



Barnet Libraries

Wall of the Words

Poetry E-Anthology 2012



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**Preface written by Yvonne Green
(Judge of 'Wall of the Words' Poetry Competition 2012)**

Hendon Library's "Wall of the Words" poetry competition was an opportunity to meet the community's readers and writers through their poems. Natalie Harmer, (the event's co-ordinator), and I were so overwhelmed by the number of entrants that we felt they should be published to evolve the group they brought together.

This e-anthology comprises all the entrants' work, (with the exception of some who declined). The poems have been left unedited in content, but have been reformatted for this e-anthology. Its range is refreshing, promising, but above all, has, for me, the feel of a conversation in a public place, a town square say.

Poets who'd published, teenagers, participants in the local mental health programs, academics, men, women, several races, creeds, socio-economic groups, all submitted poems.

During the Open Mic Poetry Night held in September we announced the winners of the 'Wall of the Words' Poetry Competition 2012. "*Antiguous... Near to God*" won first prize, *The 2012 Olympic Games* was the runner up, and *Death by Tray* was voted best live performance of the night. The library drew a crowd of over forty diverse competitors and their friends, with many of the competitors reading aloud their poems.

Since January 2013, I have been running a monthly poetry writing group on Mondays at Hendon Library, 6.30pm -7.30pm. This workshop endeavours to continue to develop poets in the local community, and encourage newcomers to give poetry a try.

We hope this anthology will be well received and look forward to running future poetry competitions and events.

“Antiguous... Near To God”

By Marbea Ebonique Logan



Without attributes of God, they would scold me! Man oh stupid man, are never wise. To be on my level, now I frown down on them. The dull mortal misery in their eyes. Painful weariness of my painful limbs. The dust on my brow, that look never dies... Antiguous!

Beneath the eyelids so dim, the row of alters rose! I came conjuring myself, only to comfort and content. I dwell an empress, she sent her people far and wide, to seek a healing from me. Please spend your days honoring and treasuring the fruits of my labor. Lift heavy burdens that could've destroyed my empire of glory. I shall tell the meaning of this allegory... Antiguous!


Did perfection of your outer beauty bare pain? Oh only the inside did. Were you too blind to see me? Closed eyes and opened mouths I saw. Did this change ache so bad to be so harsh and cruel intent for man? Did it! Their vain is passion, or lay like a heavy burden on me... Antiguous!

I felt like a sick soul drowned in the rain or drunk up while the old is buried, unappreciated woman by the hour to feed the color of some shriveled flower. I am... Antiguous to God!




The 2012 Olympic Games

By Yvonne Townsend




Well what I can say
What a triumph it has been
I've got involved
And boasted about what I have seen!
I saw the first medal being presented
And felt a huge sense of pride
I waved my GB flag ferociously
And cheered amongst the crowds
All wide-eyed!
And felt honoured to just be there
I knew I was one of the lucky ones
I appreciated each moment watching a sport I knew nothing about
I'd cheer for both opponents
I'm sure we were the loudest in the crowd!
I didn't care
I was at the Olympics
A moment to treasure
A moment so rare!
So I adorned my body with flags to show GB support
Then I adorned my Jamaica t-shirt to show Bolt some support
And like his sprint being over within a flicker of an eye
The Olympics has almost come to an end
And I could honestly cry!
I've enjoyed each moment glued to the tv shouting "come on"
And like all good things it must come to an end!
So I will put my flags away for four more years
But have no fear they will reappear
As the GB spirit never wanes
I'm looking forward to 2016 Olympic games!




The falling of water

By Greta Ross



Ask your neighbourhood poet to describe
a falling of water,
and I bet he writes
of quicksilver summer showers,
or the fast-tracking of rivers down
long-drowned stones,
the gleam of soup spilt from a bowl,
or perhaps the tremble of lilies
tipped with rain, or if fancy takes him,
a rainbow's arc slicing a waterfall
somewhere nice.

But I see
your hand
frail and still
on the shower rail,
the falling water dancing
on your body straining
in your losing battle
against the final
fall to earth.



Death by Tray

By Peretz Tabor



It all went wrong, it's clear to me
when trying to impress on bended knee

With hindsight, you're right- it was rather strange
but I was nervous, exposed on an open range

My inner monologue then lost the plot
and groped at straws to fix this strop

A comedic gem, Eddie Izzard's 'Death By Tray'
Vader queuing at Death Star Café
argument flares over catering gaff
believe me it's funny!
How could anyone not laugh?

A smorgasbord of silence, tumbleweeds roll by
my version of the cross dresser- did truly die.

Tilting at windmills, try to be as smooth as oil of Olay
no good, to you I'm as mad as Don Quixote

We discussed the last time we had both cried
my immediate response, 'United, 99, European winning side'
Compared with her tearful choice of the film Atonement
I lost my chance of being her Heathcliff moment


Randomly, I blather on about the slang of the cockneys
this might her weak at the chips and peas
No response is forthcoming, she ain't no Murray Walker
she thinks therefore I am, a total Kuwaiti tanker

We rise and exchange the compulsory air kisses
she smiles, but her body language hisses
the words of Marx-
Groucho that is
"I've had a wonderful time, but this wasn't it"




Spitfire Season

By Roy Marshall



The tune from *Match of the Day*
pipes from an ice-cream van
while a builder with a strawberry tan
delivers Robbie Williams 'Angels'
from a scaffold on the estate.

A Rolls-Royce Merlin vibrates
the loose allotment frame; sunlight
glints from the canopy of a plane
that stopped this being just another
in a procession of Swastika flag-days.



RIOTS!

By Rebecca McCarthy



BREATHE FRESH AIR,
A COUNTRY, FULL OF FREEDOM,
DAISIES DAMP WITH DEW, SMILE,
SUNLIGHT BURNS PINK LAUGHING FLESH,
NO PAIN, ONLY INTENSE HAPPINESS.
SUCH A COUNTRY CAN PRODUCE THESE FEELINGS!


AN EMPTY PURSE; SHOULD KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG,
BUILDINGS AFLAME, CRYING INFANTS,
CANNOT ESCAPE THE HORROR.
MASKED LIKE FIGURES,
A GUILDED CAGE: KEYS ARE LOST AND FORGOTTEN,
DAYLIGHT FOR THEM, IS EVERLOST.

A FAIR PUNISHMENT METHINKS.



The Bottom of the Ocean

By John Whitworth




There are people at the bottom of the Ocean
And they walk and talk there just like you and me.
They're such ordinary fellows
With moustaches and umbrellas,
And their wives as pink and pleasant as can be,
As can be,
All these people at the bottom of the sea.

When you scry into the bottom of the Ocean
You can see their children playing hand in hand.
Some are bright and some are sporty,
Some are good and some are naughty,
And they're playing in the seaweed and the sand,
And the sand,
Exactly like the children on the land.

The houses at the bottom of the Ocean
Are as fine as any houses in the town;
But the windows of the places
Are so fraught with scaly faces
Of the finny fishes swishing up and down,
Up and down,
That you wonder why the people never drown.

There's a stranger at the bottom of the Ocean,
He's a stranger who will be your special friend.
There's no cause to fume and fret
If you haven't met him yet,
He's the special friend on whom you can depend,
Can depend,
And everybody meets him in the end.

It's so lovely at the bottom of the Ocean,
It's as comfy as the blankets on your bed.
There's no doubt and there's no danger,
For *no-one* is a stranger.
Push your face into your pillow, sleepyhead,
Sleepyhead,
That's the way it always happens when you're dead.



Dragonfly

By Dan Stathers



Splicing the air on invisible wings
came a flamenco of emerald green,

spinning the sun's gold, as it transcends
its body of jewels – time always on its side.

Condensed behind exquisite armoury
lies the myth, gargantuan eyes still following

the scavenger's path – never would I risk
to stand before it and suggest its great fire

has been dampened – for fear of being cindered.
Perhaps it escaped from another world

or fooled creation into giving up all her gifts –
an alchemy of beauty and menace sent to


survive the earth with a blithe irreverence.
Subject to no one, not even the hand of change,

I bow to its majesty, sparing me only the tip
of its curiosity, before it's gone in a vanish.



To Mum with Alzheimer's

By Diana Cormack




I thought I saw you then Mum
When you looked at me.
Looked and saw and knew me.
Before your eyes filmed over
I caught a glimpse of you.

Then you were gone once more
Dragged back by that invader
That parasite in your brain
That dictator of your being.
I didn't see you go.

Imperceptive over years
Its cruel grip has tightened
Stealing you silently, slowly.
To where? Why do you obey?
Oh Mum, I want you to stay!

To hold you tightly and feel
The power of my love
Pulling you home to us
Rescued from that enemy within.
Is it invincible?

I thought I saw you then Mum
When you looked at me.
I caught a fleeting glimpse.
But, as I looked at you Mum,
You couldn't see me any more.



Autobiography

By Marilyn Katanka




Thoughts bound
In charcoals, greys, happy yellows
Shelves and shelves, endless
Corner stack
4th row back
ISBN 257983
One book mine
Little me
My autobiography



In Memoriam

By Terry Jones




The black and white of TV pictures
So well-remembered;
The British Leyland vehicles,
The prison transport of the Sherpa vans.

Cut to the moors. Hold and listen.
The names: Keith, John, Pauline, Lesley-Ann.
Shout those names on any post-war estate
And streams of children would converge
As if for parched peas or ice creams.


The brothers and sisters of those names
Approach retirement now. They are that age.
They carried their years with the added weight
Of the invisible lives of the lost,
The abducted and the sacrificed.

You catch a distortion in their faces.
Is it because they did not expect
To be interviewed for the television
Or read their words in the Daily Express?




WITH APOLOGIES TO SHAKESPEARE

By Rosemary Fisher



'Tell me, where is fancy bread –
the challah, cracked-wheat, rye,
the Brioche Suisse?' 'Will that one do?'
she asked with mournful sigh.
'No, that's just pappy, white and sliced;
no texture and no crust.'
She wiped her nose on grubby sleeve
and brushed ash off her bust.
'No pumpernickel, poppadoms?
No granary or corn?
No ciabatta, crisp baguettes?'
She glared at me in scorn.
'You're off your 'ead, you are,' she said
It seemed I'd come unstuck.
'We only sell good wholesome food,
not nasty foreign muck.'



The Games

By Clare Walker




Before the Games, they wondered...
London was an elderly aunt, hosting the family shindig one more time.
“Is she still up to it?” they said.
“Isn’t her house a bit...tatty?”
“She’ll tell us stories from the past, and fart a lot.”
“Having all those people round at once could finish her off”.

But on the day, she shone.
Her pristine house was full of fibre optics and perfect for the party games
She seemed surprised to win.
Her clothes were shocking pink, beneath the graceful drape of flags.
And all were welcomed in the smile
That shone from her heart for the first time in years.



STEROIDS


By Will Daunt



They went back to the medicine men:
a lady made him sit, and then
began to prod and poke once more.
He glimpsed a window, eyed the door,
but couldn't fathom what she'd said –
those clever things, over his head,
which named the months he'd left to live,
and something that was palliative.

They talked at the Reception hatch
as someone typed a quick dispatch
of thirty white and oval pills
and more to fill the file of bills.
'Now one dose, twice a day, but note
he'll eat too much, may start to bloat
and must return in fourteen days'.
He shot back to the parking bays

and tottered home to sleep too long,
then sat up feeling young and strong.
The urge to be outside returned.
and wincing, as his insides churned,
he smelt some annuals, heard the birds
and all his family's hopeful words
which praised their short-lived miracle.
His tail blessed the spectacle.



TIME TO WADE IN THE WATER

By Tony Sainsbury



Dinah, take the plunge!
I can't make out what you're waiting for –
Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life;
Don't stand there quivering on the shore!
Let go, immerse yourself in the Water
Where personal experience of God's Holy Spirit
Sweeps away all ingrained reservation,
Where touch is relinquished with the fixation
Of Reason infallibly unlocking any door.
It's not a step too far.
Relax. The sea of true Faith is indeed cold
But once acclimatised you'll be glad
That you found the courage to be bold
To look outside of yourself for answers.



Dance

By Anne Kelly



Dance before birds bestow promises, long and sweet.
Dance before bees baffle stems with sonatas.

Dance dizzier than dawn.
Dance giddier than sun-wooed stars.

Soar sooner than moon misleads waking horizon.
Soar before sky wobbles with love.

You are a Light.

Wake the sleepers.
Tell them you danced alone: a shiver on grass.
You pirouetted: a newspaper- adorned ballerina
Rustling with hope.

Arms outstretched, you kissed night.

Heart open: you flaunted the first step.
You paraded the swirl.

Feet tiny and bare, you wished for love.

You are a Light.


Nudge the yawners.
Command them to dance.

Dance before darkness disappears.
Dance before you are devoured in the drudgery of day.
Dance.



Fading Away


By Neelam Shah



Entering the battlefields,
Armed with weaponry,
Reassured by my friends,
‘We will survive’
Walking down the trenches,
Feeling chivalrous but weary,
We take action from the front lines,
The guns are already spitting fire,
Bombs hitting our side, tearing human flesh,
Body parts flying around.

An hour has passed, no one is left,
To breath, I look around with horror,
Bodies lie like wooden dummies frozen stiff,
Slowly sinking in the mud.
Only one left standing is I,
All my friends have perished,
The enemy has won,
I mellow in absolute pity,
Bullet like tears stream across,
My face, I hide them with shame,
Through my terror shaking hand, as I kneel,
With great failure and disappointment.
I suddenly feel cold; I look down at my green uniform,
Blood sneakily climbs through the ragged torn holes,
Three sharp gunshots have pierced my chest,
Breathing has even become a laborious job,
Last image enters my mind, my wife and children,
As I shut my eyes I too fade away, losing myself,
To the ground, I start to disappear, buried,
Beneath the mud like my friends.

Bodies have vanished,
Memories will never be erased.



Summertime

By Rashid Mirza



It is summertime again
To cherish the sunshine again
Have some refreshments with barbeque
Time to feel the freshness in air
Walk about in meadow and feel like air
See the colours displaying in the natural line
Daisies, dandelions and many others there
Feel the freedom of movement of all
Who come out in the meadow to enjoy it all
It is so much moving to be in praise
Feel, enjoy and remember it all.



FIND YOUR WINGS AND FLY

By Yvonne Townsend



Sometimes I try to remember when it all changed
And it's so hard to remember when I stopped adoring him
And love was replaced with hatred and fear!
His face was no longer beautiful but contorted and twisted with rage!
The hand-holding, lovey-dovey and romance was gone
This hurt me more than the violence ever did.
I suppose it began when the roses around the door were no longer noticed
...Only the thorns.
When was his gentle embrace replaced with a tight grip of another kind?
And when did "we" turn into "me"?
I suppose that happened when I was afraid.
"Afraid" is a small word but it can be so powerful and overwhelming!
When was rushing home replaced with walking reluctantly with legs as heavy as lead
towards "home"?
I suppose the moment I knew...he was in!
I had lost me
I had lost my confidence
I had lost my inner spirit and strength.
Until one day when I had an epiphany
A moment of clarity
A moment of realising there was more to me than "us"
And I remembered the importance of "me"!
So with steely determination I plotted
I dug deep within my soul to find the confidence that I had buried
...Until now
I was no-longer an incomplete puzzle
I had found all my pieces and put myself back together
And like a bird within a cage with an open door
I opened my wings to fly
I was scared but I knew it was time...
It was time to set myself free!
So I did
And I never looked back
Only ahead of me!



I AM

By Joan Saunders



Crystal clear, turquoise blue
I am beautiful
Hoarder of hidden gold
Murky, dirty, smelly cold
Calm, tranquil
Rough, wild
Shallow, deep
Peace, turmoil
Silent, mysterious

I see the world, people
Ships, boats, planes
Sun, moon, stars
Sunny dark days
Wind, rain
Gently flowing, running fast
Keeper of secrets
Locked within deep watery graves
Penetrate me not
For I am everywhere

I AM "THE SEA"



VENTRILOQUIST DOLL

By Vanessa Duncan



“Are you ok? Miss, are you ok?”
He looked at her
You know with that look as *she* kept repeating into the one ear that hadn't
packed up and left her.
Yes, I am fine, as she stood up shaking so she could straighten her back,
Amazed that *she* was aware, acknowledging but saying nothing.

Every time they are on show
He places one hand on her back
Like Telepathy all the words ooze out her mouth,
Yes, I am fine,
O, it is nothing,
Surely there is something somebody can do.

She holds masses behind her glazed expressions of perfection,
Slightly tinted from all the years he's been propping up her fear.
The puppeteer controls the strings.
So her rosy red cheeks remain from all the awkwardness,
Trichotillomains only a stylist can hide,
To her fatigue that made her drop eight stone in two weeks.
Is she is weak?
Fatuously other girls want her green eyes,
As she should be *grateful* to have such a perfect guy by her side.



Broken

By Sarah Macleod



You have broken the blue bowl
you gave me long ago, so I take

jagged pieces, make it whole.
Cicatrized to a different shape

it is stippled as unsettled sky.
Now the azure bowl cradles

oranges like suns, as gently
as bruised hands cup eggs.



Of Politics

By Foyez Syed



Days fall like autumnal leaves.
The crisp whisper lost in the wind's echoes of Eve.
Lost in grey; grave height
And the nights become white.

God gave grace,
But there is none in black lace.
Change belittles one who lacks empathy.
Politics; an archaic topography.


hither and tither; broken society
hither to deity
withered, just as my leaves;
once lithe, no society left to weave

repentance, in the form a twopence
another day, suffocated in silence
i find it hard to breathe
as days continue to fall like autumnal leaves



Sitting


By Philip Coales



When your theys went to America
they changed the law of things,
and I became your
companion. Your man to
deal with complex issues like
vegan dog treats.


You looked princely,
insurmountable, officious-
although I do not know if
they sniff the beds
at any palaces.
Though there aren't that many rooms
downstairs, a king could fit.
You grew into them,
and when left in an empty one
you'd make the loudest sound.

Returning years later-
because you do not visit Lake Como –
you are a *bit blind and deaf*,
I'm told. *Keep him close,*
especially at night.
But I like to let you have a
bit of space,
knowing that
I'm a they, too,
and a bit less of a dog than you.



AFGHANISTAN


By Erna Karton



Cars come in all shapes and sizes
Coffins are all the same

Mothers are crying-
Their sons are dying
Diplomats are sighing

Who is to blame?
Who is to blame?



“Someone”.... the only Second Coming possible

By Bob Tristram



First off, might we wish apologies to some past W.B.Y.?

Moment come though where would our special honour go

for that (once and for always) welcome back to earth? Not an ablutioned Pope (God rest his soul) perched high above some marbled square, Easter Santa bestowing ringed blessings. Nor, (if he plays those White House cards just right) no U.S. Pres-eye-dent either

no ticker-taped, skyscraping, astro-welcome, no roaring down Manhattan motorcade, John Philip Sousa bla-a-aring, row upon row of bouncey-bouncey majorettes, all tassels flying, buttoned-up bras, horses and swinging arses, twirling aside top most of brasses. No

Six-Million Dollar man parade. No film-set/Satellite T.V. non-stop wall- to- Wall Street- coverage, complete with Primetime (or any other time) commercials, on 909 International channels. No call for some david frost interview, no grabstick, eyegouge, sock-it-to our world, amplified, seriously bearded ‘mullah’-key. Oh, no-no, nono, No!

It would certainly not be a return of a twelve-man, last-supper Beatles nor a rolling away of The Stones (and let’s see what weve got) gig either. No shag-wild, ecstasy-eyed, smoke-ringed orgy of Hello hello hellos.

Oh, no no, nono, No! It must always begin far more simply, a mere

whisper, tiny-loud, rising, prepared to voice its own old/new cry, blood-red, flesh soft, a screwed-up face, eyes-closed, anxious to see, eager to become, a fully alive soul, sex and colour immaterial, yet with clenched gums ready to snap through its own looping, sinuously sinewed, exhausted umbilical, in proud descant to our own, out-loud, humanly divine, applause.

Only such a ‘way-out’ is worthy of a ‘second-coming-in’ So, (come to think of it, logic demands) we’ll make no apology to Mr magical Yeats at all.



LITTER

By Michelle Ellinson



I was a bag full of crisps, my name is Kettle
My insides are made of plastic and not metal.
I'm lying on the street, waiting to be put into the bin.
In some countries such as Singapore, litter is a sin!

I'm being crumpled and stood on all day long
Nobody picks me up to put me where I belong.
I started off as a bag of potatoes in a factory
And was transported to a supermarket in a lorry.

One day a little boy took me from the shelf.
He placed me in his trolley along with himself.
I ended up in a house stored in the larder
When one day I was removed as the boy set off on a departure!

I travelled to the countryside in a coach with lots of boys
Eventually my crisps were shared out all to their joy!
But when I was finished the boy threw me onto the road
What a pity, I said to myself, I wish I was a toad!

If I was a toad, I would just hop and hop away
Instead of lying around most of the day!
The next time you see an empty packet like me
Remember to put it in the rubbish where it should be!



The Poet's Prayer

By Barley LK Robinson



Please make me into an angel
I must live past my years
My daily-day, I do not think
Has hurt too many people.

I must be made an immortal now
Tonight I leave this world
All my work and all we've done
Remains behind.

Must make me into an angel.

I need to feel immortal now
No children born – nor memories left
Behind.
Only the work we did, whatever they think
Must remain.

Must make me into an angel.

Please make me into an angel
I am immortal now.
Take my ingredients
Drink my sum
And make me into an angel.

An
Angel.

Writing painfully, daily
Writing my thoughts for you
Are all that's left behind me now
And must *remain*
And
Must make me into an angel.

I do not think my daily-day
Has hurt too many people.



Poem for Revekka: On my return to nursing

By Adrian Herzmark



Your long sad gaze looks at me
Questioning, pleading;
'Why did this have to be happening to me,
Adrian?' you seem to say.

The warmth of your hand pressing softly,
Your husband and daughter always at your side,
It is you, Revekka, who has made this tenderness
That touches those who sit with you and care.

You who used to be so strong
Now lie helpless; there is no cure
And no way back to who you were before.
But we can still feel your kindness even at this cruel time of fear.

'God bless you', you said to me, and thank you,
Revekka, for letting me do the small things
I did for you. Thank you for showing me
In your family, your bewilderment, and even in your pain
That I could still do something like good once again.



Ode On A Cocktail Dream

By Sangita Konnur



O Deep Pool of Cloudless Insanity
We call Blue Lagoon, Long Island Iced Tea,
Carry me away to fairy land
Where I can no longer think, feel or stand.

A bubbling brook gurgles down my throat. There
I am, spinning to the Earth's stillness, where
The world and my soul chime in unity,
Blurring the dark hues of reality.


But when all the laughter has come and gone,
When my ears drone with melancholy song,
When my head is pounding, craving water,
Was it all too much? I start to wonder

Why I am lying here upon the floor;
The reason for which, I am still unsure!




SOUL IN A BOX

By Michael Griffin




Blue collar news
It's an obsession
To retreat from the daily war
As metal men on steamrollers
Are driving through the law
We hit the grind
With polish and shine
To make a treasure for the host
A Holy Grail
Rule Britannia in jail
The father, the son, and the Holy Ghost
Give a life to the railways
Diesel powered bosses
Fifty years service
Trade in a ball and chain
For a glittering timex special
Paper soldiers are taking over
Step by step
They are gaining ground
As rebel forces
Ride on rocking horses
To make a stand
Against the monarch's pound
Urban phobia
In suburbia
The clouds above
Are misty cages
A scotch legend
Spilling from a jar
Smothers a star
And spends all her wages
And deadly hands lead them faraway
While highwaymen follow
The yellow brick streets to the rainbows end
With just one chance
Just one shot
To hit the jackpot



FRUITS OF TIME

By Hilary Anna Hellicar




So many ideas,
Images,
reach our minds
in just one day
We travel in time –
Unaware usually,
That life could end
...at any moment.

We think back –
plan the future.
Many deeds done,
But so many to do..
How have we loved?
Is that more important,
Than the myriad tasks
We achieved?

Life's events
Throw us around
Whatever we do..
Like seeds in air,
We land safely,
Usually, it seems.
Maybe we can grow,
as seeds to plants,
to trees, to fruition
Whatever our circumstance.

Oaks grow vast –
Think what one acorn
can become at last...
So we, perhaps,
Can bear as many fruits
In our time,
Or more.



Unsatisfactory Ritual

By Diane Jackman



The last body for the final flames
will depart at 12.30
according to the timetable.

Clean lines cross-section our grief.
Cut to pieces, it has no expression
in this neutral wood-lined room.

Mourners are seen to laugh,
so unreal is the occasion, until
mention of the dead name jolts us back

to why we're here this morning.
Antiseptic, anaesthetic crematorium
robbing us of our chance to mourn.

12.45. The moment has gone.
Is that all there is? Is that all there is?
Better the hole in the ground

awakening emotions of fear and relief,
the scatter of earth on the polished lid,
back to nature, cycle complete.



the Pigs of Fila, Vanuatu

By John Gallas



the Pigs of Fila
came out of the Nostril of God
to promote the avoidance of sin
by their bloody extreme Sloth

they are all distension and tits,
they must be stoned, brothers,
and their extremities affrighted,
that they bear away evil into the bush

and, it is written, hooked squealy and blood
they will be stuck and ate in the snot greenery,
for the bastard wages of sin, though it be
God's gift that they smiled in, is death.



A Part of Everyday

By Claire Gibney



No one knows what the future lies ahead of them,
Life is short,
What time you get is luck,
Everyone dies at sometime,
Some people live until they are 100,
While others die young.

We live in an imperfect world,
Where there is a lot of pain and suffering,
But somehow most enjoy life.

Some people are not given the chance to enjoy life,
Experience the wonders of the world,
They die,
Not of old age,
But illness,
Illness that we are trying to cure,
To prevent death and preserve life.

Everyday someone is born and someone dies,
The impact that a persons' life has on others,
Is huge,
They love them,
Yet they cause them pain.

Someone's death can cause others to improve their lives,
By teaching them the most important thing everyone has,
LIFE.

Illness are torture,
But despite that most people don't give up,
They're right to live,
They fight for it.

Which is a message for us all,
Careers, money and possessions are not of importance,
Only life.



Call of the Sea
(after Masefield's 'Sea Fever')

By June Drake



I must go down to the sea again where wind sends up salt spray
and all I ask is gulls aloft that swoop down on their prey;
where small boats toss and gliding yachts are phantoms on the waves
and men are lulled by rise and fall on a knave that misbehaves.

I must go down to the sea again where the beach is made of sand
that harbours treasures thrown at it, some foreign to the land
but bright, appealing to the touch, worth more than pearls or gold,
that hide strange tales of unknown source that never will unfold.

I must go down to the sea again, to the sound of the captain's shout
as winds tear through your very soul as the vessel turns about
and all I ask of that blessed sea is a safe and pleasant trip
through oceans deep and weather fair on a good, sea-worthy ship.

I must go down to the sea again, it lures me with its spell.
What will I find? What fate awaits? I really cannot tell
but this I know, I must respond to the call of the ocean's plea
inviting any brave enough to a life on the salty sea.



“Disagree To Comprehend”

By Marbea Ebonique Logan



The reference between faith and war are eminent factors, we are what we are existed to be...“human”. With that confirmation of God it’s bound to have conflict in the physical and spiritual nature. I felt a loss of existence, not a loss of war, the term was used metamorphically to subdue a consciousness of human feelings we have no control over, but given the power to decide to fully recover and look towards the end of the rope that’s pulling you up, and not the end you want to hang from.

I want to throw my cards in and say I’m out of this game of life, but the love, faith, truthfulness, and realism of my family and friends keeps me grounded and on the right path of consciousness. I’m very grateful and thankful for the equilibrium of my cypher it’s truly humbling and motivating. Although I have not heard often or much at all from those I chose to become associative with my time isn’t wasted reaping unsewn seeds its better trying to grasp the technique and be cohesive with my human emotions and my spiritual awareness, and its power to conquer all that is sad, mad, in despair or in denial.

I know what guides my life, I know whom my creator is, now I know above all things I’ve been blessed to experience these last few weeks of this life I’m given (on borrowed terms) is that...compassion is healing, love is eminent, death is here, there, and sure to come and will pass eventually under Gods graciousness, or mercy. I needed and wanted the people I love and care about to inspire me sometimes, but not everyone is empathetic or show reciprocal respect.

Yet I can live with that and have the choice to “deal or no deal”. If I need a scholar I will read Socrates, Plato, Buddha, Gandhi, Chinmoy, Mandela or Kabir. I need the heart and friendship of a fellow “been through that type shit before” individual...I don’t want the “I’m giving you a life lesson of my thoughts and rambling type shit”...its so mechanical, and a inhuman sort of monotonous speech that would make a more weaker minded person (pull that trigger, slice that vein, take a step and fall, or block people out of existence at all)

I’m the author, writer, mother, and captain of my life who knows God is the force giving me those strengths, and testing my weakness. Now I will turn the page and live in Gods love...Next Chapter!



OUR CAT BORIS

By Erna Karton



Our cat Boris
Knows a great deal more than Horace

There is no feat that he cannot perform
He is aeons ahead of the norm

A Compleat Angler, a Connoisseur of fish
Always ready to provide a tasty dish

He is understated and neat
A long-time member of the Elite


We love and adore him
What more can we say

Except to bless him day after day



Masks

By Rebecca McCarthy



Seeming to be something,
Is like a guessing game,
Masks, all different:
A hidden depth,
Evil and unknowing.

Pounce like a panther,
When a cub is vulnerable,
Bloody eye sockets,
Senseless of all things important,
The cause; masks.

Living deathly pale,
Crawls behind consciousness,
Stealing valuable senses,
And like a leech,
Sucks victims dry.
Nobody has a fixed smile.

Beware.



NO LONGER FAIR

By Rosemary Fisher




Earth has not anything to show more dull
than inner-city turpitude;
where blanket-shrouded homeless feud
and scavenge litter baskets full
of part-chewed burgers. Food to null
their hunger, while a multitude
of well-heeled tourists, sharp and shrewd,
swarm into shops to push and pull.
New architecture, crude and bold;
glass fronted office buildings thrust
towards the sky. Big Issue sold.
Sweet violets long turned to dust.
The streets, alas, not paved with gold,
just pigeons pecking pizza crust.



Optimum

By Foyez Syed




As I lay awake at night,
I think about what could have been?
My shattered dreams, fall from height
And all the things I could have seen.

What lay before my eyes?
Nothing but impenetrable haze.
Not an ounce of hope, faith dies
Lost in life's unfriendly maze.

Complication lies on every path of life.
Find yourself, in adversity.
A lesson learnt with every strife.
Find yourself, a sanctuary.


Why think about what could have been?
When I can think about what could be?
All the things that I could have seen,
I can still see if I set myself free.

What lays before my eyes?
Beauty that is not beyond me,
Hope and faith and all things wise.
I have the world at my mercy.




Cardio

By Philip Coales



5 a day is too much,
unless you are doing a Masters,
or something important,
in which case keep going and
no, I'm not jealous;
I do my 30 minutes –
strenuous, I can assure you –
almost every day, and
though my mileage varies,
I cover terrain:
I know St Petersburg, I *know*
London, and sometimes I head
to Hastings, to spend a weekend
in appropriate attire,
making up incredible ground.



Survivor

By Anne Kelly



She dribbles at barred windows.

Seasons flirt in wicker chairs

She gulps stars: imbibing ethereal flavours as she howls.

She carries the moon on two red cushions:
A wedding ring concocted.
Pale urchins chew her feet.
Grooms perpetually turn away from her face.

Clowns nailed her here: she devours their red noses.
Clowns kneaded her.
Clowns: see how they rot.

She lives in a new name: Amy for rejected children.
Sardines: raw: rejected children clamour for life.

Amy hosts picnics through barred windows.


Amy draws faceless dreams.
She sketches red noses.

Amy paints giggling suns:
She paints pulsating skies for a life almost lost.




1929

By Tony Sainsbury




The petals of peonies litter the floors
Brought into the house from the Great Outdoors.
The telephone rings. A toddler recovering from chicken pox
Combines three separate, difficult operations:
He listens, he thinks, he proceeds to talk.
A Zeppelin completes its tour of the globe
Effecting a perfect landing in New York.
We all laud a marvellous masterstroke,
The fruit of universal collaboration.
In ten years' time the World will be at War,
The shock of opening Pandora's Box
When we see how tragically thin the veneer
Of Man's much vaunted Civilization.




TIGER

By Vanessa Duncan




That carnivorous species,
With those insatiable eyes,
Teeth baring, heart gripping grin,
With a sensational voice within,
That contains the depths to shake and wake the skies.
Holding an affirmative stripe, a statement,
With a tantalising appetite,
To go forth once a target is in sight
And stop at nothing until it has its catch.
To have such confidence in one's self,
So sociable yet detached,
With an elegance and beauty in each stride it struts,
The pride
To be a lone walker,
Content,
A smooth character to blend into its surroundings
An yet stands out, to be noticed
At the right moment,
O how I wish I could be like you.



Received Knowledge

By Jak Wough



Your daddy don't like dogs, she said
(Yelled about them often).
You heard him yell on getting home
Each time he trod in shit.


Now he comes here only for his hols
(Girlfriend on his arm).
You know how much he loves to sleep
On blow-up vinyl beds.

Your daddy chose to live abroad
(Didn't like his family).
You saw him leave each fall instead
Of living on the dole.

Your daddy lays a guilt-trip on you
(*You* did nothing wrong).
So blame him for the wrongs you do him
-- It worked for me for years.

Your daddy done your mummy wrong
(Yes, now he's really done me).
He paid my bills for forty years
And now he says no more.

You received your knowledge from me
(Straight from mummy's lips)
So you can be sure, without a doubt,
That your daddy done me wrong.



LONDON TOWN

By Michael Griffin

What shall we do, where shall we go?
Walking through the streets of Soho
See the cats blowin'
Watch the dice rolling
Walking through the streets of Soho in
London Town...
Christmas Days
And Halloween nights
When Santa and the Devil
Get ready to fight
Fools and their money
Are a one-night stand
There is gold in the mountains
And fun in the sand
In shimmering satin
She beckons the night
A turn of her heel,
Turns on a red light
Artful Dodgers
Oliver Twists
Barnet Fair
The Thames in the mist
The pavement cracks
The stripper who bares
Leans back on the stage
Drags a comb through her hairs
The smoke on her breath
Is a poison inside
Like the flaming sky
And the ships on the Nile
In whispering shadows
And streets of delight
Angels and Devils
Prepare to take flight
Fear is a force
Not understood
Love is a curse
On a poor neighbourhood
Rhythm of trains
Nightlife games
The way to the stars
In Olympic flames
If you can take a tip
You make this trip
To the slippery slide
Of the flippity flip.....in London Town
In London Town

Yachners

By Marilyn Katanka

They met at the well
Who him and her
Or her and he
Rivka and Eliezer
He came for Yitzi.
I was going that way
You do understand
I'm not one to be nosy
Nor at all underhand
Yes I do understand, but I haven't all day
But, you see, I really was going that way.
Well, he came with his camels
Yes quite a few
Then he seemed to be praying
I don't know who to
Then she appeared
And as bold as can be
Watered his camels
Though she's only 3!
You're pulling my leg
Not a bit of it chum
I saw with me own eyes
I'm not making fun
I was going that way
You know where they live
That big tent by the palm tree
Or is it a fig?
Well you should have seen
The gifts that he gave
Bracelets, a nose ring,
She'll be no one's slave
Well I peeped in the doorway
I couldn't resist
Then that Laban came out
And that's when I missed
Whatever happened next
I cannot tell
But I know it all started
Right here at the
Well

Going up the wall, regarding 'God's Other Children', at Chatsworth

By Bob Tristram



In the art-loving Bologna Domenico Zampieri was one of the feted sons

Ever popular, his many commissions decorated villas, chapels, he even, classically, adorned Roman palaces, but, later, the Neapolitans demanded an even higher Baroque

so 'He' of 'The Sacrifice of Isaac' was thus kicked out, a life drama all of his own.

Today his 'Expulsion From The Garden', hangs, complete with 'Big Daddy' himself, a huge red cloak all-of-a-billow, one finger into sky, pointing-out the inevitable.

Bottom left, Eve kneels to lick upon that grinning serpent, Adam shrugging excuses. Both, except for well-placed wreaths of smiles girt about respective loins, starkers.

The lamb and the lion? Why they're lying with each other, bottom right; chums. A bright rainbow filling up their centrefold, but, up there, riding with 'The Boss'

five beautiful 'young things', three, also without a stitch, 'the other' favoured 'two' raised in red and gold; all 'riding the wind' across swathed trees and over a clearing.

So, which 'famous five' they? and what their 'jolly spiffing adventures' yet to come?

'Over these other doors' explains a nearby printed notice, 'you'll usually find Simon Vouet's (1590-1649) 'AN ALLEGORY OF PEACE: 698A'. I say usually because, as it further explains 'This picture has been removed for conservation'

Well, thank heavens for that! someone, here at least, wants to preserve a little peace which is much more than can be said about some of our current captains steering world affairs; though, even minus this said artwork, that blank wall above the door has a tranquillity all of its own, enforced, as it were, by the very violation of absence.

Nothing we can do of course, about any of this, except a Mussorgsky promenade. Who hangs what? where? why? when? and how? entirely in someone else's hands.



A Boy in Church

By John Whitworth

Dad wears a suit for worshipping,
Mum wears a silly hat,
But, when it's time to stand and sing,
They belt out hymns like anything.
This is the Church of Christ the King.
I like the sound of that.

But Christ the Sufferer is less
Convenient to my mind.
I suffer too, and I confess
My Christian charity's a mess.
My enemies I cannot bless,
When they are so unkind.

For any time and everywhere,
They drive me to the wall.
They kick my shins, they pull my hair,
They make me piss my underwear.
O Gentle Jesus, hear my prayer.
I need to kill them all.


Christ curse them all with one accord,
Curse others of their ilk.
Christ curse them busy, curse them bored,
Give them to fire and the sword,
Strew strychnine on their lunches, Lord,
Pour arsenic in their milk.

*I am a pure and righteous person,
Perfect in word and deed.
You are a wicked and perverse one,
And day by day I watch you worsen.
Yet I will put one HELLISH curse on,
And we shall see them bleed.*

KERPOW! Our Vicar, looking grand
But never very bright,
Booms out the blessing. Then we stand
To shuffle out together, and
My little sister takes my hand,
So everything's all right.

A breath of fresh air

By Neelam Shah



The feeling of freedom,
The endless struggle forgotten,
No more polluted air,
Gliding in the midst, I sigh with relief,
No anxieties, no worries,
A brand new journey awaits,
With the helping hand of a,
Breath of fresh air.


I feel a cool but pleasant sensation,
That touches my cheek, leaves me at,
Ease and peace with the helping hand,
Of a breath of fresh air.

Beyond the past I set off, awaiting an,
Brand new future.
A time to revitalise, to reenergise,
A time to declare myself, reveal the truths in an,
Heavenly atmosphere with the helping,
Hand of a breath of fresh air.

I am at a different disposition in life,
To revolutionise and adjust with,
The helping hand of a breath of-
Fresh air.


Let go of the struggles, welcome,
Upon new opportunities, smite,
All battles that come in my way,
I strive to gain victory with pride,
only with the helping hand of a-
Breath of fresh air.

Stepping outside the house,
Living every moment to moment,
Seeping in the hours, days, months,
Years with great anticipation,
I couldn't have done it without the,
Helping hand of a breath of fresh air.



**Rattus Norvegicus
(Concerning an invasion of rats)**

By Terry Jones



They had constructed their library
from leaves of paper, coded
in classification unknown
to our Schools of Information Science.


Their eager researches had revisited
our own boxed history, layered
in dated statements and ticked bills.

These furnished the fascinating matter
to be bitten and devoured,
shredded into sibylline leaves
for rearrangement on a cold floor.

Their enquiries rustled within our hearing
at strange times. But how easy to cite
alternative causes up to the very
moment of the catastrophe.

Their executions had no dissent
and the hemlock we supplied
was poured like party nibbles
into casual containers.

At the finish, their literature
was swept aside with the black seed
of their droppings and up to this day,
against the decay of their corpses
we burn clouds of incense.



Fade out the bad and the sad

By Liz Goes

Where have you come from my lovelies
your ebony skin so shiny
and your eyes so bright but so sad?
What on earth could have been so bad?

What in your world was the trouble
that brought you to freeze in this cold?
Distressed, haunted eyes – never glad.
What tragedy turned them so sad?

Your new, white, school shirts are perfect
but not your second-hand blazers.
Your papers say, '*No mum or dad.*'
I guess that's why your eyes are so sad.

Two silent children, hand in hand,
not ready to join in the fray.
Those smouldering eyes still so sad
I so long to make them look glad

Schooling, it says, '*Non-existent.*'
Level of English: '*Beginner.*'
Where are the sounds that tune in 'glad'
and fade out the 'bad' and the 'sad' ?


A tentative, 'What is your name?'
is answered with questioning stares.
Silence, no words; certainly no 'glad'
hovers in a hushed mist of 'bad'.

'*I Hada, he Abdul,*' she says.
I smile and at last they smile too.
Is this a switch to light up 'glad'
and turn off the darkness of 'bad'?

'*She sister, I brother,*' he cries,
his smile lighting up his new world.
'*I teacher,*' I say, feeling bad
I missed out '*am your*' – but I'm glad.

Enlightenment

By Tim Kearns




The spill that splintered in the Bunsen flame,
was burned to charcoal, scribbled half a name
on the asbestos mat in that dark room –
suffused with iodine – lit up the gloom
of early schooldays; where eternal rain,
and condensed windows, and all of the vain
attempts to see beyond the misted glass,
came second to the race to scrape a pass.

No foetus in formaldehyde for us
to grace the shelves which ached with clamps and jars;
no spatchcocked frogs.

Instead chaste light in linear perfection,
prism-poised and bruised to spectral fission,
angling for apprehension
inside that still dark room

I saw the light; I saw enough of Science
in each fresh metaphor that we'd exhume.



A Mournful Rustling

By Tim Kearns

“And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again...”

[Henry Wadsworth Longfellow]



The fag-end of that Summer, when we four
crossed quads, twice tandem, making promises
to meet up before Christmas, to write more,
it suddenly occurred to me that this
was just the dying echo of a song
whose haunting, half-forgotten, sad refrain
resurfaced on the waves it sank among
to play itself out time and time again
till we move on.

Your letter sits behind an ornament -
part of a pair I picked up years ago,
when I was struggling to afford the rent;
I keep it on the mantel even though
a later move did for its counterpart -
now ornament and letter occupy
the same place in my house and in my heart
reminders of past selves that I've put by
till I depart

A man can live his life like some fist clenched
around a talisman, which, while secure,
and from which surely nothing can be wrenched,
both binds and blinds him to its clammy core:
a just impediment, a padded cell
sold once for pence, now measured out in pounds
of flesh. Or he can dash it all to Hell,
to trust instead the grass between the mounds
of those who fell.

