

Poetry Express Newsletter #57

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Artwork by Ingrid Andrew



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Contributions to Dave Russell (Editor) – bricolage92@hotmail.com

Editorial

Happy New Year from the other side of snow! There have been some exciting developments recently with Survivors – and so many activities that each of the lead participant will have to tell you themselves.

For me it's been a slow bricolage of persuasion, but there's been a breakthrough I hope to share in my next.

A relatively quiet revolution has been going on with Events – core-managed by Debbie McNamara with three rotating MCs including Dave Russell, our extraordinary anchor for nearly 30 years. His update will tell you far more.

Debbie herself was rooted in those heady early years; her return links us with much of that pioneering energy and élan. We start earlier, and now have to finish earlier too. But with Debbie's remarkably focused campaign and liaison with Poetry Café, numbers are up.

In addition, Debbie has raised our profile, bringing us to the awareness of the larger poetry stage. Two imminent fruits bear witness to the buzz: First, John Hegley is down to read on March 14th – no introductions needed there I imagine.

Second, thanks to Debbie there's a Torriano Poetry event on Sunday March 3rd. Naturally for those outside London like me these events aren't easy to get to on a Sunday evening. But they're rightly famed and if you're anywhere near the vicinity – do contact Debbie and see if you can read too.

There's a budding morrow in midnight, Keats once wrote of creative hiatus in his astonishingly brief career. The latest rounds of fundraising and profile-raising have proved the most heartening for years. Perhaps too, without all the trappings of large-scale office-born funding, we can reorient what we need as opposed to the large-scale ambitions incumbent on me when I stepped in nigh on 16 years ago.

Sometimes it takes a winter of disinvestment before we can wither into the truth. Yeats might have rested there but renewed himself. Except this time it's not green shoots but crocuses – the promise of spring and a few long-cherished modest ambitions I have to remain silent on now. Really, watch this space.

Simon Jenner

Survey

September 13th at the Poetry Café saw the continuing trend of capacity audiences and new faces. The highspot was **Colin Hambrook**, with a spirited succession of poems accompanied by screenings of his great artworks, including his portrayal of a knitted boat. The rest of the evening was truly action-packed. A wild Shamanic opener from **Andrew Rea**, followed by rousing utterances from **John Hoggett**, veteran campaigner against abuse and suicide. Some great Caribbean feeling from **Jean** and **Jeanette JuPierre**. Strong polemic from **Martin Read** on the Trump phenomenon, with the challenging image of an 'inner Trump'. Lively spots in the second half from **Keith Bray** and **Alain English**. A great sense of Survivors' history was given by recordings of the late **Joe Bidder**.

The dynamic pace accelerated further on **October 11th**, emcee-ed by **Alastair Murray** who, alongside his songs (one of them enhanced by the brilliant flute-playing of **Keith Bray**), recited the late Razz's beloved poem *Kylie's Bum*. The main guest was **Louisa Harvey**. Louisa has the invaluable double perspective of having been a severe sufferer (including suicidal ideation – celebrated in *A Leap of Faith*) and a Counsellor/Therapist. *One Under* spoke with deep compassion of someone who threw herself under a train; another of her highlights was her personification of a threatened, sensitive tree in *What the Trees Speak When They're Cut*. Louisa also does music under a pseudonym. Some historical perspective too, including the ancient Britain of **Andrew Rea** (complete with ivy headgear) introducing the audience to the warrior women 'The Hag Tessa', and to *Kalkera Dybak*, a fungus afflicting ash trees. Great input of historical perspective, with Sober reflections on centenary of the First World War from **Lee Hay** and **John Farrer**, while **David Hayes** gave some sobering historical perspective with his observations on Australian participation in the Vietnam war. In contemporary mode, **Martin Read** made a bitterly ironic declamation with *I Wish I were a Brexiteer*. A beautiful mythological presentation from newcomer **Julie Ann Robinson**. The evening was also memorable for its honest, overt expression of emotion in direct reaction to real pain and trauma: **Richard and Jean** spoke directly of their traumas in total, tearful sincerity, while **Aleathia** contributed *Hey Agoraphobia*, and some delicate verses were recited by **Anne Vaughan Williams**.

Musically, **Kath Tait** aired her new, richly melodic, jazz-tinged song *The Poet and the Engineer*. More musical contributions from John Arthur and Declan, the latter in wild improvisatory mode. There was also a further instalment of **Joe Bidder** recordings.

November 8th sustained this dynamic pace, with the poetic and musical sensitivity of Keith Bray, including musical boxes and his delicate flute-playing.

No let-up in tempo on **December 13th**, headed by **Jennie Bellestar (Matthias)** girl band dating back to the 80s, and looking remarkably well-preserved. This, for her, was a rare solo a capella performance – radiating a powerful humanitarianism. She read *Wake Up World*, then proceeded to outline her **Show and Grow** project – encouraging people to learn, and gather strength, from adversity. Her aims are totally in sync with those of Survivors Poetry!

The event was emcee'd by **George Tahta**, who made his deeply moving tribute to the plight of the Armenians. Floorspots as dynamic as ever, great opener from **Andrew Rea**, with his celebrations of pagan antiquity – *Witch in the Wood*, *Ash Tree* and *Fairy Ring*. Some cosmic perspective from **Kevin O'Connor** with *The UFO*. **Jessica Lawrence** declaimed eloquently about the destruction of trees, bared ground which 'bled like ragged nail-beds, and of 'landscapes wrecked by fire's savagery'.

Some sensitive music from **Alastair Murray**, who has just released a CD – *This Way Home*; on his last number he was backed by the tasteful harmonica of **Lawrence Renée**. The musical element was further enhanced by the jazzy lyricism of **Rosie Shy** and **Declan**. A very welcome newcomer in the form of **Anna**, who discovered enlightenment in communion with Hampstead Pond – kingfishers kissing indeed! Some great polemic by **Martin Reed**. targeting Dominic Raab, and with the incisive quip "parrots suck seed – much like Teresa May". **Frank Bangay** introduced his new, beautifully illustrated book, *The Adventures of Jack Frost*. More from **Jeanette Ju-Pierre** – ebullient as ever.

Impetus continued unabated into the New Year. January 10th featured the brilliant rap artistry of **Potent Whisper** (details on page xxx), who read from his *Rhyming Guide to Post-Grenfell Britain*. This to me is a true high-spot of rap culture, an impeccable grasp of stark socio-economic realities exquisitely versified in the rap rhyme scheme. He packed everything in. A close second from the floor spots with **Jonas** and partner, who enhanced their intensity by performing in the dark. They did a brilliant satirical pastiche of bureaucratise and some excruciating bits of Facebook-speak. It's a great 'consciousness-raiser' to have these absurdities highlit in a fresh and critically aware context.

Great tribute to 'The King' from **Dave Elvis**, complete with wig and Las Vegas outfit. Sensitive music from emcee **Alastair Murray** with nimble harmonica from **Lawrence Renée**. More Shamanic delights from **Andrew** – including a celebration of wassailing. **Amelia** reflected on a shallow relationship, describing herself as being treated like an ephemeral Christmas parcel. She was followed by Gary questioning as to whether he was 'above his station'. Further contributions from **Varshini**, **Kevin**

O'Connor, Richard Downes (loving cake), **Jean Bailey** and Jessica Lawrence – some laconic relationship observations in *Merman* – “I am your manatee”, while her partner is described as a ‘bald eagle’.

Ros Kane described her struggles with recalcitrant paper and circulars in *Vicious Letterboxes*. **Frank Davis** presented a recording of Joe Bidder reading his *Renaissance Man*. **Rob Rider Hill** did a ‘cockney’ rendition of an ode originating in the 3rd Century AD, with roots in Ancient Greek, Hebrew and Chaldean.

The new faces keep on rolling in. **February 14th**'s ‘Valentine Special’ went with an engaging swing. Jessica Lawrence did a sublimely sensual selection, greatly enhanced by her recorded backing tracks (including Debussy) and some great guitar from **Alastair Murray**. Great analogy between eros and bicycle maintenance. The ‘warts and all’ aspect was depicted in a poetic dialogue between **Richard Downes** and **Jean Bayliss**. Throbbing contributions from **Armored Weston**, **Kevin O'Connor**, **Sophie Max**, **Peter Beverley**, **Eloise**, **Frank Bangay**, **Louisa**, **George Tahta**, **Jack**, **Alex**, **Mariam** and **Ros Kane**.

Dave Russell

Dear Friends,

It is with profound sadness that we share the news of the passing of two dear friends that have contributed to FEEL over the years, wishing to send our condolences to all their friends and family members.

Kevin Zdaniecki (1952-2018) (Cons. Drs. C Psychologist AFBPS Chartered Member BPS DCP). Kevin led a talk for a FEEL event at Kingsley Hall in Nov 2014 and supported FEEL work ever since.

The brilliant ***Jazzman John Clarke*** (1948-2018) was one of FEEL's favourite MC at several Poetry events, with whom we shared some real memorable times.

A legendary figure in many poetry circuits around London, Jazzman is being remembered and celebrated widely at some of the spots where he was regularly seen performing.

Please contact **Vyvy** on **Vyvyemail@gmail.com** if willing to contribute to the special zine dedicated to John being collected together for this event.

In Memory of Ingrid Andrew



Ingrid Andrew was for many years a dedicated poet and painter. Survivors cannot have missed her spectacular pictures on the flyers. She also branched out into music with her ensemble Heartssong. One of her last efforts was the composition of the epic *When Woman Created the World*, in collaboration with Tara Fleur. Her artworks here are taken from her illustrations of the latter. Like many, I was deeply shocked by the news of her tragic demise.

Dave Russell

I Knew A Man Named Cliff

I knew a man named Cliff
I think he drove a Ford
Because my good poet friend
Just called him only Clifford

I Always Know When Spring Is
G David Schwartz
I always know when spring begins
Its on my anniversary
The day I wed my smart beautiful girl
And brought her to the 'nati.

I Wanted To Be A Scientist
G David Schwartz
I wanted to be a scientist
I wanted to study time
So I bought chalk board and an eraser
And the universe became mine.

Her Smile Made Me Feel
G David Schwartz
Her smile made me feel
That everything was real
From here below my knee
to down around Tennessee

This was written by **G. David Schwartz** – the former President of Seedhouse, the Online Interfaith Committee. Schwartz is the author of *A Jewish Appraisal of Dialogue* (1994) and *Midrash and Working Out Of The Book* (2004). His newest book, *Shards And Verse* (2011) is now in stores or can be ordered on line. David is currently a volunteer at The **Cincinnati J, Meals On Wheels**. The names here are fictitious

DavidSchwartzG@AOL.com



Memories of Alan Leader

Friday 22nd February 2019

2pm

**At Sutton Mental Health Foundation (SMHF), 63
Downs Road, Belmont, Sutton. Surrey. SM2 5NR.**

Please let Jane or Carol know if you would like to say something about Alan – come and see us or contact us at: jane.isaac@smhf.org.uk or Carol.Jacques@smhf.org.uk

Alan Leader Tribute: (reproduced with kind permissions)

We are very sorry to report that our dear friend and colleague Alan Leader died on the 20th August 2018 in hospital. Alan had been struggling against increasing ill health for a long time, although appeared improving, hence an unexpected passing.

Alan had been a part of the Sutton Mental Health Foundation [SMHF] team for almost ten years, he joined us with extensive experience of working alongside and representing people with very severe mental health problems. His vision and drive led to the establishment of the *Sutton 1in4 Network*, which rapidly established itself as a focal point for people to work together on projects and activities of their own choosing. He worked with people using services to set up the Commissioning Advisory Group, which meets commissioners regularly to discuss the commissioning and performance of mental health services and he ran training to equip people to play their part effectively in these discussions. He built strong relations with the regular users of Sutton Mental Health Foundation's "Connect" service, encouraging them to re-engage with social activities such as football matches, and established and supported Circles of Support meeting in community venues.

Alongside these local activities, Alan found time to engage in a wide range of activities on a broader stage. He worked with people who use the services of the South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, contributing to the development of the Trust's Council and encouraging people to become members of its Council. He was involved in several Trust projects, both as an individual and with Sutton 1in4, including work on Care Plans, Making Safeguarding Personal and policies on physical restraint. In the course of these activities he made many friends and contacts and built on his previous work in other places.

Alan will be greatly missed, both for himself and for his important and imaginative work. Our thoughts continue with his family at this difficult time.

SMHF Website: <https://smhf.org.uk/>

Fish Eye and The Mirror

He was thrown into a gap, down to the centre of the earth, opening like a womb down to the core of creation.

And all was empty, wiped clean as dust, a silent place of shadow, shovelled-up with the hubris of centuries of certainty that the place of the mad was secure...



He is an ocean. He is an ocean raised in air and living in a bubble below the surface of things.

He is a bright sea extending the full wrap of the orb of the earth and to the edges of the wind.

He is yesterday. He is tomorrow and all spaces in between.

And he is not these things.



He is the deepest breath – one that seems never to stop filling the lungs.

And he is an even longer out-breath. He is the rattling cry of the corvid reaching to break the chains of this moment and to take in the ocean of generations back and back to the time when hydrogen and oxygen first decided to mate, the primary coupling of matter.



He is the birth of spirit into the tearless cry of new-born life.

He is the centre and the periphery.

He is the melancholy grace of the wings of the Whooping Crane, the sail of the Sea Swallow, the Starling and the Dunlin. He is a Salmon pushing up-river and all living things searching for grace.



He is without boundary. He is everything and all time and he is nothing.

He is of no consequence, less than a single beat in the story of knowledge.

He is the roar of flame at the core of the groaning planet turning as a restless foetus seeking revelation in the womb of its mother.

He is a whisper of red, the all-consuming passion at the start and end of it all.



Colin Hambrook



Artwork by Ingrid Andrew

States of Happiness by Suzanne Batty

Bloodaxe Books 2018 ISBN 978 1 78037 426 0 £9.95

In this collection, Suzanne explores her relationship with her twin sister, who had a tragically early death. The description of their relationship together radiates the fresh curiosity of childhood. She struggles to get to grips with her bereavement; that struggle fortifies her in later life. The trauma is captured in the phrase “My heart’s a butchered slab in a plastic bag.” She has some maternal feelings towards her sister.

Mum and Dad are extremely powerful and enigmatic figures. They take the two girls on rural expeditions, where they are exposed to the elements. Her twin – *My twin, the fearless* – seems to have been a wild, impulsive spirit, exposing herself to danger, difficult to control – neither earth nor tree can balance her.

The second section, *Angels of Anarchy*, consists of five poems all inspired by paintings and artwork: *The Oval Lady*, after *Self-Portrait*, by Leonora Carrington, *The Oneiroscopist*, after a painting by Edith Rimmington, *Frida’s Letter*, after *View of Central Park 1932*, by Frida Kahlo, *A Little Night Music*, after *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, by Dorothea Tanning, *House Containing Angel*, after photographs by Francesca Woodman, and *The Longest Journey I* by Ana Maria Pacheco.

I think it would have been extremely reader-friendly to put reproductions of the artworks in the ample space available. Accordingly I here present some of the artworks referred to: -



Self-Portrait, by Leonora Carrington

The Martello Tower – Martello towers were built around the English coastline to prepare for a possible Napoleonic evasion. The one in this poem seems to be a place of exile and solitary confinement, where she has food delivered, but is deprived of all the other necessities of life. She has a bitter, wistful memory of a lover. *Gay-Lyfe Pets and Aquatics* refers to a pet shop with Aquarium tanks. This is indeed a fascinating spectacle, but the underlying predatory reality does penetrate, with the cannibalism of the Egyptian Mouthbreeder, and the feeling of fishes' teeth biting the poet's cheeks. *They didn't want to see me* seems like a nightmare of psychiatric internment, expressed figuratively. The nurses feel like malignant shades. 'Every howling monkey morning' is an extremely powerful phrase. In her vision, a suicide makes a post-mortem visit. She aches to depart from the world.



Photo by Francesca Woodman

P10 seems to refer to the death of Princess Diana. In this nightmare vision of the response, the paparazzi perpetrate unspeakable acts of sadism and masochism in order to obtain their pictures. The poet saw herself as a genius who knew the real culprit, also as the ultimate tortured victim. In the third stanza, things come 'down to earth' and into 'reality' on the psychiatric ward. She is brutally assaulted by one of the nurses, and ends up drawing blood.

Wincobank is the name of an iron age hill fort, and a railway station. The poem seems more centered on the latter. It portrays a strong sense of human physical agony through industrial metaphor: 'the promise of their frostbitten, scaffolded hearts'. There is apparent reference to a hermit/exile, with a 'home made of plastic sheeting', and then a scenario of being caught up in a sanguinary riot. *Taraloka*, by its own definition, "is a women's Buddhist retreat centre, founded in 1985 and set in beautiful Welsh Borders countryside. We are part of the Triratna Buddhist Community." There is a succession of surreal images here: do they relate to

Buddhist meditation exercises? There is no flinching from the painful: “I remember her untouchable hands/their harshness when she opened them//released me too soon . . . the frog-like stink of loss”

The effect of *Behind my sister's house* is fragmented and centrifugal. The dominant image is of a swan, with its combination of beauty and ferocity. I admit to finding the conclusion utterly enigmatic: “It steps out from behind a hawthorn in full flood/calls me a prisoner in a waterless pit. It starts to rain./I kneel in the stupid grass, can't bring myself to drink./I will do what I'm told – delete myself.” Is the swan a symbol of doom? *Searching* is dedicated to romantic poet Jack Gilbert. Some background information to clarify the connection would have been welcome. A gruesome tableau of the animal world run riot – “A wolf is splitting sticks/between its teeth to start a fire.” The chaos also relates to humanity: “The animals/press their eyelids shut, fill my eyes with sparks.”



Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, by Dorothea Tanning

Foundations – a nightmare journey into a dark tunnel, persecuted by ‘goat-ghosts’. There is an exhortation not to think of oneself as alive. The idea of the boiler-suited guards is quite scary. *Babysitting* – some gruesome images: of the baby being permanently preserved in an aquarium, of its father swallowing stones and harbouring young goats when his body is dissected. Then there is a shift to her being held down by force (in a psychiatric hospital?), with the anaesthetic at the ready, after that a yearning to ‘shapeshift’. The horrific continues with *Coal bunker*, a fantasy of shooting some dolls, and leaving behind a totally void and desolate landscape. Megan McMorran – the memory of a childhood haunt goes haywire. The poet feels she has turned into a Spaniel. The hostess is briefly molested, and then comfortably

reads porn. “There is all this white stuff in the air.” Has a pillowcase burst? *Bungalow* evokes a sojourn at a decrepit grandparental abode, where a hideous ‘bad dream’ scenario unfolds – ‘plagues of brittle ladybirds . . . The old people die of Nanny’s bread and butter . . . yawning rabbits made of cabbage leaves’.

Well dressing – Suzanne goes on a lugubrious expedition with her mother. The first stanza is ‘comfortable’ enough, decking a dried-up well with flowers. But then ‘the sky is cruel’ and the ‘Ground is thick with frogs’. The conclusion of the poem almost seems like a death-wish, or at the very least, a yearning for solitary exile. “Let there be walls and no windows/a sack to sleep in on the cold impersonal earth.” *My father in the monastery* is a spectacle of a brooding, menacing (and non-religious) patriarch, where the imagery is cleverly tortured out of joint – ‘the grass laughing under its snow-dome . . . candles spit like camels . . . The cold is a crawling insect/within his blood.’ *Conversation at Cricieth castle* – the conversation in question is with Suzanne’s father, who seems to have been callous and insulting towards her. In spite of this, she yearns to return to her childhood ‘and turn you (father) into the sun’ – direction or transformation?



The Longest Journey I by Ana Maria Pacheco

Subsongs is also quite disparate. The first stanza seems to allude to an unpleasant lesbian encounter. In the second, she is a hurricane victim, transmuted into a tree, and then to a scavenging predator, preying on birds’ nests. Then another flash to her childhood, hitting her

father – who is now on a life support machine. In *Anchoress*, the child Suzanne was ditched by her father, who talks of suicide. But for all his callousness “He gave me a vision/of my coming into being – I was in Christ’s body, clinging to his heart.” However, she did extricate herself from him, and become independent – “I wrapped my soul around me like a second skin”. *My father’s field glasses* – a good way of magnifying memories.

In *Landing, Plymouth Rock*, Suzanne identifies fully with the Pilgrim Fathers, who would have faced starvation and death without the assistance of the Native Americans. *Thomas White, who dyed of the general sickness* is a truly painful deathbed vision. *William Bradford, Elder* was a prominent figure in the Mormon church. It is not immediately clear to me how this reference relates to a poem which seems to refer to the possible drowning of Suzanne’s twin. *The Longest Journey I* relates to a failed love pilgrimage. Again, I am newly informed of Ana Maria Pacheco – a highly distinguished Brazilian sculptress. The reading public deserves to be more fully informed about her. *Trefeglwys*, interestingly enough, refers to a place I have actually visited – a charming rural idyll including freeing a lamb from a placenta. *Truck driver, 1983* seems to describe a hitch-hiking experience involving an attempted rape which then became consensual: “I swam in my shapeless/feminist clothes, took off my shirt to make a float for him . . . I wanted to see his hair/floating on the water like something forbidden . . .” *Gap year* is a mild expression of the spirit of adventure.

Severe weather warning suggests a close, possibly deceased woman friend who may have experienced a lover drowning, returning to her friend with a bleak and desolate tale to tell. In *Seamstress’s notebook*, a pedal-operated sewing machine seems to be a meditation aid. There is a dog-fight in the background, and she is sewing, for her father, a garment which he will probably never wear. *Oswald Road* conveys the sense of being a fugitive, from a predatory and unwanted partner. Her fugitive steps accumulate on a mountain side; she hopes that they will be a positive liberator, and ‘blow the door open’ to freedom and security.

In *Dreams of warthogs*, Suzanne reflects on her unhappy childhood, with some degree of self-revulsion, even considering herself ‘a corpse decomposing in my attic’. There is a painful sense of futility – “I am an empty pram, I am walking uphill”. *The Boatshed Café* is an indictment of chaperonage and surveillance, of a particularly subtle kind: “Don’t be tempted to take him to the mangrove swamp/*we are already there . . .*” *Jesus on a train from Mumbai* recounts the not-so-happy experiences of a New Age Traveller, at the hands of predatory British tourists. She is introduced to the real harshness of the locality. *Woodcutter* – a countrywoman doing her washing, with some passing fascination for a woodcutter; perhaps she senses his essence in her shirt ‘throwing white arms around me’.

Grandmother is a protest poem. Suzanne rejects the advice that “when a man beats you, it’s with the beam of love in his eye”; he will retaliate. *The nameless tree* – Suzanne personifies herself as a tree, with the company of copse siblings. Now she is isolated and desolated. The company of other children must now come from elsewhere. *Hatch* is a lament for a husband/loved one stoned to death. *States of Happiness* concerns the progression from childhood, through adolescence, to adulthood. She seemed to have to look after several siblings; her father was ‘like a gift promised by mistake’. In adolescence she had both lesbian

and hetero experience. In adulthood she bore an offspring; the experience was somewhat traumatic: "The midwives woke me with their metal hands, their words as dark and squat as woodstoves." *After April* seems to have been written from hospital, wondering if there could be a return to outside life, past and present. I admit to being disturbed and sometimes confused by this collection, which speaks strongly for its courageous originality.

Dave Russell

Newsflash - Alan Morrison's New Title

Dear Recusants and Associates

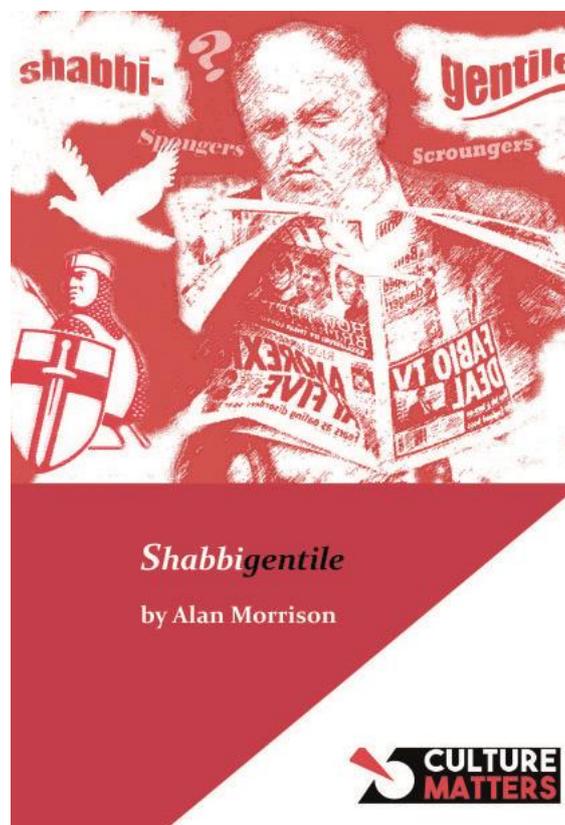
Alan Morrison's new poetry collection, *Shabbigentile*, published by Culture Matters, is now available to order here: <http://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/shop-support/our-publications/item/2981-shabbigentile>

Here is an Introduction to give a flavour of the book:

<http://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/arts/poetry/item/2982-shabbigentile>

For further enquiries or review copies please contact Mike Quille at editor@culturematters.org.uk

"The state of the nation we are in, with all its uncertainty, chaos... is covered in this collection of searing poems. They are poems that will make you burn with anger but also with hope" Peter Raynard



The Pay Cut

This is your final notice lobster pink
YOU OWE print PAY deposit WE MAY CUT OFF
Yr Supply You NOT PAID

OUR RECORDS SHOW
YOU HAVE STILL NOT PAID
electric account bill final
NOTICE how late

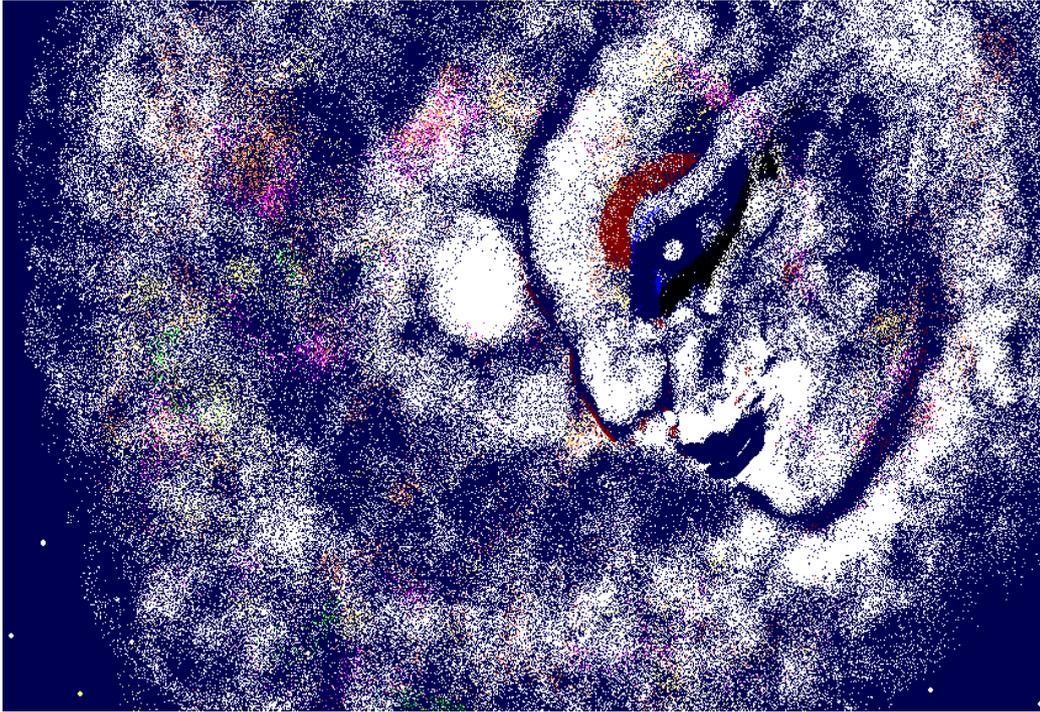
payment is for the amount
USED YOU HAVE USED. NOW. LATE.
all previous important tick payments pay
in full where to pay reply
or WE MAYCUT OFF CUT YOU OFF

crystal
plain English campaign TELL
NOTICE
you may lose, cannot win
in return direct debit what name
is your bank are you do you
anyone in your household who lives
with YOU can Pay can Pay

PAY Take the whole bill if you prefer
you can pay this bill future quarterly
WRITE A/c PAYEE only YOU can pay

each week each fortnight each month each year
each month, each year.

Carlyle Reedy Feb '08



Artwork by Ingrid Andrew



Artwork by Ingrid Andrew

Stomach Wrench

(Words from a Hungry Wedding party intruder)

Blade – rake – torch, insecticide. Whip lash, help me Mumma, I sense the ceiling caving in.
Blade – rake – torch – insecticide. Whip lash, shall I depart? I'm at a loose end? All straws are loose. There is no last straw. There is no first straw. Which way? I dig deep, in fact I reach in, hand first into my mouth. I then with *all* determination, penetrate the entrance to my throat. You see, my destination is my stomach.

Blade – rake – torch – insecticide. Whip lash, with *all* determination. I tried very hard, I tried *very* hard. I could not do it. The world champion for dry reaching. What a trophy to be proud of. What an award to celebrate. A thick, lumpy, bland bile, mud slime projected from my lower, solo bulge. I tried, I tried, I tried. I was very ill, *very* ill. Only for a day. Yet consequences caught up soon.

I love coffee. I couldn't drink it. I cut and scratched the black hole to my throat when desperately trying to get my hand in, *in*, into my stomach. The stinging snatched my coffee away, spilling on the floor. I want to rip my guts out. That's what I wanted to do, rip my guts out. Everything I could get my hands on down in there, reach in and yank it all out! Why? Not yet. Why? Not yet. Rattling refuse was down there, down below in my lower solo bulge. Cans, bottles, bones n'butts in sweet syrup bile, a gluttonous revolting rapid hurling through. Once I recognised as my stomach, I now know as the dump.

On this particular occasion – cold cow, a fine rare roast, sliced and arranged to the portrait perfection of a parrot. Fish – exquisitely baked, simply saturated in butter, salt and garlic, showered in fresh parsley sprinkles. Sheep – the softest lamb I've ever consumed, swimming in the most delectable juices I could not identify, tempting me to temporarily depart myself from the party and find a shot glass full of Cognac to drink, just-by-itself. Truly a sensational swig. Cake – *it was a palace* and for the first time in my life, I wanted this palace to fall on me. It had the fluffiest interior. Angels could fly through it, soft and cushioned on their flight. They'd go mud bathing in chocolate mousse on the mezzanine and ski, cross country on the edible marzipan gazebo.

‘Just Married’ strung together making a hell of a racket as the fallen lovers rattled down the driveway. No one could hear, nor I, yet calm, quiet night jetty sounds could be heard if you were very up-close, ear touching my stomach. The knocking, rocking of the sleeping boats with occasional bell chimes. The ordered separation of rubbish for gradual improvement of our earth, had no say here. Recycling? A joint, conglomerating collection of it all, coming out to fertilise your sea or enrich your sewer from my guts.

I failed to reach and wrench it out, the entire contents of my stomach. Further efforts to wrench *the dump* would cause detrimental consequences, carrying me to casualty. I didn’t want to go there. Spew out the whole mass? Force myself to throw up? No. That is just a residual effect. I want the WHOLE house and contents out of me! Stomach pump?

I am on my way and will depart this marital affair with gumption, not to clean your bathtub.

© **Cathy Flower Poet for Life**



Artwork by Ingrid Andrew

At Your Side

I've had some issues but haven't we all,
Sometimes we rise sometimes we fall,
With your love and hope I can stand tall,
All it takes is a text message e-mail or call.

Words can cut us to the bone,
But what are words when you've got no home,
When you walk the streets at night alone,
And a life of love is all you've known.

Focus upon these worded lines,
Feel the passion in these rhymes,
Know I am with you for all time,
For we are of the same design.

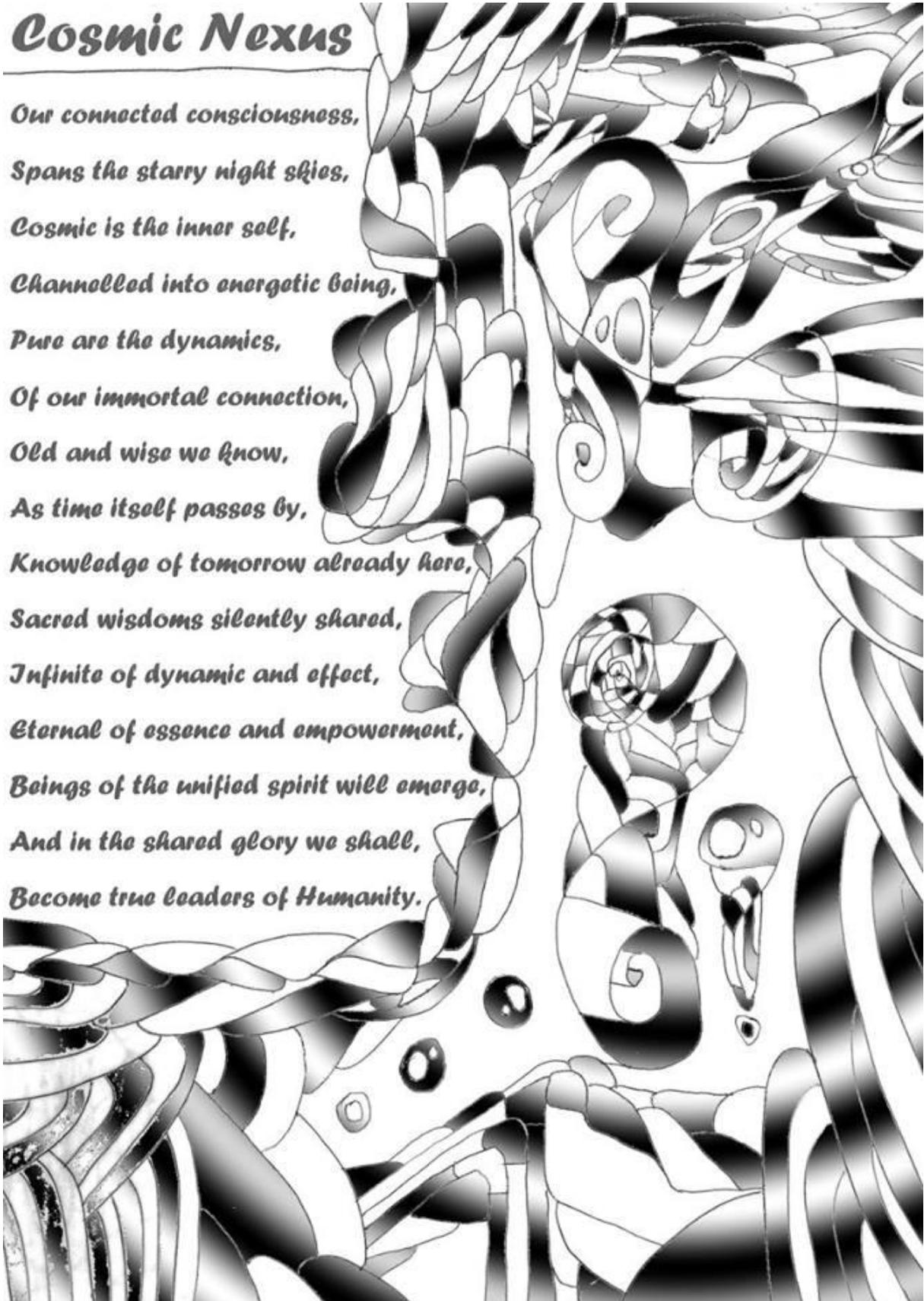
You need never cry or hide,
Know I am forever by your side,
With your strength, courage and hope and pride,
I know you will overcome all in your stride.

 /NEWWORLDTHOUGHTDISORDER



Cosmic Nexus

*Our connected consciousness,
Spans the starry night skies,
Cosmic is the inner self,
Channelled into energetic being,
Pure are the dynamics,
Of our immortal connection,
Old and wise we know,
As time itself passes by,
Knowledge of tomorrow already here,
Sacred wisdoms silently shared,
Infinite of dynamic and effect,
Eternal of essence and empowerment,
Beings of the unified spirit will emerge,
And in the shared glory we shall,
Become true leaders of Humanity.*



Open Letter to the Organisers, Partners and Delegates of the Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit, London, 9th and 10th October, 2018

<https://www.nsun.org.uk/news/global-ministerial-mental-health-summit-open-letter>

The UK government is hosting a Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit in London on the 9th and 10th of October, 2018. [The Summit](#) aims to “build momentum on global mental health issues such as early intervention, public health, research, tackling stigma, and promoting access to evidence-based services.” The event is set to culminate with a “global declaration committing to political leadership on mental health.” The Summit will also see the launch of the Lancet Commission into the links between mental health and sustainable development.

We the undersigned are concerned about the way in which this event has been organised and about the UK positioning itself as a ‘global leader’ in mental health for the following reasons:

- 1) The organisation and planning for this event has been a closely guarded secret. Even the full list of countries participating was not released beforehand, which made any possibility of advocacy by civil society organisations in those countries impossible. Significantly, there has been little or no involvement of organisations led by mental health service users, survivors and persons with psychosocial disabilities in the thinking, planning and design of this event. While a few networks were approached to provide ‘experts by experiences’ to attend panels on themes already decided on, there has been no meaningful consultation or involvement of user-led and disabled people’s organisations not already signed up to the ‘Movement for Global Mental Health’ agenda or funding to enable a wide range of representatives to attend. This is in open violation of Article 4 of the UN-Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which [obligates signatories to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organisations](#) in decision-making around issues that directly concern persons with disabilities.
- 2) The UK’s positioning as the leader in the global effort to tackle mental health needs is highly problematic for a variety of reasons. In 2016, [an inquiry by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) found that austerity policies introduced by the UK government had met “the threshold of grave or systematic violations of the rights of persons with disabilities.” The Committee found [high levels of poverty as a direct result of welfare and benefit cuts, social isolation, reduced standards of living, segregation in schools of children, lack of support for independent living and a host of other violations](#). The situation has had a direct impact on people’s mental health with [rates of suicide attempts doubling](#) and widespread [destitution](#).
- 3) In the [concluding observations on the initial report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#), the Committee raised particular concerns about the insufficient incorporation and uneven implementation of the CRPD across all policy areas and levels within all regions, devolved governments and territories under its jurisdiction and/or control, and about existing laws, regulations and practices that discriminate against persons with disabilities.
- 4) In the UK, there is a particular situation of discrimination within mental health services that affect its black and minority ethnic communities and migrants from ex-colonial countries and the global south diaspora. Decades of evidence show that they face [consistent discriminatory treatment within UK’s mental health services](#), including high

levels of misdiagnosis, compulsory treatment, over-medication, community treatment orders and culturally inappropriate treatment. The [inquiry into the death of David Bennett](#), an African Caribbean man in the care of the state, found the NHS to be institutionally racist. Yet, the UK government has set out to lead the globe in creating inclusive and just societies while continuing to perpetuate a 'hostile environment' not only in its health and social care services but in other areas that impact on people's mental health such as immigration, policing, employment, welfare and so on.

- 5) The Summit is set to announce the global launch of the anti-stigma programme, Time to Change, with programmes planned in India, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya. Millions of pounds have already been spent on this campaign which claims to have made a positive impact on mental health stigma, while evidence also shows that [there has been no improvement in knowledge or behaviour among the general public, nor in user reports of discrimination by mental health professionals](#). The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [in its concluding remarks](#), raised particular concerns about perceptions in society in the UK that stigmatize persons with disabilities as living a life of less value than that of others. It also pointed out that existing anti-discrimination legislation in the UK does not provide comprehensive or appropriate protection, particularly against multiple and intersectional discrimination. Given this scenario, it is objectionable that the UK government continues to fund a programme that aims to address stigma while carrying on with the most stigmatising and discriminatory policies that affect persons with psycho-social disabilities.
- 6) UK has already taken the lead in exporting the failed paradigm of biomedical psychiatry globally through the 'Movement for Global Mental Health'. The [failure of social contact based anti-stigma programmes to attain any change in structural discrimination and inequalities](#) has not deterred the UK government from supporting the export of another high-cost, low impact programme, with funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Office, to the global south. This model of 'North leading the South' recreates colonial 'missions of education,' significantly impacting on the development of locally relevant, rights-based discourses rooted in the wisdom of CRPD and led by persons with psychosocial disabilities in the global south.
- 7) Many professionals in the field of mental health both in [the global south](#) and in [the global north](#) have cautioned against the application and scale up of western models of mental health care worldwide. User/survivor groups in the global south have already objected to importing failed western models of mental health care into their countries and [called for full CRPD compliance that will enable full and effective participation of service users, survivors and persons with psychosocial disabilities in all aspects of life](#). This is significant at a time when the Mental Health Act is under review in England and there has been [consistent resistance to moving towards CRPD compliant legislation](#).

Given this scenario, it is hypocritical that the UK government is taking the lead in creating a global declaration on political leadership in mental health. As with the Global Disability Summit this government recently staged, we are seeing an intolerant government posing as the upholder of the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities. The organisation of the Summit is in opposition to the spirit and terms of the CRPD.

We ask the participants and delegates of this Summit to:

- A. Reflect upon the issues brought forward in this letter, including existing structural and multiple discrimination against persons with psychosocial disabilities in the UK by its government
- B. Demand a clarification from the UK government on its position on the CRPD and the measures it is taking to uphold the CRPD within its own laws and policies
- C. Ask the UK government to desist from operating in imperial ways that export failed models and methods to the rest of the world which negatively impact on local innovations and ways of working
- D. Campaign to ensure that any declaration created at the Summit is put forward for wide consultation and ratification by the diverse range of user-led and disabled people's organisations worldwide
- E. Insist that if the UK government wishes to promote mental health in the global south, it must:
 - i. Lead by example by changing its domestic laws, policies and practice that currently threaten the lives of mental health service users and survivors in the UK, including its economic and welfare policies that have widened inequalities, made life intolerable for thousands of disabled people and contributed to their deaths.
 - ii. Acknowledge the knowledge existing within user-led and disabled people's groups about what works best as well as provide support for user-led services, advocacy and research
 - iii. Examine its own foreign policies in order to lessen north-south disparities in health standards and its own ethical standards in exporting western mental health systems
 - iv. Support local, inclusive innovations in the south to address social and structural determinants of health rather than take over leadership
 - v. Enable local people to develop services that are for the benefit of the people concerned as *subjects* rather than objects of development and sustainable without dependence on or interference from rich countries in the West.
- F. Engage with independent civil society groups and not conform to the wishes of the UK government.

Signatories

1. National Survivor User Network, England
2. Recovery in the Bin
3. Mental Health Resistance Network, UK
4. Linda Burnip on behalf of Disabled People Against Cuts, UK
5. North East Mad Studies Collective, England
6. Transforming Communities for Inclusion – Asia Pacific (TCI-Asia Pacific)
7. Bapu Trust for Research on Mind and Discourse, India
8. SODIS (Sociedad y Discapacidad), Peru
9. North East Together (NEt), England
10. North East Together (NEt), service user and carer network, UK
11. NTW Service User and Carer Network, England
12. Steve Nash, Co-Chair ReCoCo: Recovery College Collective, England

13. Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (CHRUSP), USA
14. Akiko Hart, Hearing Voices Network, England
15. Akriti Mehta, User-researcher, King's College London, UK
16. Alan Robinson, Artist, Buenos Aires, Argentina
17. Alexandra Reisig, Student (Global Mental Health), UK
18. Alfred Gillham, ISPS UK
19. Alisdair Cameron, Launchpad: by and for Mental Health Service Users, UK
20. Alison Faulkner, Survivor researcher, UK
21. Alvaro Jimenez, University of Chile, Santiago, Chile
22. Andrea Liliana Cortés, Independent activist in human rights and psychosocial disabilities, Colombia
23. Asmae Doukani, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK
24. Brenda A. LeFrançois, Professor, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
25. Caitlin Walker, Cambridge University, UK
26. Carolyn Asher, Service User of Mental Health Services, UK
27. Catherine Campbell, Professor of social psychology, London School of Economics, UK
28. Che Rosebert, Director - Interim External Communications, Association of Clinical Psychologists UK
29. Cheryl Prax, Psychiatric Survivor, Speak Out Against Psychiatry (SOAP)
30. China Mills, Lecturer, University of Sheffield, UK
31. Chris Hansen, International Peer Support, USA
32. Claudio Maino, Université Paris Descartes, France
33. Corinne Squire, Professor of Social Sciences, University of East London, UK
34. Cristian Montenegro, PhD Candidate, London School of Economics, UK
35. David Harper, Reader and Programme Director for the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, University of East London, UK
36. David Orr, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, University of Sussex, UK
37. Derek Summerfield, Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer, IoPPN, King's College London, UK
38. Diana Rose, Professor, King's College London, UK
39. Dominic Makuvachuma, Co-ordinator, Reigniting the Space Project, England
40. Doreen Joseph, Service User, Advocate/Researcher/Lecturer/Writer, UK
41. Dorothy Gould, Researcher, Trainer and Consultant with lived experience of Mental Distress, UK
42. Duncan Double, Consultant psychiatrist, Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, England
43. Eamonn Flynn, ISPS UK
44. Elaine Flores, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK
45. Eleni Chambers, Survivor Researcher, UK
46. Emma Ormerod, Survivor Researcher, UK
47. Erica Burman, Professor of education, University of Manchester, UK
48. Erick Fabris, Psychiatric survivor; Researcher for the Mad Canada Shadow Report, Canada
49. Ewen Speed, Senior Lecturer in Medical Sociology, Director of Research, School of Health & Human Sciences, University of Essex
50. Farhad Dalal, Psychotherapist, Group Analyst, and Organizational Consultant
51. Fiona Little, MH sufferer, violated for years, UK
52. Francisco Ortega, Professor of Collective Health, State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
53. Frank Keating, Professor of Social Work & Mental Health, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK
54. Giles Tinsley, Hearing Voices Network England
55. Glenn Townsend, Service User of Mental Health Services, UK
56. Hari Sewell, Independent Consultant and Author, UK

57. Helen Spandler, Professor of Mental Health, University of Central Lancashire; Editor, Asylum Magazine, UK
58. Ian Parker, Emeritus Professor of Management, University of Leicester, UK
59. Iain Brown, Tortured sufferer at the hands of MH Team, UK
60. Ilma Molnar, London, UK
61. Janaka Jayawickrama, PhD, Associate professor in community wellbeing, Department of Health Sciences, University of York, UK
62. Jane Gilbert, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, UK
63. Janice Cambri, Founder, Psychosocial Disability-Inclusive Philippines (PDIP), Philippines
64. Jacqui Narvaez-Jimenez, Carer bullied by the MH Team, UK
65. Jasna Russo, Survivor researcher, Germany
66. Jayasree Kalathil, Survivor Research, UK
67. Jen Kilyon, ISPS UK
68. Jenifer Dylan, Service User Involvement Facilitator, Camden and Islington Foundation Trust, UK
69. Jhilmil Breckenridge, Editor, Mad in Asia; Founder, Bhor Foundation, India
70. Karen Machin, Researcher, UK
71. Kate Swaffer, Chair, CEO and Co-ordinator of Dementia Alliance International
72. Katherine Runswick-Cole, Professor of Education, University of Sheffield, UK
73. Lavanya Seshasayee, Psychiatric Survivor; Founder, Global Women's Recovery Movement, Bangalore, India
74. Leah Ashe, Victim of psychiatry
75. Leo McIntyre, Chairperson, Balance Aotearoa, New Zealand
76. Liam Kirk, Member of the Service User Group of Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster Mind, UK
77. Lisa Cosgrove, Professor of Counselling and School Psychology, College of Education and Human Development, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA
78. Liz Brosnan, Survivor researcher
79. Luciana Caliman, Professor of Psychology, Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, Vitória, Brazil
80. Lucy Costa, Deputy executive director, Empowerment Council: A Voice for the Clients of CAMH, Toronto, Canada
81. Margaret Turner, Secretary, Soteria Network UK
82. Margerita Reygan, Mother/Carer of Mental Health Service Survivors, UK
83. Mari Yamamoto, User of psychiatry, Japan
84. María Isabel Canton Rodriguez, Rompiendo la Etiqueta, Nicaragua
85. Mark Allan, HVN England and North East Mad Studies Collective, England
86. Melissa Raven, Postdoctoral fellow, Critical and Ethical Mental Health research group (CEMH), University of Adelaide, Australia
87. Michael Ashman, Survivor of Psychiatry, UK
88. Michael Njenga, Executive Director, Users and Survivors of Psychiatry in Kenya, Kenya
89. Mick McKeown, University of Central Lancashire, UK
90. Mohan Rao, Professor (retired), Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
91. Neil Caton, ISPS UK
92. Nev Jones PhD, University of South Florida, USA
93. Nikolas Rose, Professor of sociology, King's College London, UK
94. Norha Vera, King's College London, UK
95. Paola Debellis Alvarez, Universidad de la Republica, Uruguay; CCC PhD-Forum, Geneva, Switzerland
96. Patrick Bracken, Consultant psychiatrist, Co Cork, Ireland

97. Paula Peters, Bromley DPAC (Disabled People Against Cuts), England
98. Peter Beresford, Mental health service user/survivor, Shaping Our Lives, U
99. Peter Coleman, A family carer for son currently subject to restriction, UK
100. Phil Ruthen, Survivors Poetry, UK
101. Philip Thomas, Writer; Formerly consultant psychiatrist and academic, UK
102. Raúl Silva, Doctoral student, UCL Belgium/Ecuador
103. Reima Ana Maglajlic, Senior lecturer in social work, University of Sussex
104. Reshma Valliappan, The Red Door, India
105. Roy Moodley, Associate Professor and Director of Centre for Counselling & Psychotherapy, University of Toronto, Canada
106. Ruth Silverleaf, User-researcher, Kings College London, UK
107. Sami Timimi, Consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, England
108. Sarah Carr, Acting Chair, National Survivor User Network, England
109. Sarah Yiannoullou, National Survivor User Network, Managing Director
110. Sebastian Lawson-Thorp, UK
111. Shireen Gaur, Clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, UK
112. Sofia Bowen, PhD candidate, King's College London, UK
113. Stan Papoulias, Assistant Director, Service User Research Enterprise, Kings College London, UK
114. Stephen Jeffreys, Someone with lived experience, UK
115. Sue Bott, Deputy chief executive, Disability Rights UK
116. Suman Fernando, Retired psychiatrist, writer and campaigner, UK
117. Sumeet Jain, Senior lecturer in social work, The University of Edinburgh, UK
118. Susan Wolfe, Social historian, UK
119. Sushrut Jadhav, Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Senior Lecturer in Cross-Cultural Psychiatry, University College London, UK
120. Teisi Tamming, Estonia
121. Tish Marrable, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, University of Sussex, UK
122. Tracey Lazard: CEO: on behalf of Inclusion London
123. Will Hall, Host, Madness Radio; PhD candidate, Maastricht University School of Mental Health and Neuroscience, Netherlands
124. Zsófia Szlamka, Youth activist, Hungary

(Poetry Express Newsletter aims to publish an update and views from delegates in its next edition)



Artwork by Ingrid Andrew

A Woman

morning like any morning
step like any step
coffee

will I crush today?

evening with the day behind me
stairs and door handles behind me
camomile instead of coffee
dreams as companions

and again morning like any morning

yesterday I did not crush
I did not let myself get broken
perhaps today I shall not get gutted

Ifigenija Simonovic

Taj Mahal

I am left with the glittering whiteness of the
palace

and the innumerable rose petals
cut from stone of different colours
and inlaid into marble

flowers fit the cut out niches
like a hand of a nobleman fits a glove

standing at the edge of the artificial lake
I was observing figures in silk saris

dreamlike fairies dancing
the dance of sadness and memory

sweepers crawled over the plateau
like sleepy lizards

I am left with images of thirsty stone cutters
and melancholic women
carrying stones on the plates on their heads
their children holding the edges of their saris.

they were allowed to be beaten and fertilized
they were allowed to die in childbirth

but I was also left with a memory
of a declared love
which demands suffering
in order to glitter

Ifigenija Simonovic

Poems by A. Hurford

tell me when

tell me when
just when
social masks
aren't needed

tell me when
just when
the wind in the grass
is heeded

(21/5/18)

Saturation

sodden on word-seas
leaf storm tossed in forest deep
dream diluted dream
rest here breathe beneath your tree
drown leaf-maiden in your deeps

(28 May 2018)

being ill

is just being alive,
magnified

the way a torturer
makes it hurt

or the way you wake, peaceful,
fever gone, to clean sun light

oh how it may go on, chronic,
your life through its lens

lostness more lost,
strangeness stranged familiar,
a moment's reprieve, heavenly,

nectar to drink, think on, distil ,
bid grow toward its blissful cure-all

meanwhile, this is life
its medicine is living it

a full account, books uncookable,
dreaming of clear dawn light

(24th & 27th October 2018)

broken

as dawn falls golden
past bronze to lead remember
all sunlight's broken

(19th May 2018)

words don't mean a thing
without the heart that moves them
knowing when not to

(10 June 2018)

Make of yourself a light – Buddha

i've always loved to watch the light
although darkness claims my name
it is to light that I would turn
my night a grieving shield from hurt
dungeon to conceal myself, punish,
bringing only worse, cell for the frozen,
hiding from light's encompassment,
mourning a drift on its lossless sea
of love

we must forgive ourselves
and each other . . .
our faults intrinsic
shadow-traps to our best makings
only define me whilst i refuse
to turn to sea, again . . .

(19th September and 13 October 2018)

in process

hear this lament
femininity found
must keen a death

and yet, and yet,
and yet,
it is not death
and he's in her heart
beats in her chest
one soul,
un-sexist

a full palette
found in
beyond
sex

beautiful morning

Poems by Richard D. France

THREE

This Seeping Madness

Madness is prevalent
It is everywhere
Only today it's well hidden
For we'd go insane otherwise
All these Doctors and Nurses
Who work all hours to save us
We the barking nonsense mad
Who wish to roam the streets fully
It is a tough life being insane
You can't fill in an application form
The shops don't stock on it either
It's imposed through misfortune
A path littered with blemishes
No-one knows where it comes from
Nor have witness to its birth done
There is nothing quite like madness
A sense of futile sorrow
Followed by trigger happy smiles
We the those who are inflicted
Take no pride in this imposed weight
It takes more than strength
To open lead-ridden eyes
We the those who are inflicted
Find no joy in living this way
What are we to do but strive
The best for another tomorrow to come
We the those who are inflicted
We the those who are barking insane.

FIVE

Fraught

Here I sit
Thinking just how
It came to be
High and low
A travesty of the mind
Life simplified
Transaction of the heart
Sorrow in the learning
Another life ended
Only this morning
I wake to sense
That perhaps today
Will be a different day
High and low
Nobody knows
Which way I'll go
Be warned to
Be aware
Of the danger signs
Only last time
I never knew
Just how far I'd go
High and low
What a crow
To carry when I wake
Simplified
High and low
Watch the danger signs.

THIRTEEN

Choice

The drums are beating
My heart is slowing
Breathing on a motion
Hesitation awaiting
This path is mine
Nor others to choose
A darkness surrounds
Morose morbidity
Only here could it
Be freely spoken
Brethren amongst us
Death wish mob
We avoid the stares
Hidden conversations
Beachy Head mentioned
A fall too far
Life is the living
Category in choosing
Everyday at a time
Passing clouds again
Will it ever end
Sorrow of the mind
A darkness seeps
Sweeping sickness
Only amongst the brethren
Do we understand
Don't need no Doctor
Just my own choosing.

SIXTEEN

Desperation Hues

The beating of the drums
Come closer as you run
A darkness in firelight
And soon everything burns
Run for lives at mercy
Of the unknown shadow
There will be no return
For once death has visited
Renewal in desperation
A sense of flight
The past always carries pain
Whereas all the tomorrows are unknown
The booming of the drums
Always ringing in your head
Nowhere to flee but must run
Soon comes rebirth in safety
And everything begins to renew
What was it of the night
That spewed fire and violence
A mind shook up in fervour
Paranoia tastes bittersweet
Was it all just a dream
Or am I caged in this mind
Longing to break free
Only constrained by time
Move an itch to gain a mile
And soon this burden will be free
The booming of the drums.

SEVENTY THREE

These Secrets

There is no travesty in justice
Unless it is you that is deceived
There are no barriers in your freedom
Unless your mind has been stolen
There is no technology invading your
space
Unless you're in the CCTV
There is nobody watching you
Unless your ego is bigger than yourself
There are no obstacles to richness
Unless there is a conspiracy
There isn't an alien after you
Unless you're living on Mars
Paranoia, paranoia
It really gets to you
Paranoia, paranoia
It becomes your enemy
Everything of perception
Altered by your reality
Everything there isn't really here
It's actually walking behind you
Your mummy's close friend
An agent of the FBI
Your daddy's wallet
Funded by the FSB
Paranoia, paranoia
It really gets to you
Paranoia, paranoia
Who's knocking on your mind tonight?

NINETY FIVE

Future Famine

Oh futile future
Where are you when all I seek is you
Why are you so elusive when I am so
blind
I see that all the tomorrows stretch so far
Into a distance that eyes cannot roll
Oh futile future
Where are you when I hunt high and low
Everywhere in this cell confine I see thee
A travesty of time expurged in haste
When today should by rights be tomorrow
Never cease the chattering voices of the
mind
That yesterday is the condemned past
Nor of that I'm living right now is the very
future
Of that nonsense that I mythically seek
Oh futile future where are you tonight
This sheathening of the day's end
That brings nightfall to my darkness
Nor will light impenetrate my blind
While I search high and low
In this eternal torment of the tomorrows
That my mind seeks oh indeed desires
Oh futile future where do you lie
I cannot rest for today is of turmoil
Oh come to me and take me away
For this sense of time standing still
I cannot bear as it ticks me by
Oh futile future please do not elude me
For I come to realise after all I am the
future.

Dumb

No black is deep enough
for this.
No words describe
the bitter, tearing agony that writhes
beneath
and cannot show its face;
numb-struck
long before,
the eyes still staring,
seeing nothing,
heart beyond appalled.

I don't know why the lies and hurt
took sharpened edges, curled
them into flesh and twisted inwards,
lies still twisting, cutting,
bend my weary back still further,
clotting tired muscles
into burning holes,
I'm beaten,
beaten, down.
There are no words.
Is this hatred, mutilating,
yours, or mine?
Piercing my heart, my hands,
narrowing my eyes,
it is the only sign,
rightful,
mine,
the only sign my spirit speaks,
the pain
rightfully mine.
My spirit speaks the lacerations,

pain that twisted inwards
working outwards,
turning on me,
You deserve,
yes *you* deserve
to die.

Alison Orland

An Introductory Note

Miranda Moondawn is a writer residing in Copenhagen Denmark. Her novel *Moonianna and the Lost Chronicles of Sophia* was first written between 1991 to 1993 under the title of *The Mnemosyne*. The original narrative was a short novella, concluding with a dream-play performed by the main protagonists, the six daughters of Mother Memory. The original tale drew heavily upon the imagery of Greek and Nordic mythology, early Christian Gnosticism and the performative character of ritual theatre as a process of psycho-spiritual transformation.

After it was completed, *The Mnemosyne* was left to stew for a long time and was rewritten from 2012-2014 – in 2018, the author revised the book for a third and last time, which is the version presented to the reader here. During the rewriting process, the original characters of the six daughters of Memory were kept and the basic structure of the plot remained intact. At the same time, the personalities of the main protagonists took control of the plot, and the original novella was greatly expanded to incorporate deeper psychological studies of the six sisters, along with many important political, cultural and world events from the time and place where the original novel occurred: i.e. Northern Europe and Scandinavia during the ten year period between the first Gulf War in 1991 and the 9-11 attack on the Twin Towers in 2001.

Elements of Hindu lore and iconography were also added to the Greek, Nordic and Gnostic elements of the original

novel. In particular, the ten Maha Vidyas or Wisdom Goddesses of Tantra have been interwoven with the original Gnostic imagery of Sophia, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom and the Mnemosyne, the Mother of the Muses.

In this way, the reborn novel, *Mooniana and the Lost Chronicles of Sophia*, functions as a universal saga of the Goddess, bringing together the collective feminine archetypes of both east and west and fusing them together with the Rites of Passage of the central female protagonists, who now double as both the six Muses of the Goddess of Memory, as well as incarnations of the Maha-Vidyas from the Tantric Shakti tradition.

Moreover, due to its innovative themes, iconography and complex narrative structure, Miranda's novel is one which neatly fits into the new cultural and spiritual tendencies slowly emerging in the 21st century and the new Millennium. Indeed, while most authors and the publishing industry remain rooted in the narrative forms, characters and themes of the 20th century psychological novel, Miranda has taken the plunge to explore archetypal characters, plots and motifs drawn from the Anima Mundi of the World Soul and the collective group soul of humanity.

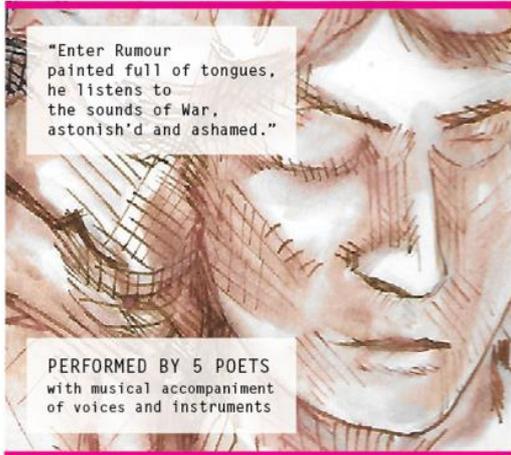
For those who want to leave the predictable world of Hollywood script novels and enter a new literary genre, then this book *Moonianna and the Chronicles of Sophia* is definitely for you.

**Miranda Moondawn
(R. J. Rintoull)
Copenhagen, 2018.**

CONTRABAND
presents the poetry book launch of

LONDON BRIDE

by john gibbens



WEDNESDAY 6TH MARCH 7.30pm
APOLLO ROOM @ THE CROWN TAVERN
43 Clerkenwell Green, EC1R 0EG

London Bride is born of this city's bone and marrow. The poet tracing the history within the 4 walls of the City of London. The collection also includes under this title, 'Eye City', 'Sand of the Thames, & 'Falling down, Reading this collection is to capture the intertwining of centuries, seasons and moods. It's as if he's caught the essence of the Thames – its tides and lights and hidden freight and all that surrounds it in the here and now and in the past. It is a critique of wealth, power and architecture as visible politics.

This is a quote I picked out from *London Bride*

“[The era's] confidence is clothed in glass that plays the margins of reflections, concealment and transparence
[.] for architecture is visible politics.”

John's Biog

Born in Cheshire in 1959, John Gibbens grew up in Germany and Cumbria, but lived as a Londoner for 35 years. John achieved early recognition, receiving a Gregory Award in 1982, aged 22. As a young poet he was asked to contribute to a Faber Introduction poetry collection, but instead went underground and remained there, working as a secretary, typesetter, jazz club doorman and journalist for national newspapers, whilst continuing with his own vast output of creative work.

His *Collected Poems* were published in 2000, followed by a series of other publications, notably *The Nightingale's Code*, a poetic study of Bob Dylan (2001, Touched Press), series of 32 illustrated poetry pamphlets (2002-2013, Touched Press), the narrative poem *Orpheus Ascending* (2012, Smokestack Press). John's poetry was published in numerous journals and anthologies. John was also a gifted musician, writing and recording several CDs' worth of songs with Armored Weston as *The Children*. He wrote plays, and made translations of Osip Manel'shtam and Rainer Maria Rilke.

He still found time to give himself to being an adopted father to 2 children, and a life partner to Armored Weston, from the age of 19, till his untimely death in 2015.

Potent Whisper

Georgie, better known as **Potent Whisper**, is a London based rapper, Spoken Word artist and community organiser.

Born in South West London (6.7.89) and raised in a single parent, working class family, he went on to study theatre and performance at The BRIT School. After training as an actor he became increasingly interested lyricism and started rapping.

In 2006 he enrolled at Richmond College where he met producer/ DJ Wu-Lu and MC Simple who invited him to join the Dubstep collective We Are Dubist. The crew went on to be offered a record deal with Congo Natty Records but the release was never made due to artistic differences. The group later disbanded and Potent Whisper continued his journey as a solo Hip Hop artist.

In August 2012 PW received his first major radio play with his single Between the Lines, featuring singer Nanci Correia. The track was aired by Jen and Ally on BBC Introducing and PW went on to receive further BBC support the following month with The Boom Bap Bounce, featuring Jungle legend Congo Natty aka Rebel MC. In 2013 he performed at the Tate Modern's 'Hyperlink' Festival and worked with Raw Material and The British Council to deliver festival performances in Senegal, France and Sudan. The shows were accompanied by his first newspaper coverage with a full page feature in the Guardian.

In 2014 PW began working with revolutionary video production company Global Faction. Their first collaboration came in form of the

anti-war single *Just Wondering* featuring singer Lara Lee (The Voice UK). The music video starred Joe Glenton, the first British soldier to refuse to serve in Afghanistan on moral and legal grounds. The track was played on BBC Radio 1 and Radio 6 by Tom Robinson, who called Potent Whisper's music "life affirming".

The same year, PW wrote one of his best known pieces *Trident on Trial*. The video was produced by Global Faction and released in collaboration with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). *Trident on Trial* was the first Spoken Word piece in which PW demonstrated an ability to explore and explain key political issues, through rhyme. This "Rhyming Guide" style would later go on to become his trademark.

In early 2014, PW wrote his first Play *Invisible*. The Immersive Theatre piece was taken on tour to four UK cities by Brixton-based charity Raw Material. Later in November '14, PW released his first short film *What's Going On?*. The four minute screen-play was written in rhyme and served as the first episode in his short-film series 'Real Talk'.

In 2015, PW started campaigning and organising within the Brixton community. On 31 March he founded the multi-arts community group *Our Brixton* which supports local housing campaigns by fusing art with direct action. The group launched with the release of the self-titled Spoken Word piece 'Our Brixton' which addressed the redevelopment of the Brixton Arches. At around the same time, PW delivered his first TV performance on RT (Russia Today) with his piece *Trident on Trial*

and received invitations to perform the piece at various national CND demonstrations.

On 3 May 2015, PW released his single *Brixton First* featuring Lara Lee. The music video was filmed at the Reclaim Brixton demonstration and famously featured street theatre portraying Lambeth Council as the character of a pimp. Images from his video/street theatre became iconic in the anti-gentrification movement. *Brixton First* received support from The Independent, BBC Radio and also featured in a documentary on BBC 1's *Inside Out*. The track became known to many as an anti-gentrification anthem.

On 25 January 2016, PW released his single *Now* in collaboration with award-winning Electric Harpist Maria-Christina & The 7 Pedals. The music video was filmed at the 'Occupy the Tory Conference' demonstration in Manchester and the track received support from Tom Robinson on BBC Radio 1 and Radio 6.

In March 2016 Potent Whisper was invited to co-lead the Save Brixton Arches campaign. He organised and led numerous direct actions throughout the year, perhaps most notably at a Planning Application Meeting on 2 August. PW led a rally outside the Planning meeting, before officially addressing the Committee on behalf of traders. When Lambeth Council voted to approve Network Rail's Planning application, he famously stood on a table and threw red glitter onto the floor, representing "the blood of Brixton". This action made national printed press and was later followed by a police investigation after Lambeth councillors made false allegations against PW.

No arrests were made and no further action was taken.

At around the same time, PW worked with the South London branch of the Revolutionary Communist Group to organise a Youth March for Housing in Brixton. The march was the product of a series of free arts workshops that he delivered on Cressingham Gardens Estate. Global Faction attended the march to film the music video for Make a Change - a song about housing - written with young people at the workshops. The release of the video prompted his in-depth interview with Inside Housing magazine, in which he discussed the Save Cressingham Gardens campaign and estate regeneration. PW later went on to translate the interview into rhyme in January '17, with his piece 'Estate of War'.

In November 2016 he released his first official "Rhyming Guide". The Rhyming Guide to NHS Privatisation is a six minute Spoken Word piece that drew inspiration from Dr. Youssef El-Gingihy's book 'How To Dismantle the NHS in 10 Easy Steps'. The video starred prominent doctor Bob Gill and was released by Jeremy Corbyn's group Momentum. The video has received 170,000+ views to date. In the same month, the British Council booked Potent Whisper to headline the Shakespeare Lives Festival at Khartoum's National Museum in Sudan.

On 21 March 2017 Potent Whisper released his political Grime EP New Radical. The EP features MOBO award-winning vocalist Fola, and has been described as "A masterclass in political Grime" by The Canary.

NEVER STILL – FINDING A WAY FORWARD

Sitting all alone in my uni room 'the box.'

No one here, cradling myself back and forth, so scared of.....me?

I'm clock-watching. It's now past midnight. I can hear sounds of joy, laughter. Students arriving home, high on life. I'm a world away, so tearful, so fearful. Crying.

I walk around in a daze, simply not fitting in. Is this just a phase, right? More crying into the night.

Should I drop out? And leave this place?

I need hugs, and warmth, and kindness. Who shall I tell? Tears falling massively into this giant wishing well.

NEXT DAY

I wake very late, no bath, just on autopilot. I manage to get a comb through my matted hair. I have reached rock bottom. So scared.

I refuse to stay like this. What is life? I didn't get the memo? TIME TO GET HELP.

I refuse to stay still, not me, not anymore.

But am I strong enough, to just leave university? How to handle that? I shall be the talk of the town? People will gossip, look at me with a frown.

I take myself to the doctors, I can't live like this.

AND NOW

My journey from the stillness, dark to light – it is finally, truly happening! Evolving all the time, babysteps.

Some medication. Advice from my dietician, dusting off the old cobwebs as I brisk walk amongst all the different trees in the forest.

The sun is coming out, and I stop at the ice-cream van, with myself selecting an orange juice lolly – super good as I will get less dehydrated from the medications, the meds that take the edge off.

I made it through the winter of my life. Just ask for help, be persistent, and you shall find the strength and courage to come out winning, and roaring like the beautiful lion you are, ready to restart your life. Take care.

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Title never still, finding a way forward.

Art medium paper

Theme stillness

Size of art a4

Cost of art unsure

Bit about me turned 35 27 April, and have only just 'found' myself. I spectacularly fell apart at university, so I was the one who walked with her head held low. And my mental health pain was aplenty. However, now surrounded myself with people who love me. Will always have mental health problems, but it is about having a sense of humour, and truly embracing the good.

Hope

Here I am. As the sun is streaming, the room is gleaming, but I remain unmoved. I go through the motion's, day after day, wondering, when and why did my life become so grey? Mixing with the wrong crowd, it turned me bad too, But then I met him, and into my arms, my love flew.

Long nights, laughs at breakfast, oh what fun we have. Drinking hot chocolates as the days get cold, we don't care, with each other we shall grow old.

Now the fear is nearly gone, I rise at dawn, wrap up, a slow jog around the local lakes. I can feel it – my heart is getting lighter.

For I was thankful for some love, it was a long time coming. Years and years, I was merely a shadow of myself, couldn't cope. But he lit up a candle of hope.

Music in my life, and painting, yoga, and tai chi. Cooking up a storm, carrot cakes so sweet and warm!

Host a big gathering in a local town hall. You got positive vibes? Come one, come all!

Lets delight at life, we have to look at the bright side to get it right. Your body is a temple, but my head, my thoughts were mental? I cried and cried, but something deep inside – I never ever gave up hope.

And now, I remember the days my nephews arrived, I laughed and smiled till I cried – Thankyou all, helped me see the beauty in life. And now, dear reader, I must dash, places to go, things to see, I'm truly living now, flying

Familial by

Philip Ruthen

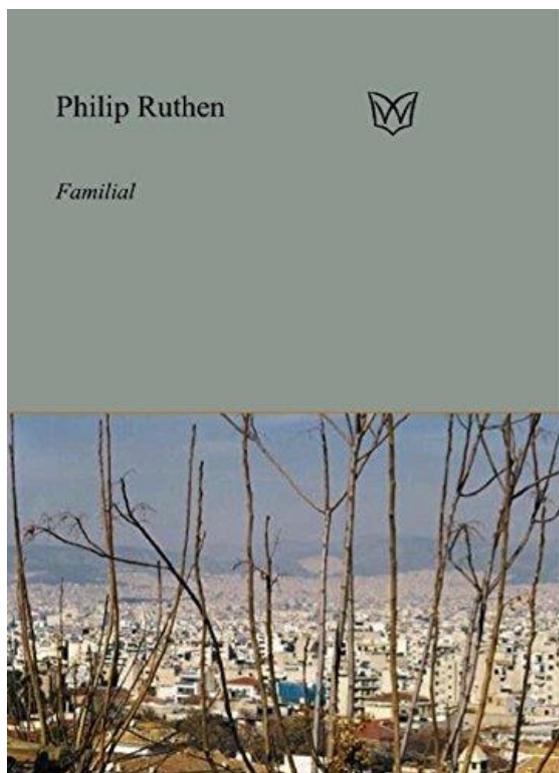
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Here the wistful and the laconic jostle amicably in this cross-section of Phil's work over many years. There are childhood and holiday reminiscences, interspersed with half-nostalgic reflections on psychiatric institutions. In a way, the latter theme sets the tone of the book. Significantly, *Cluster*, describing the closure of a psychiatric hospital, is presented as a 'prelude'.

There is a need to 'un-sentimentalise, in spite of all the emotionally touching aspects of the hospital. *Leave, Blackberrying* suggests an adult author supervising his own childhood self and friends. The foci of reflection are explored in all their botany and ecology, such as in *Town and country garden*. On any country walk one is likely to witness animal mortality, as expressed in *Terrors*.

Footnotes – could this refer to discovering crop circles on country rambles? It embraces ecological and historical awareness with "the land enclosed/by visceral energy/is good land" and "tales of abandonment and reverence". In *Arterial*, there is an impression of a weary traveller near the end of the line, perhaps a weary survivor of a holocaust. The location seems largely abandoned, in a condition where nature prevails against artifice: "Half-remembered causeways lead/to kicking pebbles/down an empty high street."

Remembered, a word to the wise – on solitary rambles, one often comes across people acting strangely, and feels a combination of curiosity, compassion, fascination and fear. Such feelings may be accentuated by medication; I used to take Mogadon before it was banned!

On solitary perambulations, one often meditates on mythical figures: this is

the case with *Now, and then*. Here, the figure of Demeter appears, with all the fragility of the ecosphere. *Yes, it is a thank you* launches into debate and polemic. There is a suggestion of despair and a sense of futility in “I was a philosopher once,/now redundant, letters patently leaden”; there is a sense of inadequacy with ‘romanticism wanting erudition’. A poetic challenge to the boundaries of the animate and inanimate is made in “if rock spoke it would implore to be cherished”. Also to the boundaries of mortality in “I am no Adam, no longer God’s clumsy emissary” and to the permanence of sacred texts, belief in which should be replaced by a sense of ‘geo-symmetry’. The third stanza has an overwhelming sense of standing on the boundaries of the ecosphere: “close as any/do we scurry on a planet’s crust, sheer folly to eternity’s smudge.”

Tracing heaven portrays a visit to the site of the Battle of the Somme in World War I, with references to volunteers, headless ghosts and ‘non-distribution of bones’ in white flinty soil. I did not understand the reference to ‘Where the globe was’. A searing image of mutability and predatory humanity in the reference to the relatives who ‘Still burn the local slops that are mixed with lime’. The second part of the poem seems to refer to a loved one, in all probability a war widow. I wonder whether ‘Lain’ is an

abbreviation of Cuchullain. The poem definitely evokes a perennial inspirational legend. There is a most unusual image for his longevity: ‘a cell that expired/regularly/an example to our sperm’. He seems to have some potential as a greater leader, possibly a malignant dictator: “Through him we pervert/he gives us a new state/through him the personal relates/there is no class.” *A Currach in the park* – seems to refer to a recent bereavement, the significance of which seems to reverberate into ancient history, with references to ‘woad-tarred skins’. There is a sylvan, bleak burial ground, exposed to the elements: “chiselled is the wind . . .” *Trip Advisor’s Ramsgate* seems to satirise the pretensions of aesthetic and artistic holiday makers by setting them against a background of banality. *Not dreaming, Kalamata* celebrates the ‘second city’ of the Peloponnese. I love the term ‘new stone age tourist’. He emphasises the fragility of wooden buildings and structures in the area, their vulnerability to the elements: “wooden batons grope for unpinnacled floors”. And then again the recurrent theme of massed burial: ‘warnings of bones stretched beyond their compass’. *Familial, Epirus* concerns the revisitation of a location where Philip, in his childhood, had been taken by his father. Such an expedition naturally engenders mixed feelings, crystallised in the phrase

'curiously satisfied distress'. *Decades* muses wistfully on nostalgia and recall, capturing its bi-directional essence: "you wanted to help the strays/in life – travel to the horizon,/but always come back.

Firenze – unidentified background sound: from a distant crowd, or from a wind? Again the archaeological leitmotif – 'condensing long-sculpted pasts'. *I love you, but* – another dead creature image!

As Thiepval is a brief homily to the cemetery for the Battle of the Somme. Perhaps a footnote would have been in order here.

Protest – some wistful voyeurism re fleeting, elusive lovers' meetings.

Green blood – a placid domestic scene is partly defined by a background of recorded sound: "an upstairs radio has a way/to replay past conversations." Indeed, punch lines in song lyrics can often relate to key points in dialogue. 'Aleatoric' is a new term for me: "**Aleatoric** music (also aleatory music or chance music; from the Latin word *alea*, meaning 'dice') is music in which some element of the composition is left to chance, and/or some primary element of a composed work's realization is left to the determination of its performer(s)." (Wikipedia). Repeated listening to some pieces of background music sometimes makes it feel malleable to the moods of the

listener. Toward *Hydra in a boat* and *To and fro* reminisce about past holiday locations, incorporating strong senses of the local flora and fauna. *Mountains of the moon – a romance*: Stanza i seems like a carefully premeditated tryst with the overtones of a religious ritual. Stanza ii I find somewhat opaque; there is a quantum leap from the implicitly ancient to futuristic architecture. Participants in emotion seem to become detached, if apprehensive, observers.

On news before a nephew's birthday – some staccato aphorisms denoting inter-generational friction, with a degree of exasperation on both sides with uncle and nephew. *In a foreign country* is a verbal sightseeing collage – embracing telegraph poles, buildings and time travel. *Future* proclaims a writer's artist's identity – 'A short story waiting/To become a novella/A character in a feature film'. He senses that he has a kindred spirit, but is in a deep quandary about whether his feelings will be reciprocated. *You may buy trees for our reforestation programme* is a pastiche of charity advertising slogans.

Con-join – more verbal collage. *The sense of jamais vu* confronts authority figures. Firstly the religious: I like the conceit of 'whims modern and ancient', and appreciate the paradoxical reality of dispelling myths and creating more. Secondly, the

psychiatric: great figure of the ‘mad consultant’; great indictment of ‘received indifference’. This is followed by a clever poetic exposition of the behavioural factor of not being able to say what one thinks. Brilliant summing up: “I feel the need to ask/the mad Consultant/”can you feel everything/and nothing?//If he senses that he knows,/why doesn’t he feel for us.”

Last name chosen is a piece of random association, juxtaposing sightseeing holiday phenomena – horse guard parades, pot-bellied monuments, taxis, mosquitoes.

Faraway – trees makes a survey of exotic fauna in exotic locations, carrying the spirit of Edward Lear into the 21st Century.

A grandfather’s invitation is a benign picture of one of the older generation, though I am not quite sure what he is forgiving; that point could perhaps have been explored more fully. *Accrue* – great learned tomes gather dust in a socially pretentious environment, which ‘re-congeals to make all rich’. Its lack of awareness is contrasted with Bohemia.

With Georgia on my mind, I am not clear how the poem relates to the title. Nonetheless it is a charming evocation of a warm and familiar urban environment.

An epilogue is a near-haiku – showing Victoria station, police surveillance and a deserted city street.

If she no longer has her voice bring forward doves to speak? This seems to be a parable of a lost soul, swamped by a crowd, decomposing into dust; also the image of someone losing her grip, faced with the imponderable, reduced to silence.

Find your own way out – the author’s neighbour had an accident and he visited her in hospital. The second stanza seems to refer to her reflections from the hospital ward, where ‘Avocets land on the mantelpiece’. The poem concludes with a powerful evocation of injury: ‘The followed trace of her hand/near lovingly sofa-armed/horse-hair sensed final venoms’ drop/the tumblr-chopped maze of veins/as splinters from ticker-tapes’ 6ft rising waters. This third Waterloo Press collection is supremely fluid and mobile, negotiating many depths and shallows, with a powerful sense of temporal and spatial perspective.

Dave Russell

For further details, check the following links:

www.waterloopress.co.uk

Philip Ruthen - Author Central link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Philip-Ruthen/e/B002MNBQCY>