cafe

Dates: Featuring

11th September 2008 *Ingrid Andrews*
Akin Oladamiye & Margarie
9th October 2008 *Holmes*
13th November 2008 *TBC*

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>

Maggie's Bar

Dates: Featuring
11th September 2008 *TBC*
9th October 2008 *TBC*
13th November 2008 *Michael Horovitz*

Maggie's Bar
98-100 Church St.
Stoke Newington
LONDON N16 0AP

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 7.00pm-7.30pm in order to book your floorspot. The doors will open to other audience members from 7.00pm and the performance will start at 7.30pm 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.

contact: email: xmtuck@hotmail.com

Tel: 07796 831 935

<http://www.survivorspoetry.com/pages/home/event-calendar.php>

contact: email: info@survivorspoetry.org.uk

john weedon exhibition

The Lady Dressed In Red
Exhibition extended to mid-August 2008

Venue: The Poetry Café, 22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BX (Nr Drury Lane Theatre).
Tel: 020 7420 9887 poetrycafe@poetrysociety.org.uk

Bristol Survivors'

contact: steve henessey
email: cd007g8825_2@blueyonder.co.uk

www.steppingouttheatre.co.uk

Wakefield Writers' Group

contact: Tim Grayson
email: timg@touchstone-leeds.co.uk

Manchester Survivors'

contact: xxxxx xxxxxx
email:

Abegeveny Survivors'

New Group Contact

Contact: Louise

email: alluishas1@yahoo.co.uk

Simon's Blog: click link to access

<http://www.survivorspoetry.com/pages/home/simon-s-blog.php>



classifieds

Survivors' Poetry is in a position to share our office space with another organisation needing small office space. If you are a small organisation in the North London Area please give us a call to discuss your needs. We are situated in an old school house by a green, close to amenities, Hampstead Heath, Highgate and Archway. We have a large open office space overlooking residential houses. parking meters apply.



Our overall space
:
small office
2.90m x 2.6m

large office space to be shared
10.50 x 5.5m



The space available is negotiable however Survivors' Poetry will need 50% of the overall space. Any costs for move to remain with enquirer.



The Survivor's Pledge

Survivors' plans to set up a Survivors' Pledge Account, by asking those that wish to see us continue to undertake our good work make an annual subscription pledge.

We are looking for those who would donate an annual pledge, details of which will be uploaded on our website News page soon.

<http://www.survivorspoetry.com/pages/home/news.php>

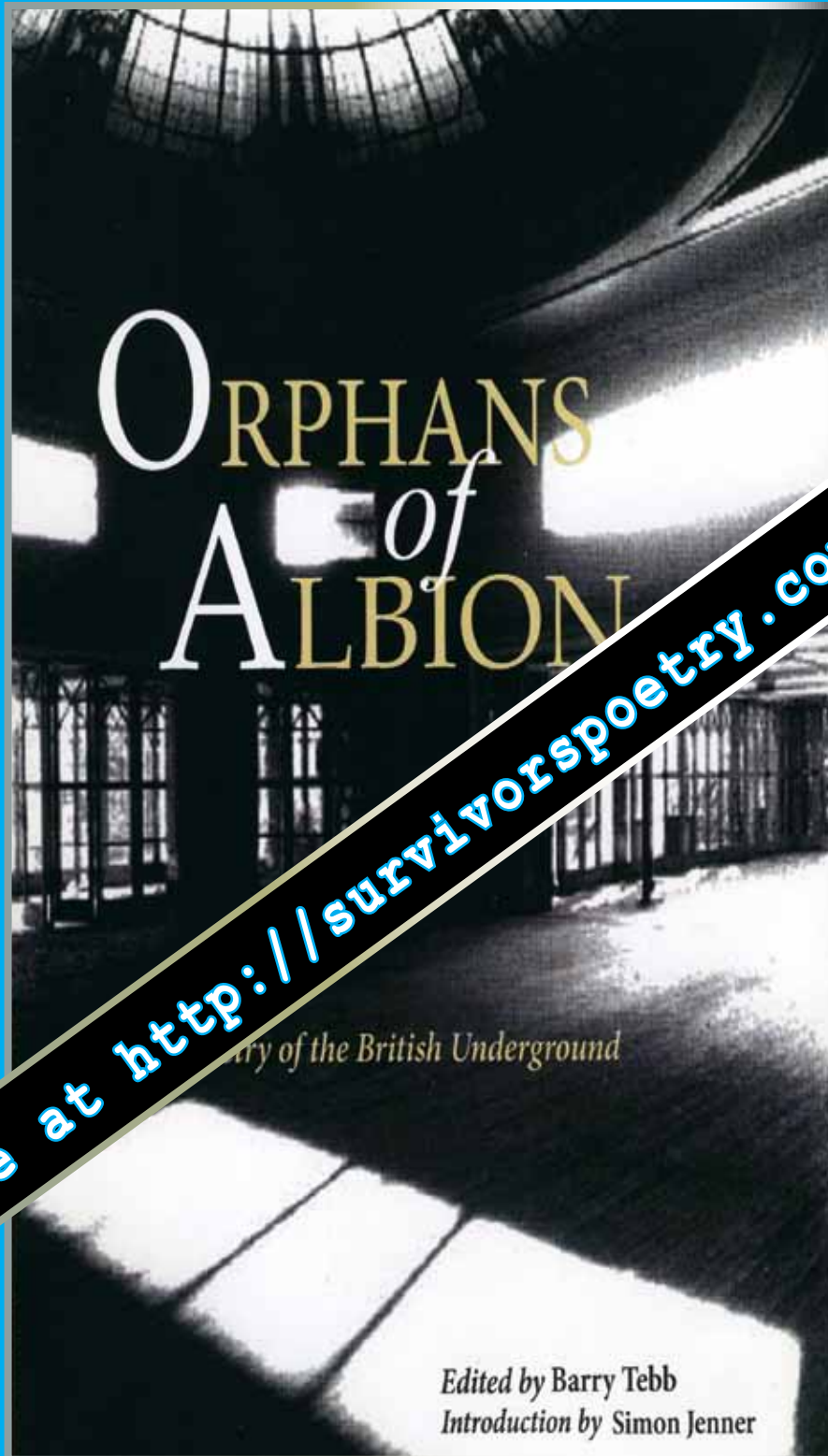


Survivors' Poetry is looking for new trustee's to get involved. If you have 4 hours a week with an understanding of the charity or NHS sector we would be very interested to hear from you.

if you wish to



make contact and respond to anything you have read or if you wish to contribute please either email info@survivorspoetry.org.uk or write to
Survivors' Poetry
Studio 11 Bickerton House
25-27 Bickerton Road
London N19 5JT
Tel: 020 7281 4654
www.survivorspoetry.com



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