

OpenDoor magazine

YOUR WORDS MATTER.

*Theme
Poetry for
each day*

WHAT IS THE
RIGHT PUBLISHING
PATH FOR YOU?

Prepare to
reflect on life
and afterlife
in this issue

AUTHOR

FEATURES

**MORE BOOKS
TO READ DURING
LOCKDOWN!**



WELCOME TO THE OPENDOOR MAGAZINE MARCH ISSUE!

This month we dive into a subject that is typically difficult to discuss. In our 'Life / Death' Issue, we have authors and poets and artists exploring what that theme means to them. The concept of Life and Death coming in personal poetry and words from artists and poets from over ten countries, is wonderful to read. We are so excited to share their words with you this month and that this wonderful theme comes on our SIXTH issue.

We are also thrilled to announce that we are close to putting out our first anthology! We have received so many requests to have a print version of our magazine, but it's just not currently financially viable to do –while still maintaining our goal of keeping our magazine free for subscribers and submissions – and opening it for all. We still wanted to provide the option to see these amazing words in print though! So we will be releasing an anthology each quarter that will include articles, poems, features, etc. – from the magazine in that quarter. We will strive to make this as affordable as possible for you – while being able to use any proceeds to help us cover our ongoing operating and effort costs. Watch for our first anthology coming up for sale in the next week or so!

Thank you for continuing to share our magazine with your friends and family and allowing our audience to keep growing.

- Mel & Kassie

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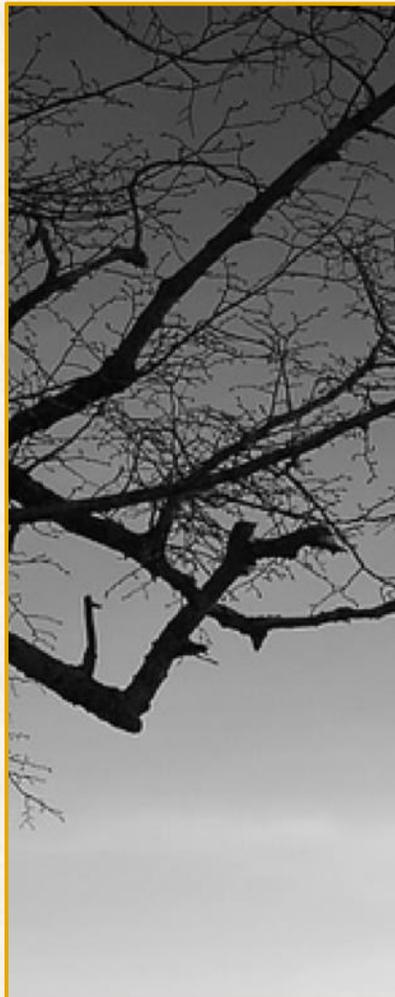
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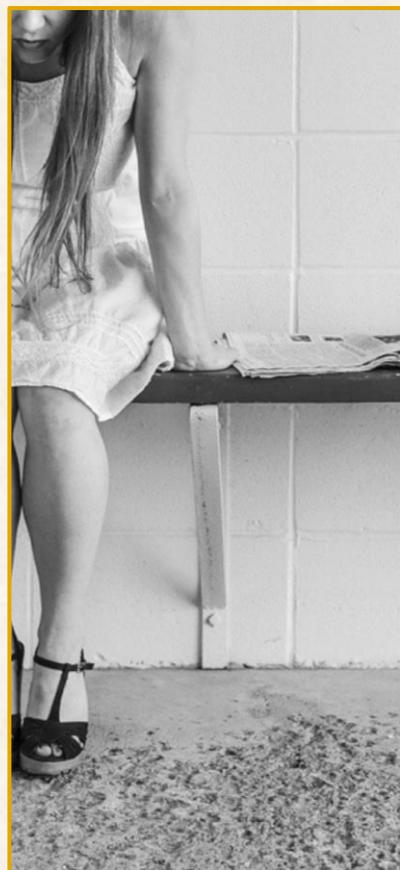


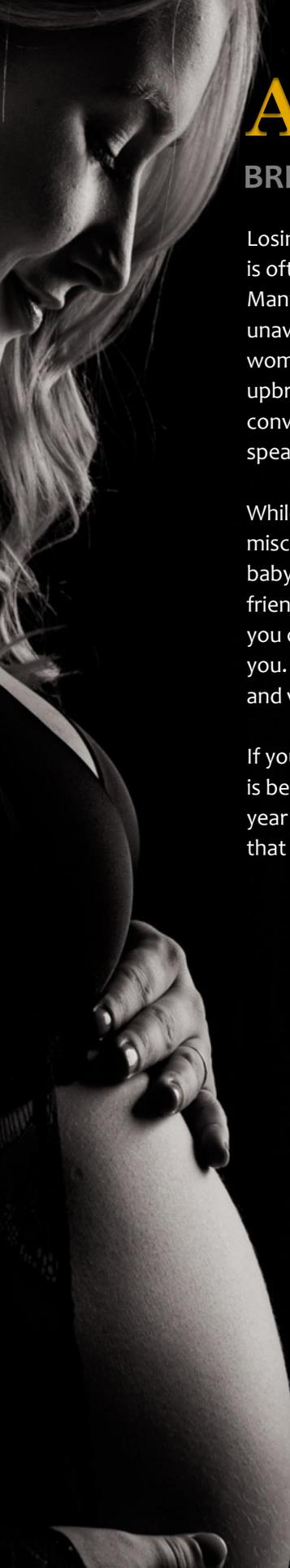
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A Miscarriage Lullaby

BRITNEY MARIE [FB@therealBrittneyMarie](#)

Losing a baby in pregnancy through miscarriage is still a taboo subject around the world. It is often linked to stigma and shame, yet it is the most common reason for pregnancy loss. Many women feel they must remain silent because miscarriage is considered common or unavoidable when you are trying to conceive. But having a miscarriage does take a toll on women and their families. Still, numerous women have said that despite their culture, upbringing, or education, some of their friends and family still are unwilling to have a conversation about their loss. This seems to correlate with the silence that shrouds speaking about miscarriage grief in general.

While it may be taboo, some women and their families do grieve openly about their miscarriage. Some talk about it to share their sadness, to break the stigma around losing a baby to a miscarriage, for others and themselves do not feel alone, or all of these. If a friend wants to speak to you about their pregnancy loss and you're unsure what to say, you could try saying something like, "I am so very sorry. I can imagine this is very sad for you. Is there anything I can do to help?" These are some ways we all can break the stigma and validate what women go through when they have a miscarriage.

If you're unsure what having a miscarriage may feel like, the poem "A Miscarriage Lullaby" is below. It'll put you in the shoes of a woman who was reflecting on her pregnancy loss a year later. And if you have had a miscarriage, I am so very sorry for your loss. Please know that you are not alone.

Thinking of you intensely today
And how abruptly you cruelly went away
A dream turned into a tainted nightmare
I begged and pleaded, but you weren't spared

That moment forever haunting my heart
The emergency room where I fell apart
I didn't know how I would be able to survive
Because at that moment, a part of me took a dive

Now, a year later, I can't help but think:
What would you have been, blue or pink?
Are your eyes brown, blue, or green?
Would you have been the cutest little bean?

I will not know until the day we are reunited
Until then, part of my soul will feel divided
I wish your journey got to begin
I'll love you forever until we meet again

March Theme: Life / Death

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

I LIVE IN A BLACK BOX

Iulia Pană

Romania

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<https://www.facebook.com/iuliapanawriter>

I live in a black box...
I and my body
the box is small and the cardboard
has a strange smell of almonds
morning visible through holes
gouged with difficulty
as if I await nothing but more waiting
for long depressing couplings
the air blows through me...
goes on and remains stuck to the box lid
changing its color to gray
in this temporary dwelling
I have no room for visitors...
barely enough oxygen for a single creature,
a fly...
life in a box has its humor...

GOODNESS

Claire Kroening

United States

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Nature followed her footprints,
Planting seeds in the sand
With every forward land,
Blooming trees to the moon.

Wind would whistle between
The curls of her bronzite hair,
Setting a crown of flowers upon her head,
Hues of violets and blues.

No matter how much strength
She placed in the land,
There was only so much she could do
To brace the incoming doom.

Her eyes as forests
Would get torn down one by one,
Leaving nothing but rabbit holes
In the tracks that were left.

Generations would soon come to see,
The everlasting beauty of her earth.
In what was worth protecting.
What was left for recovering
before her last breath touched the sea.

DEAD ROOTS

Kim Denning-Knapp
United States

I dig
 hands
 nails
sinking into dirt
feeling around for dead roots
remnants of a life
 to rip them out
they've gotten in the way,
interrupting the moving on.

My hands, brain,
they dig
striking, stabbing,
 turning over decay of leaves
 pushing spade,
The one he sharpened
 kept sharp
 to ease his work
in his garden of marigolds, hummingbirds,
symbols of dead and life

Like in my dream of faded blue curtains
where he said goodbye,
his voice drifts of transparent West Texas steel—
 You know what to do.
 You're doin' it.
 See?
 Keep Goin'.

Knowing and doing,
he is here
my father

I see my hands in dirt
dirt under nails, creases of my palms
 for a moment

They are his.

LOVE IS NOT THAT LOVE

Sonia Pal
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Love is not THAT love
if it does not bring.....
the very best out of you,
gives you the pain to sting,
wells up your eyes with tears
to roll down your cheeks,
while being reminiscent of the ties

Love is not THAT love
if it does not take
you near your God
to pray for the re-union
which lingers on hold forever

Love is not THAT love
if it does not get into your nerves for life
to look for the one who taught you how to thrive
but you got separated from
and finding hard to survive

Love is not THAT love
if it does not keep
you busy in your thoughts
and gets catapulted emotions Purgated and
regenerated

Love is not THAT love
if it does not uproot your inner self and
reincarnate A NEW you
full of life for the little sapling of YOU
so delicate waiting for the sunshine, A NEW life
and turns out to be a SUPER YOU
like a giant Mother-tree!
Full of bloom, birds, fruits and beauty laden
standing upright with a very deep hold of inside/
insight

Love is not THAT love
if it does not teach you the lessons of life
beyond time and dwells in you to philosophies
for the brand NEW of you,
And tells you what is wrong and what is right,
how can you be wise for the rest of your life !

A HEART OF GOLDEN THOUGHTS

Gavin Prinsloo

South Africa

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/342703652580471>

Should color be the sound of light, and hold my heart in golden glow, cupped hands aglow, a beating golden heart with light spilling between laced fingers, laying bare the thoughts of infinite hues, a wealth of mind reflected in shafts of incandescent gleam, so bright as to narrow the eyes of perception, and shutter the window to the soul.

Sound heard without hearing, light seen without seeing, sensation felt without touching, it infuses flesh and mind, gifting the immortality of thought without thinking.

For all that is, all that ever will be, is the golden glow of life, of a heart suppurating and spilling over with the emotional heat of existence, irradiated with the promise of life.

So, as I return my heart into its suppository of self, as the light is quenched and internalized, as eyes yet see again, ears respond to the beat of my heart, and mind relax with the certainty of my temperance, my hands feel yet again the coarse texture of reality.

So again, is hidden my golden treasure, until time again to expose my mind to the light of a beating, pulsing heart, to recreate this moment of experienced infinity, and to glow again with creativity of life.

FLOWERS

Gabriel Angrand
United States

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"God,
I've seen flowers grow
in graveyards where skeletons
are laid to rest

So if bones
were buried inside me, can I be
made beautiful?"

Miscarriages, family secrets,
sex partners, or other trauma—
bones are whatever resonates
with you

But the answer is, "Yes"
Eve, 'n' you can be made beautiful
Jesus died in human flesh
Cause you were made beautiful

You were never graveyard
But you are earth in truth
So I pray that seeds are planted
In your heart and mind or womb

That you may see how flowers grow
where death had stolen room

THE FATAL KINDNESS

Mike Ball
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<https://twitter.com/whirred>

You need not rise to open your door
So that death can come into your room
Or into your life, although it stopped
For Emily and will visit you.

A marvel of physics, death passes
Like cosmic rays through your plastered walls,
Your locked door and your shuttered windows.
And goes where it chooses, and it must.

Your personal version of a death
May arrive loudly, violently
On the sudden point of a knife, or
Agony of exploding heart, or
It may visit like the dew at dawn —
Moist, cold, soft smothering and silent.

You may bliss out with yogic OM or
Weep at ultimate unfairness, or
Rage your panicked need for long life, or
Make guttural sounds of the drowning.
You may strike an atheist's bargain,
(In your mind; Death is indifferent.)

Death accommodates you in your end.
Braying while grasping a cocktail stem,
Unable to rise from your wheelchair,
Working anxiously at your keyboard,
Vivid dreaming one last time beneath
Your comforter. Death accommodates.

You need not rise. Death will come to you.
Surcease is death's only specialty.
In the end was the word, and the word
Was with death and death was the last word.

HER NAME

Kassie J Runyan

United States

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<https://www.facebook.com/KassieJRunyan>

She haunts me.
Daily.
When I wake up,
she hides under the bed
for only a moment.
Teasing that she went away.
I blink and she's back
tapping on my shoulder
with her manicured nail,
painted in blood red
and sharpened to a tip.
Interrupting my thoughts;
my hopes;
reminding me
that she is always there.
Waiting.
Stalking.
I plan a future
but she frays the corners
of my mind,
teasing me about flights
and storms
and the dangers of them all.
She reminds me of the future
that might never come
to pass.
She stands with me
when I go to my doctor
and they scan my body
looking for danger.
Shrugging her thin shoulders
when I get the all clear
and she mumbles under her breath,
"maybe next year."
She forwards me articles
about the souls
that lost their battle
with their own mental demons.
Ones that look and feel like mine.
But they made the decision

or were pushed to
and she whispers,
"that could have been you."
She sits in the pew
of the funeral home
as I pay my respects
to the family of a woman
I barely knew,
but who left the world
after a life well lived.
And the crimson nail
motions towards
the coffin
as her lips pucker
and she mouths,
"that could have been you."
She is there,
now and always.
Stepping fully out of
the shadows
as I turn out the light
and lay my head on my pillow
trying to ignore her glossy glare
as I slip to sleep.
But still...
I can't escape her.
She follows me to my dreams...
chasing me
like I'm her prey
and she's starving for a capture.
She chants and pants,
"that could have been you"
as she haunts me.
Counting down the seconds,
the moments,
until she can caress me
and fold me
into her bosom.
Making me a trophy
residing on her shelf.
I toss and turn in my sleep
and whisper to her in the shadow.
Her name escapes my lips,
and is shared with the world
"Death"

EMPATHY AND TRAGEDY

Gavin Prinsloo

South Africa

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/3427036525804>

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What is missing in our world today?
Where empathy is nonexistent,
Why do Devils come out to play?
Is it because we are so persistent?
Has tragedy killed empathy,
In a world dripping crimson and coughing death,
Has too much Death drowned sympathy,
with every struggling breath?
One for all and all for one that truth has never been,
For all the hopeless misery, that we have daily seen.
Disease and war are rampant, no matter how we
strive,
Our chances get slimmer, of getting out alive.
Where do we go from here, it seems the world
gives not a shit?
Our only hope is that we open eyes, so that Hope's
bright flame is lit.
If we should never speak again, and the world takes
its last breath,
Please join me in a requiem, for empathies torrid
death.

TRIAL RUN

Kathy Jo Bryant

United States

I don't mean to be noseey,
But I brought you a posey,
Maybe we can get cozy,
Out here on the swing!

And then I might mention,
Just to get your attention,
It is my intention,
A love song to sing!

My heart is on fire,
And full of desire,
May the angelic choir,
My message convey!

Words are just much too feeble,
So Darling be agreeable,
In the future unforeseeable,
To LOVE me always!

A SEASON OF DEATH

Amy Turberville

<https://www.facebook.com/theangelinthedarkness>

I cut my teeth on grief
at an early age
Baby blues fading to black
I walked straight up to my grandfather's coffin
and peered in
And felt death's Cold, lifeless embrace
holding me tight
Only the void staring back at me
I have spent a lifetime
Gathering ashes & striped carnations
One after the other they fell
And I cannot help but feel it's
Death taunting me for all those years I escaped its
grasp
That I am living in a cursed skin
Drowning in survivor's guilt
Longing for a life lost

MOON BABY

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The moon so bright
Forever alight.

Shines into the night
Such a joyous sight

Sleep, my baby sleep
Hush, hush and do not weep.

Such a busy day
Walked along the bay.

Chatted to familiar faces
About the surrounding places.

Built up an appetite
So we stopped for a bite.

The day it ran away
And now time to lay.

Look up at the moon
You'll be asleep so very soon.

Close your tiny eyes
Time for beddy-byes.

Dream wonderful dreams
As the moon still beams.

LET IT BE OUR DREAM

Ashim Hazarika

India

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'Let me live', wails the child for life has just begun
Let us live peacefully or we can't live, can we?
'Let us die', wails the aged for life is somber .
It is complicated to yield and yet mysterious to go,
To follow and to do our wish.

Can you live? Can they live? Can life itself go on?
Positively none can because of the destructive
effect,
Impact of the cruel hands of violence.
Can they love? Could they love? Should they love?
Neither me, nor you, nor they, because
Affection and compassion has turned illusory.

'Let us fade', wails the earth for nothing is natural
Sorrow or joy, tears or smiles are worthless.
'Let us unite and lead our life', wails the youth,
For it is our time to meet our challenge.

Come, let's live – let's lead life, cos
Life is meant for living without delusion cos life is
A tedious journey, so, get everything
In time.

FAREWELL, MY BROTHER.

Adrian David

As we privates bid our final salute,
shrouding our grief as a tribute,
from near and afar, come shrill cries,
while our homeland mourns our brother's demise.

He enlisted to keep the flag flying high.
Alas, the horrors of war left him to die.
Remembering the good and bad times we shared
often,
with heavy hearts, we carry his flag-draped coffin.

His family was waiting by their door.
From their eyes, rivers of tears pour.
The little angel asks, 'Mom, where's Dad?'
God, why has the world turned so bad?

The bloodstained uniform pocked with bullet holes
belongs to yet another unsung patriotic soul.
An undaunted hero gone too soon
leaves an indelible void in our platoon.

Deep within us, there is relentless pain.
We promise his sacrifice won't go in vain.
O comrade, whom we call our own,
Why have you left us all alone?

(Dedicated to the fallen heroes of war)

THE LAST HARVEST

Tina Wayland

The Last Harvest

Canada

<http://tinawaylandcopywriter.com/fr/published-fiction.php>

The cows give birth
in the barn,
six slick calves crowded
together in the mild
March night.
The farmer bent and tired,
too old, he thinks,
for another season.
Too broken
to breed them again.

In April he carries crop seeds
out to the fields,
filling the fallow ones
with corn and carrots,
cabbage and potatoes,
lining fresh-plowed rows
with beats and beans and lettuce,
his tractor creaking like his joints,
cracking like his bones.

As the henhouse heats
in the late May sun
the chickens chuckle and cluck,
the farmer reaching for warm eggs
with his sweaty palms,
piling them high and heavy
in the basket his mother made
when he was a boy,
sixty summers slung over his shoulder.

The sheep are sheared in June,
their wet wool mucked and musty,
bleating between the farmer's knees
as he cuts the fleece from their feet,
their bellies,
each new ewe bruising his wrists,
shearing the skin from his palms.

Come July he sets his stand
by the roadside,
sells strawberries in wooden crates,
places peas in their pods in neat rows,
licking a line of raspberry juice
from his forearm,
feeling his tongue touch the old blue veins,
scrape across his burnt skin,
cracked and creased
from seasons of sun.

He runs the broom through the barn
in August,
sweeping rats from the rafters,
gathering gophers and voles in the fields
like an old barn owl,
swooping in on unsteady wings
to pluck his prey.

Then comes September,
the fields full and the farmer,
dirt deep down under his nails,
picks and plucks and reaps his crops.
Growing old with every row,
his weathered face fading
like the tall fall shadows of the barn.
But no more will he be bound to his bounty,
for when the last of the crop is culled
he will rip himself up by the roots,
snap his stem from the tree,
and at last, at last
bring his final harvest home.

LIFE AND DEATH

Darshana Thapa

India

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Why do they never meet?

Life comes first,

Death last,

What type of game is that?

Holding hands with happiness and sorrow,

Death follows life of tomorrow.

So enjoy happily as happiness knocks at your door,

Nobody knows of tomorrow.

Shed tears as much as you can

Don't grumble but run away from sorrow.

If day was never ending,

Light is long,

but darkness loves life

So beware of sorrow.

Life is a struggle for existence

until death ends following life .

A LOOK OF A CHILD

David Dephy

United States

<https://artisticfreedominitiative.org/artists/david-dephy/>

A look of a child makes you smile.

Fear disappears by the breath.

Your hope is not shaped by

the nightmares of the news at 9.

It still leads you across the mists.

A look of a child will refresh your soul.

It will guide you in the dark, its strength

will follow you all the days of your life,

you will dwell in your own childhood miracles,

forever, but put the rifle down, first.

NEW LIFE

Viva Andrada O'Flynn

Philippines

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<https://lovevivacakesandcrafts.blogspot.com/>

look not so sullen
when you see me gone
sunny skies and smiles
still dance before your eyes
earthy soil blooms into new life
spurts promises and eases strife
somber black never suited your style
glow like a rainbow does in exile
after the storm clears shake off your fears
leave yesterday's episode
unpack your load
winds of change blow directions unknown
as a sweet soft sigh carries me home

THE LINE BETWEEN

Rebecca Kenny

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The line between
We never talk any more
And
We will never talk again

Is razor
t
h
i
n

And when it's breached
Cuts
Like a blade to the chest
You were there

Now

You are not

I SEE YOU THERE

Jennifer Muniz
United States

https://www.instagram.com/so__to__speak/

I've been picturing it lately
At the edge of the sea
Of my dreams
When all has been rendered useless
Except for this effortless transcendent love

I see you there.

When our broken bodies reach
The extent of their toil
After all
And our limitless hearts have
Met their limitations for injustices

I see you there.

Your omnipresence emanates
Where it didn't before
You're with me
My penance in broken remnants
When I will arrive at your door in the end

I see you there.

I'll feel your heart pulsing in the stars
Well after the world goes dark
Our love stays
I've been envisioning it lately
I've been wishing it without my own consent
I see you there.
I don't paint pretty pictures
Nor pen science fiction
Tell me now
What happens in that final hour
In the last pages of your ever afters

-am I there?

NEARLY NEW-BORN

Michaela Fuller
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What's that strange feeling?
A rumbling, a sound,
I wriggle myself on the spot,
To try and turn around.

Ooo, there is was again,
A low humming purr,
Was that this person?
Could it be her?

Oh no, that feels different,
That's lower for sure,
I wriggle around again,
To try to hear more.

The sounds are together now,
In unison they hum,
This is all new to me,
The sounds are so fun.

I think it's who carries me,
The noise who's called mum,
And it must be the noise 'dad,'
That's got to be the other one.

I like these feelings,
The sounds comfort me,
I can't wait to get out,
Then the sounds I will see.

PARADOX

Shanzay Sethi

Canada

I don't know what it is, but I want to make it something it's not.

I want to make it complex. Wretched. Muddy.

Heartrendingly beautiful, haunting my sensibilities and an emotional sensuality

Till the point my entire world looks like a wrongly arranged jigsaw puzzle.

Where only I can see the image, it's supposed to represent.

When everyone sees only abstract insanity.

Well, everyone except you.

You would see the picture and we would discuss it over a bottle of apple juice filled in champagne bottle.

People around us would whisper and point at us, snickering behind their mouth covered hands and calling us stark raving mad.

We cancel out our imperfections and the resulting combination is nothing short of a masterpiece.

Words are stuck in my throat.

I have a sudden craving to take out my dad's old typewriter and write a tragedy. I will probably wake up in the middle of the night, take the typed story out. Then scathingly scratch out the part where the two people in love die and rewrite the story with a happy ending.

May be then, I will miss you less.

DEATH IS A CARICATURE OF LIFE

Hiba Heba

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Freeing: the oceanic murmur of
a shanty. Beguiling, tongue-tied;

like the soft existence of a recluse.

A wall, tumbling. Brick after brick,

and what's beyond water, or sustenance?

When I am buried in the quicksand,

I will be a kidney devoured by a bulging
liver, or a heart. A flipped mattress.

The color of reflection. Convulsing, a
metonym not yet pronounced. Out loud.

FOR MANY YEARS

Francisc Edmund Balogh

Romania

[https://www.facebook.com/Francisc-Edmund-](https://www.facebook.com/Francisc-Edmund-Balogh-308992359468783)

[Balogh-308992359468783](https://www.facebook.com/Francisc-Edmund-Balogh-308992359468783)

<https://www.instagram.com/francisc.e.balogh/>

We lived
in that bellow the rainbow small dug hole of
subbasement apartment,
from that dug hole of crowded, narrow, snakes
like convoluted small streets area,
from that dug hole of end of the world small town
which stole from us, slowly, one by one,
all the reasons for the sun to shine!

We lived
in the dug hole of tireless aiming for the wonder of
luck
inside that barb-wired perimeter of
everyday routines.

We lived
in the dug hole of a soul wrecking materialism
hidden under its shallow cover of wisdom.

We lived
in the dug hole of our fatality entrenched self
image
as seen in the color-blind mirror of life.

We lived
in the dug hole of unpredictable bat flight like
sensitivity of the truth.

We lived in the dug hole of the stone heavy silence
of divinity!

The power of our love was so bleached!

We lived that dug hole life
without being able to turn it
into a tunnel.

Today,
the dawn released
a new morning's light,
high up, above the town,
as if it was a white dove.

BOB DECEIVED ME

Robert Baker

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<https://mobile.twitter.com/TheRomanceBloke>

<https://www.instagram.com/TheRomanceBloke/>

This sorry tale is gospel truth.
One night when I stayed out quite late
I met a “man” who changed my fate
and took advantage of my youth.

I’d been out with an old schoolmate
who dragged me through the pubs in town
then left me stranded like a clown
and stumbling in a drunken state.

Confused and lost, I sought my pad
and passed a graveyard on the way,
a gloomy place of tombstones grey.
That’s where I met the scheming cad.

I’d never seen a man so tall
and handsome in a roguish way.
God moulded him from finer clay;
or so it seemed before my fall.

He whispered words that flowed like wine.
I took him for an honest guy
who wouldn’t ever tell a lie.
How could I know he was a swine?

He smiled and said, “Please call me Bob.
Say, did you ever dream to be
as healthy, fast and strong as me?”
It seemed he thought I was a slob.

Eternal life he offered me.
He swore that all he said was true
and counselled me to think it through.
Nothing that good comes for free.

I thought it was his little joke —
that Bob was making fun of me.
Perhaps he’d drunk too much Chablis
or maybe snorted lines of coke.

His eyes glowed red, and then I saw
he meant just what he’d said to me:
immortal I could choose to be.
If only I’d perceived the flaw!

Instead, I dreamed of endless time
and how I could achieve much more
if I were just as strong as Thor.
I didn’t see that Bob was slime.

I said, “You have persuaded me.
I’d love to last a billion days
and live my life a million ways.
So don’t be coy. What is your fee?”

And that is when he bit my neck
then drank my blood ‘til I dropped dead.
His fearsome fangs were dripping red;
my corpse was left a ragged wreck.

Since I was dead I didn’t see
the steps he took to bring me back.
That demon had a magic knack
and used it to awaken me.

I felt I’d died a dozen times,
each death more dreadful than the last.
My innocence he ended fast
as Bob enrolled me in his crimes.

“You must now feed if you’re to live
because you’re weakened by your death
and though you have no need of breath
my lies I doubt you can forgive.

“For I’ve not told you everything
about my life and what I do.
The trials that I will force you through
are worse than normal life would bring.

“Now every night you must drink blood;
you can’t survive on human food.
This means a change in attitude
so doubts you should nip in the bud.”

I shook my head and gaped at him.
“How could you ask me to drink blood?
I’d rather eat live worms and mud.
That diet must be why you’re slim.”

He sighed and said, “Before you run
you’ll need to know another thing:
that to avoid a fatal sting
you can’t step out into the sun.”

“I’m sorry, did I hear you right?”
I asked him in a trembling voice.
“You mean I haven’t got a choice;
I cannot walk into the light?”

“You’re now a vampire too, my child.
Your mortal life is at an end
and darkness is your only friend.
Like me, you must embrace the wild.”

And that is how I fell from grace.
My heart has grown as hard as coal
and I no longer have a soul.
Best run if you should spot my face!

ALWAYS ME!
Ellen Urowitz
Canada

wake up every morning
going to bed early and
earlier each day.

Each day passes by
one after another.

Another day has been
unfortunately, wasted.

Unlike other days in the
pass I have lost all of my
control.

I have someone to blame
and sometimes I now even started
to complain.

locked in for days,
it's like this is a
hard maze.

no one can predict the ending
no one saw it arriving.

no one wants to admit fault.
no one is ever wrong.

it can't continue to go on like this
business and restaurants will
a be gone.

NANA'S PHONE

Alex Thompson

United Kingdom

<https://alexanderthompsona.wixsite.com/alexthompson>

Mum, don't read this, dad leave it too.
Sister you can, but grandad this isn't for you.

I keep walking round my home,
all the time when I'm on my own,
and on the table or the kitchen top -
Nana's phone rests, dead.

I see it in the back seat of the car,
it's not a fresh wound,
but an unmistakable scar.

And each time I see it, grey, the case dirty.
I think about the things you said,
we'd do when I turned thirty.

The memories that are stored in there,
for no one to see again,
they're safe in that little box,
memories as thick as dust.

So if I call Nana's phone,
if the screen lights up,
is there a part of her somewhere,
that hasn't been struck?

If I send,
just one more text,
a letter of thanks,
and nothing less,
will mine light up too,
with a reply from you?
Reading words you never sent,
and clutching it to my chest.

Someone hide Nana's phone from me,
because I can't bear the sound.
Her old ringtone makes me think:
If not her, who's moving Nana's phone around?

THE PRISONER OF DEATH

Amanda Jane Bayliss

United Kingdom

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/moresuccessfulsubmissionsbyamandajane/>

Painfully, I cried goodnight
To the prisoner of death
As you took your phantom breath

My eyes blurred
From the polished cell
Tributes of flowers
As they laid you to rest.

My heart smashed
My tears ran free
Remembering memories
From years that have
Dimly deceased.

Images and words
That live on
Your life phrase lingers.

It is better to have loved
And lost
Than never loved at all.

These words are so very true
So go now
You have broken free
You will suffer with
No more pain.

Do not worry about me
I will be alright
You will see.

TIME AND AGE

Bilkis Moola

South Africa

<https://www.facebook.com/Poetic-Shores-103759598212110/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC78xK4tUFoITRG7APfkm9vw>

I did not know the grey streaks,
swelling hips and sagging breasts that
would steal my body.

I did not know the wrinkles -
lines that crease the visage
of one who was young.

I did not know the heart turned to stone -
pebbles and rocks hurled as I travelled
the road of life.

Age arrived with little remorse
reminiscent for days young -
youth fresh like darling buds
ready to bloom.

Regret taints the ticking clock for a
life ready to leave -
ready and bitter.

Age wanders with little remorse and
I did not know its swift arrival
for burial's carriage.

Death stops, stops and rejuvenates life -
and time says,
"I am not ready for life to end".

LIFE-DEATH ENIGMA: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

Marcellinus Alexander

Nigeria

<https://www.facebook.com/friarmarcel>

Stamped in blood, death's letter arrives
to men and women of the *sapiens*,
shortening their jolly-merry days
and to some, terminating their hollow-sorrow days
what's the difference?

To some, those who believe in the bible's Christ,
life is Christ; death is gain.

To some, those who believe in the Quran's Allah,
death is the gateway to paradise, an exit from the cosmos

To some, those who believe in the doctrines of the east,
death is a gateway to another opportunity of perfect
transcendence.

To some, those who believe-not in divinity,
death is a return to nature, the end that constitutes the END.
What's the difference?

The thought of death,
Many a mind occupies;
more than Juliet occupies Romeo's,
that sometimes they forget to live
and other times they begin to live
what's the difference?

Ecoutez:

Be alive while you live,
die while you live,
die when you die.

Because:

If you were alive while you lived,
and died while you lived,
then, you will live, after you must have died when you die.

Voilà!

That's the difference!

WHEN A FRIEND DIES

Rebecca Dorkins

United Kingdom

<https://www.instagram.com/cancerpoet/>

My friend died last week, and someone on Facebook wrote that she lost her battle, and I almost hit delete.

There is no battle, no armor, no war, Just a knowledge that we have really been here before.

Watching a friend fade away, knowing that will be me one day, makes things more real, more surreal, more believable than any other day.

Death is closer, and we grieve in our own way.

After you have sat across from a friend and shared chats, coffee and cakes and watched them slip to someone with a beating heart asking should I buy the shoes

or will I be dead before I can wear them?

It's surreal and wrong and no cancer fighting language changes that and life for those taking part goes on.

MY MUM

Melanie Haagman

United Kingdom

<https://www.facebook.com/Girlontheedge90/>

<https://www.instagram.com/girlontheedge90/>

I am so good at hiding it,
All the pain that I feel,
I compartmentalize it all,
As if it isn't real.

I want to speak about you badly,
But my mouth doesn't comply,
I wish I could explain it,
But I don't even know why...

I think about you all the time,
And what could of been,
If you hadn't had to leave us,
When I was just thirteen...

But I hope that you are happy,
With the woman I've become,
Never think a day goes by,
Where I don't miss you Mum...

THRESHOLD

RC James

United States

When I lie down, aware and dying,
I'll shun all sympathies ventured
to stare the great beast into dying light renewed.
I'll follow my own path illumined
with old memories and adventures,
skip along the surface of a pond, glissading
in my mind, still alive with exuberant harmonies
uninterrupted by formalities of the occasion
leaning on tradition.

Then, in the last moment, to gasp at the final
wonder,
a light, a sound, some unexpected denouement,
a combined exit and entrance
of an emotion until now unfelt,
that settles everything around us
into the peace we were not meant to understand.

DEATHS SERENADE

Matt Cummings

United States

<https://trappedpoet.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Trappedpoet/>

Bedridden, virus got me in the vice
Rolling dices, gambler's luck
Able to speak, but only sounds of muck
Filling my lungs as Death mocked at my face
Gracing the serenade of my soul
Stretched out, turning on the sirens
Off in the horizon, still following me
To reap what it sown
Snow slowly falls in my mind's wasteland
Tipping point in the minefield, deathly hell
Stuck in eternal limbo, the key's thrown away
No way out expect my private suicide
The reaper allowed one call, I called my god
He said to hang on, so I laughed
Haunting my own death, damn it all
My serenade to live, fearless in face of death

LIFE IS FOR LIVING

Petronella Powell

United Kingdom

<https://www.instagram.com/petren33/>

Life is for living,
You never know when it may end
So spend every minute wisely,
Do what you want to do,
Be who you want to be,
Let everyone see that you are living
As opposed to just waiting for death to come,
Just run up behind you,
It could come from anywhere,
Scare you to death,
Take away you're last breath
Without any warning,
So don't be boring,
Instead be soaring,
Living life to the fullest,
Being as pure as you can be
So you can live life feeling free.

BEREAVEMENT IN VIGNETTE

Nicolette Soulia

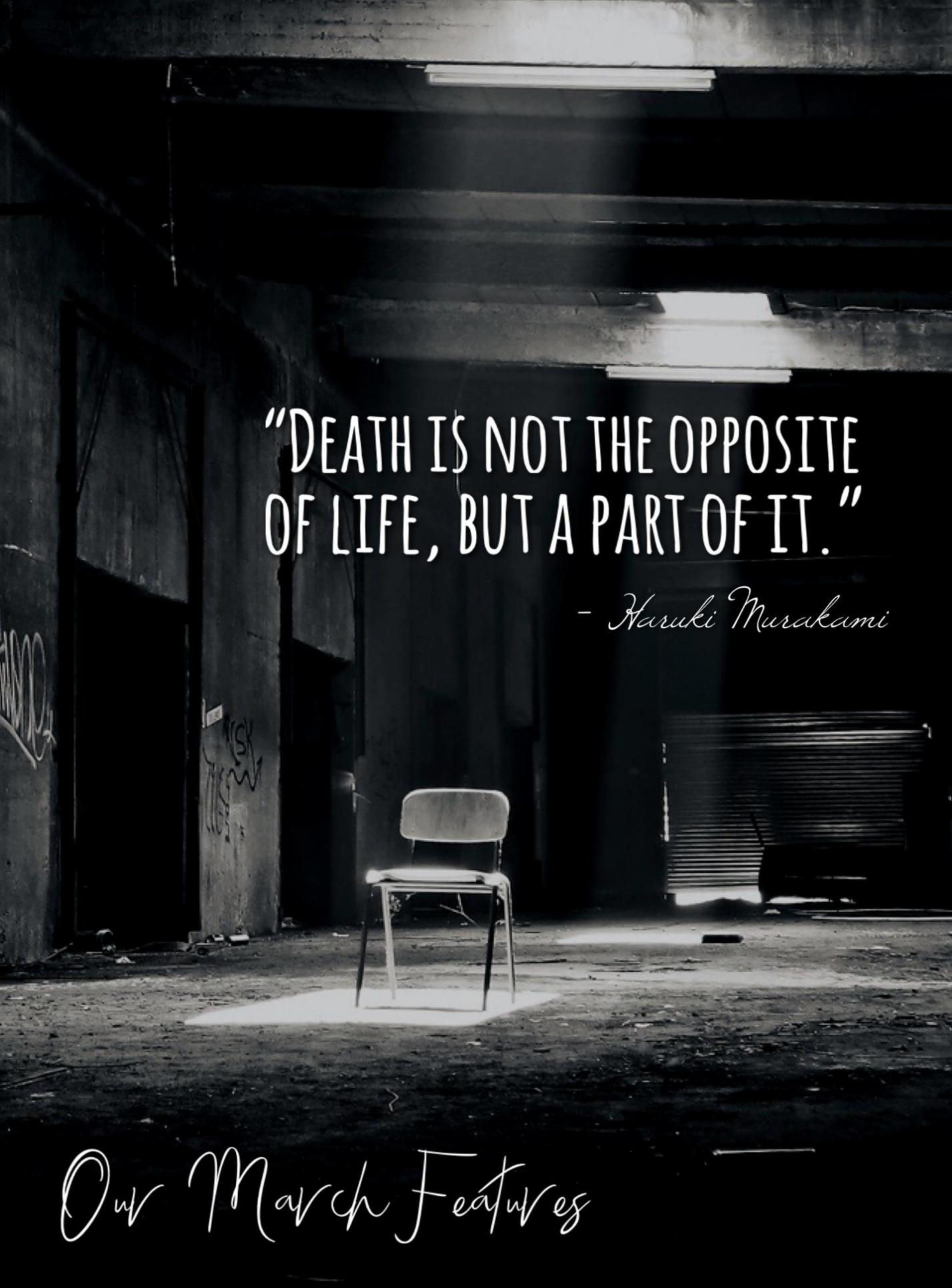
United States

<https://www.instagram.com/NicoletteSoulia/>

<https://twitter.com/NicoletteSoulia>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@nicolettesoulia?lang=en>

- I. You lifted your head, searching
Found me with your tired eyes
for one last moment, yearning,
and, just like that,
today became the worst day of my life.
- II. It's so quiet with only one.
My heart beats half as fast.
I'm pretty sure the mornings are
the loneliest of all
When I used to hear your voice call.
- III. I'd rather spend a thousand lifetimes
burning in the purgatory of solitude
than one more tissue on
pretending that I'm okay.
I just wish you were here with me today.
- IV. You deserved better than me.
You deserved someone with more money,
more time, more patience, more vitality.
More of what you gave me
when you were the one in need.
- V. I no longer know how to function
without your presence,
so I sleep until permanently punch-drunk
and let my body's aches be the
only reminder left to feel something again someday.
- VI. I always asked why humans deserved
four and five-score aeons
while dogs merely a decade or two,
but now I realize dogs don't need long lives
because they actually spend theirs living it.



"DEATH IS NOT THE OPPOSITE
OF LIFE, BUT A PART OF IT."

- Haruki Murakami

Our March Features

TARA ARYAN

Author Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/PersonalAboutPoetry>

https://twitter.com/aryan_tara

https://www.instagram.com/mrs_tara_ryan/

Tara Aryan lives on the South coast in the UK with her husband and two young sons.

Tara is an emerging poet, who writes emotive and rhyming poetry which she has been writing since she was small. For many years she kept her work hidden.

She also writes adult fictional novels and published a children's illustrated book last year.

She currently works in the Sports Travel industry, however since becoming furloughed during the beginning of the pandemic, Tara decided to use this time as an opportunity to chase her dreams to become a writer.

Tara began posting a poem a day on Instagram with only a small following and since then some of her poems have been published in magazines, anthologies as well as her poetry being featured & read around the world. In February this year, one of her poetry pieces was selected and featured at a musician's concert in New York.

Tara Aryan's first poetry debut collection: "Poetry For You, Truths For Me," is out now on Amazon.

THE LADY AND THE TIGER

Hormonal and under siege,
A strength and power out of my league,
As the battle commences on the war of survival,
A black and orange feline beauty, now my rival.
A testament to strength, igniting power,
I hesitate, step back and duly cower.
She takes the plunge, no fatal errors,
Fulfilling my deepest fears and night terrors.
Opposing threats, her fur stands electrified,
Confident and aggressive, the cat amongst her pride.
I've met my match, with her claws and stripes,
That resembles my body, that jut out and strike.
A ball of ferocity, her coat camouflages,
Into the flames that flicker, threatening to sabotage,
Her predatory prowl as she lures in the darkness,
Protective and fearless, almost heartless.
She lunges and swipes with her talons, baring her paws,
The scars and bruises are prominent telling of the wars,
She has had to endure to survive whilst being hunted,
"I am not a threat!" I shout instantly confronted.
"We are the same you and I, we're forever judged,"
Our marks and patterns blurred and smudged.
Cornered and trembling, I let out a howl,
As she bares her teeth, purrs and fiercely growls.
Curling herself around me, her tail resembling a snake,
Knowing my plight in that moment and what is at stake.
"I am not here to harm you or take away your fur,"
I hear my echoes hurtle around the cave, hauntingly whisper to her,
With ears pricking up, twitching whiskers and the licking of lips,
Eyes boring into mine, my body she strips.
All I am is nothing but prey in the vision of a tiger,
As she feasts on me, my soul now empty inside her.



Poetry For You, Truths For Me, is an emotive, personal poetry journey through the pain of heartbreak.

From teenage to adult relationships, this collection contains an array of thoughts and feelings about love, anxiety, grief and fury in rhyme, discovering the true depths of heartache.

Immerse yourself in heartfelt resonating poems that are full of strong and beautiful imagery.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Poetry-You-Truths-Tara-Aryan-ebook/dp/Bo8SDY1DT6>

HELD CAPTIVE BY MY WORDS

What is a sentence, a verse, or an essay?
Held prisoner inside of my head, keeping the words at bay,
A prison sentence in itself will I ever become free?
The words will they be bailed, released from inside of me?
Will there be recognition or a person that just waits in the
wings and lurks,
The way my mind filters to rhyme like clockwork,
Or will I be continually unknown and un-reviewed?
My work read out, spit out and chewed?
I am trapped in a web war that has become unstuck,
Will my pieces shine like a star ready to be struck?
Will I keep falling held captive by words,
My inner critic closing me in, only wanting their voice to be
heard,
As darkness encroaches, headaches come pounding,
The will of my words infinitely resounding,
A force to be reckoned with, vocabulary on fire,
Hopes and dreams ignited, so much to aspire,
Dig me out of this wreckage, the rubble of this labour of love
cell,
That shows no remorse in this wicked hell,
Held captive by my words, lips stitched with glue,
Like a prisoner of words which can't get through,
Maybe if I hadn't listened I'd have learnt a lesson,
And I wouldn't be held captive by my words in this confession.

LIVING IN YOUR SHADOW

I live behind the darkness,
Residing in the shadows of your kids,
Like violet skies,
I blend in as I lie,
Like the moon that sits on the lake,
Baring everything that I have at stake,
As I live residing in your shadow,
I have nothing to show,
But a crescent heart,
Interlaced into darts,
That slither and slice,
Not once but twice,
Hidden behind,
In the bars of a silhouette, confined,
As I represent your other half,
Wrapped within your knitted scarf,
That's woven in knots,
Bled into clots,
Of tears in the rain,
That fuels my pain,
As I live in the shadows that loom,
Peaking as they zip and zoom,
Across those blank canvas's we know as walls,
Tears cascading like lone waterfalls,
Because living in your shadow,
Is like being hit by an impending arrow

LORELEI BACHT

Poet/Artist Feature



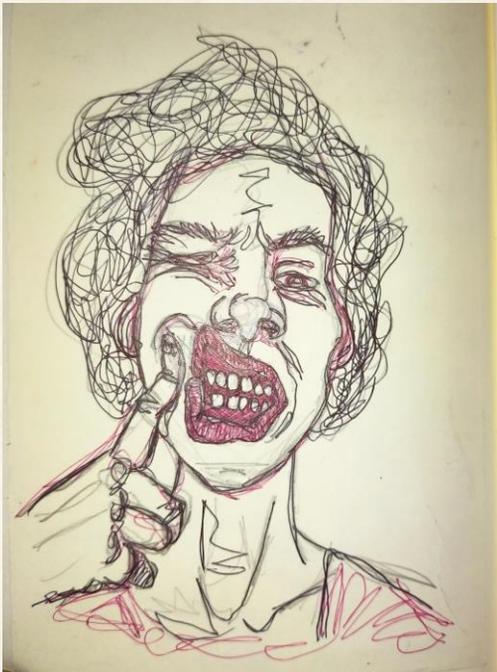
<https://www.instagram.com/the.cheated.wife/>

<https://www.instagram.com/the.cheated.wife.writes/>

<https://www.instagram.com/lorelei.bacht.writer/>

Lorelei Bacht is the latest iteration of a bundle of people loosely attached into an individual. She is: 1) a mother to two beautiful children; 2) a wife (perhaps); 3) a job (a passionate educator with a penchant for mathematics, biology, and anything to do with patterns); 4) the space that breathes between all of the above. This space has often given birth to writing, from the most prosaic to something close to poetry. Places visited and/or inhabited in the past have include: the sea, Paris, England, Smith College, Hanoi. Previous careers include: lobbying, publishing, a few other occupations to do with words and helping people. Work previously published under a different name will not be included here.

This spring, Lorelei is nursing the wounds of a failing marriage (her second), drawing and writing furiously, albeit in bouts of five minutes (working moms of toddlers unite), and exploring such themes as gender, ethnicity, motherhood, marriage and aging. Some of her work has appeared and/or is forthcoming in Open Door, Litehouse, Visual Verse, Visitant and Quail Bell. Other musings in words and/or sketches can be found on Instagram: @the.cheated.wife, @the.cheated.wife.writes and @lorelei.bacht.writer.



SLEEP IN FISH

I am learning to sleep like a goldfish:

Awake, but suspended. Merely moving
To stay in the same place.

Hour after hour, a slow undulating
Of fins. Fixed gaze in the moonlit water.
A mouth for making smoke rings
Slowly sucks in diluted air, watercolour,
Smoothly flowing through my gills.

In my head, visions forms incomplete -
Not quite yet a dream. Sand in my mouth,
Other bodies, the taste of green.

One week since the neighbour's cat last visited.

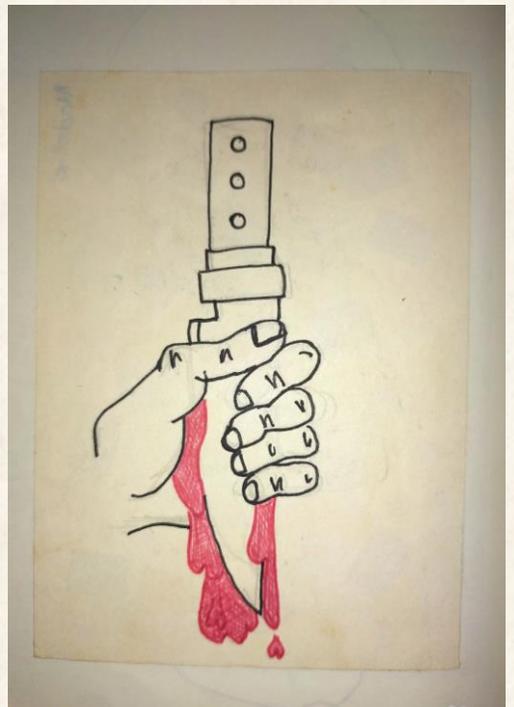
ABOUT THIS ALREADY.

You trip me, watch me fall
Down the stairs, rumble tumble
Of broken limbs and hair,
Knocked head, you blame
Me for making such a fuss.

You entertain other women,
Old bathwater, everyone gets
A turn, I ask about the hair,
The smell of another, you say:
Stop being so fussy.

You take scissors to the fabric
Of our relationship, our family,
The very fabric of reality,
Every morning is the morning
After, you say we've talked

About this already.



TO TAKE YOU BACK

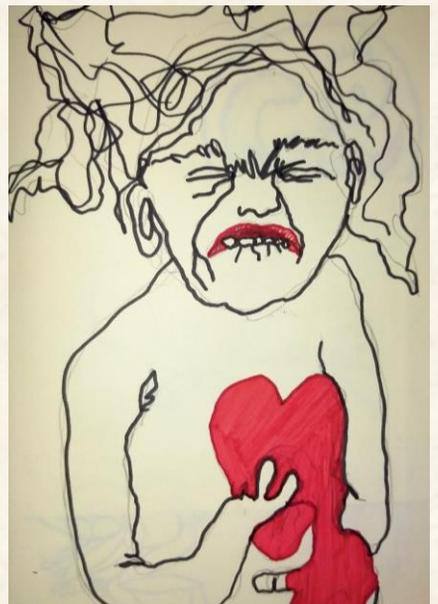
Darling, if you could only see
The flowchart of revenge which
You narrowly escaped.
Oh my. So. Many. Ways.

Your standing, breathing
Next to me: nothing
Short of miraculous.
They call us:
Emotional.

They call us:
A bit much. How much
Restraint do you think went
Into this domestic enterprise:
Laundry, dishes, tucking bedsheets,

One million gestures, repeated
With one sole goal: to keep
My fingers off your throat.
Perhaps I should
Print it,

The diagram of catastrophes,
And near misses
(I slept on it),
The measure of the strength
It takes to take you back, Jack.



TERRY TUFFEN

Poet Feature

My name is Terry Tuffen born 12/6/71 I live in a village in Surrey with my wife and 3 kids I have several jobs pre lockdown doing 18 hours a day but at the moment only 12 hours.

I've always been interested in poetry since I was a kid and was amazed by Pam Ayers and two years ago I had the fortune to go and see her live. Myself I tend to write them to stop having time to think about things so it keeps me busy. Apart from poetry I like my music especially live music that you would always find me at a concert.



TERRY TUFFEN – POET FEATURE

HOME TUTORING!!

My daughter's been off school now
Since I cannot recall,
I guess the teachers on lockdown ,
Leaving me to do it all.

They're calling this home tutoring,
I call it take the piss,
Have you seen the amount of homework,
It's a never-ending list.

First subject it is English,
A subject I should do just fine,
Till she comes out with all theses words to spell,
I've not heard in my time.
All the pronouns and the adverbs
Well this might as well be Dutch
By the time we're end this lesson
I don't think she'll learn to much.

It's history time in this here school,
We will learn about her past.
I can see her concentrations dim,
And I'm sure that it won't last.
We started on the tuders good old Henry, Anne
Boleyn,
She's a morbid cow as she just laughed, when her
head went in the bin.

Now art , this is a subject of that I know I'm fine,
Got to draw the human body,
And her chosen one is mine.
Well she's not quite diplomatic but she's done the
best she can,
But all mum and me can only see,
John mericks elephant man.

We will have ago at math now,
Adding up and multiply,
But she's coming out with square routes,
I just want to fade and die.

And on top she's added fractions,
Now I know that it's a laugh,
But it turns out they are easy,
Just dividing things in half.

It's geography that's calling now,
They've picked a place I've never heard,
And the questions that they want to know,
Well I find it quite observed ,
Djibouti now what the hell, what planet are they
thinking,
I know I've dug myself this whole
But I don't need a help with sinking.

Next sexual education
I've been putting off with dread,
So I call out to the kitchen,
Get her mum in here instead.
I am busy cooking dinner,
All these clothes won't wash their self
You will have to find the courage
This is for your daughters health.
With my stomach all in tatters but my head held high
aloft
I showed her pictures of her brothers,
Well I knew that would put her off.

Now my daughter came up to ask me,
What's tomorrow got in-store ?
I said on Thursday teachers training
So there won't be anymore,
Well I'll wait then until Friday
I'll be down here dead on nine,
Well we are going to have a inset day,
So stay in bed that's fine.

So now it's reached 3.30,
Time for her to go and play'
But for me it's all this marking and
Finding work for her Monday.
So here now ends the lessons,
And the one thing I have learned,
If I ever get time off again,
I will get my fingers burned.

TERRY TUFFEN – POET FEATURE

THE NEW AGE PERCY THROWER

Well I'm out here in the garden,
just trying to sort it out ,
tending my allotment for when the vegetables will
sprout.

I've got rows and rows of carrots, runner beans that
grow up the stick,
them little round green sprout things you know the
ones that make kids sick

I have loads of tubs full of potato's different types and
different size,
she can have them boiled mashed or roasted,
and the kids can have them fried.

There are charlottes ,mixed in with beetroot ,
collie flower ,celery ,
plum tomatoes in the greenhouse ,
with hanging baskets of strawberries.

We have pumpkins set for Halloween,
parsnip for Sunday roast
dark red juicy onions that go nice with cheese on toast.

Lettuce for the salad and for the curry green chilli's,
pickles to make that tangy sauce for fish chips and
garden peas .

Some sweed for stews in autumn ,
cabbage for all year round ,
mint that grows just anywhere and covers all the
ground .

artichoke and basil coriander and rosemary ,
corn on the cob to fill your gob if you're coming round
for tea,

reddish sweet potato aubergine and leaks ,
I could put a selection in a bag and charge a little fee.

Mushrooms for our breakfast ,
and ginger for some cakes ,
a taro and a yam but I'm not sure what that makes.

a bottle gourd some spinach ,
a okra and a Neep that is nice with fresh hot haggis
the intestines of a dead sheep.

I'm doing fruit for all our puddings,
there are many different types ,
All with lovely flavours and the ones that no one
likes.

I've got apples up there in the tree ,
the rhubarb's being forced ,
a bush with bright red cranberries ,
for the Christmas dinner sauce.

An abundance of Prunus spinosa,
it's the best it's ever been
and for those not so familiar
you will need them for your gin.

We have mango and papaya ,
avocado passion fruit figs for drying out ,
to help you open up your shoot.

persimmon with mulberry a melon and a plum ,
a jackfruit and guava with a durian just for fun.

I didn't think it would come to much ,
it was odds on a real non goer ,
but it turns out I'm not that bad ,
I'm like a new age Percy thrower.

CLAUDETTE MARTINEZ

Poet/Artist Feature



<https://www.gallea.ca/en/artists/claude-martinez>

<https://facebook.com/claudettemartinezdesign/>

I am a proud self taught Canadian Artist , an advocate for Mental Health and Female Empowerment. I paint from feeling, from my heart. Blood to Canvas. I leave it all there to be seen and shared. I have been fortunate to have won International Artist of Inspiration Award twice. I have been published three times in The Perspective Project, pairing my visual work with words and poetry. I have had my piece Broken used for the promotional material for The Oxford University Concert for Mental Health Awareness. I recently won with my piece Beast of Burden, as the representative for Canada for the small works piece New York Penthouse Competition 2020. I contribute pieces annually to the Kids Help Line and Women's Shelter for their fundraising to encourage art and provide assistance to these most deserving causes. Thank you Claudette Martinez #claudettemartinezartist

As a commission Artist my goal is to feed your soul, engage you. I hope my work will be looked upon as thought provoking and moving, leaving you with something you didn't have before. Something beautiful and stirring.

BROKEN

I've been broken. Shattered into a billion tiny shards scattered about my feet. Panic hits me OMG, I'm broken, I have to fix this! I grab a handful of shards, I close my eyes and work through the pain. My hands are shaking, I breathe and the tears start to fall. I try to fit them as best I can. Some are missing for sure, the edges are jagged and razor sharp. They cut as I move, the blood makes them slippery and hard to maneuver. Its slow going but I force them in place. I begin with the largest first, seems logical. I know where they go... don't I? I close my eyes and reach for the picture of the me before she was taken, trying to convince myself that I know who I was. I mean who knows me better than me right? Who is more qualified than me to fix me, right? Wrong.

I continue to build. I realize, as I carefully place pieces, my surface is no longer glossy and smooth. If you run your fingers across they will catch on the sharp peaks and valleys where the pieces meet, slicing the tips as you feel your way. Never again will I be touched without damage. There are dull spots and cracks and in some areas I can see clear through. The image is forever altered the picture slightly skewed as if under water. If you take a few steps back you can tell its supposed to be me only this is a grief stricken scarred version.

I will be put back together. Me only a different me, fatally flawed and way more fragile, but still me, less a few key pieces.



FOWARD

I Look out the window. The view is obstructed by two very large, very old birch trees. I've always loved birch, the contrast between the white bark textured by various shades of black scars, small upside down pear shaped leaves, thousands of them or a least I imagine that many, who could know for sure, each one a brilliant lime green beauty.

Today the green has been invaded by yellow... daffodil yellow, a perfect yellow for sure but still an unwelcome addition because I know what follows. When did that happen, overnight? Was there yellow yesterday? I have to breathe, switch it up, big ins and big outs. It helps with the panic. I do find the mix of the two, green and yellow soothing. Change isn't always bad, is it? If I tilt my head to the right and squint slightly I can get the two to melt together and become a new shade of green, I like it. It's a welcome break from the lime. I can pretend it's a different view from the one I have shared my mornings with for the last 60 plus days. I wonder, can the beauty of the green begin to fade if its the only color you see? Are the changes mother natures way of keeping us satisfied, keeping us from becoming bored with her? Mothers do like to please.



The trees have turned from an obstruction to distraction. Watching the leaves flutter individually and sway in groups, back and forth and back, the sun hitting flat glossy surfaces turning yellow and lime to white, each leaf fighting for their moment in the sun, twisting and turning wildly for the opportunity to be shined on... just like the rest of us I suppose.

The distraction is good for me. I know this because the doctor told me so "You need a distraction. Get away, find some peace." Peace? Really is that even a thing... I'm sure it is but for the life of me I can not recall what it feels like, what I wouldn't do to be reminded. I'm sure she meant something larger than staring out the front window watching leaves turn but right now I will take what I can get.

All this adds a layer to my sadness. A heaviness like the old quilt your mom would add when you were chilly at night. I look and imagine the slow take over of the yellow and sigh deeply sipping my coffee and try to take one moment at a time. The cold is coming. I'm not happy about it, I'm not a winter girl but like all things no matter how hard we wish on the wishiest star, pray to the goodliest god or

promise the ultimate promise, we can not stop the unstoppable or change what refuses to be changed. The leaves will all be yellow, green will slowly retreat, many will fall and then brown will take over until every last one has fallen and the girl will still be gone.

Breathe... big ins big outs. I shake it off an start day 64.

CLAUDETTE MARTINEZ – POET/ARTIST FEATURE

SEEING

I watched the administrative assistant kneeled next to my mother as she lay in bed semiconscious.

I watched as this woman softly, lovingly, stroked her forehead whispering sweet comforting words. I watched my mother react, smiling, moving into the caresses.

I watched all this detached and envious that my touches would never bring her such a peaceful response. I'm grateful for the girl but at the same time I wish she would leave. I found myself envious. Why doesn't she look at me like that. Why can't I make her smile, what was it about me that she so openly disliked. I was not the provider of comfort for her. I never was and never would be. The girl completely innocent and unknowing of my feelings towards her.

They've told me she has hours or days or who knows. The not knowing is an agonizing wait. Watching for each breath is almost unbearable, in and out.

She talks and mutters as she drifts in and out of sleep.

The room is filled with the scent of eucalyptus and a constant sound of the oxygen machine, forever pumping up and down in perfect beat.

Down the hall I can here the staff going about their business, so accustomed to death and those dying around them, not bothered by one more.

To me it's all too much to take in.

It's just me and Mom now, her eyes perpetually half open. Counting each breathe of hers, mine and the machine. I wait.

She's fully asleep now and as in each case I wonder if she will wake. I allow myself to fantasize that she has passed and I can move on and close this chapter of my horror novel. Then, of course guilt bores into my chest. My tumor on my soul, guilt, reminding me taunting me about all the things I shouldn't be, think or do.

I wish I could reach in and rip its spidery grasp and cast it into the sea.”



MARGARET ROYALL

Author Feature

Margaret's 1st poetry collection 'Fording The Stream' appeared Sept 2017 under the pen name Jessica De Guyat. She was shortlisted for the Bangor Literary Festival and Crowvus poetry prizes in 2018 and her poems have appeared online, in journals and anthologies, most recently Hedgehog Poetry Press, The Blue Nib, Impspired and forthcoming in Sarasvati.

May 2020 saw the publication of her memoir of childhood 'The Road to Cleethorpes Pier,' a Haibun fusion of prose and poetry.

In July 2020 she won Hedgehog Press' Full Fat collection competition and 'Where Flora Sings,' was published November 2020.

A new poetry pamphlet entitled Earth Magicke is forthcoming in May 21 with Impspired Press.

Margaret leads a women's poetry group in Nottinghamshire and performs regularly at open mic events in person and online.



<https://margaretroyall.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/margaretbrowningroyall>

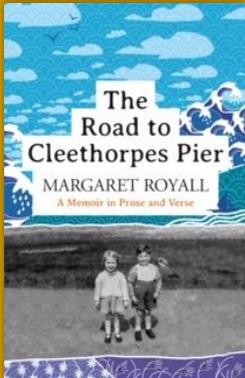
<https://twitter.com/RoyallMargaret>

<https://www.instagram.com/meggiepoet/>

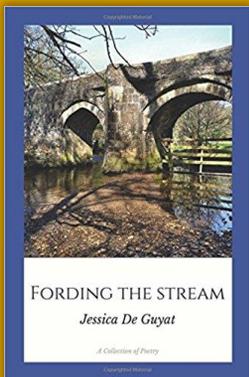
MARGARET ROYALL – AUTHOR FEATURE



<https://margaretroyall.com/where-flora-sings/>



<https://margaretroyall.com/the-road-to-cleethorpes-pier/>



<https://margaretroyall.com/fording-the-stream/>

LADY WITH LAVENDER AURA

From a secret drawer Aunt Phoebe takes the unctuous lavender oil - and

gaggles of barefoot children run amok through wildflower meadows, dry tongues of summer

yearning for sarsaparilla and calamine balm to soothe the itch of post-war deprivation.

She hears the electric hum of bees in lupin throats, watches fingers pluck flowers from Air-raid shelter walls,

Breathes in carbolic soap from the hard-scrubbed nails of her dad, stripped off to wash in the kitchen sink,

Drools as her mum lifts milk-topped scones from the blackened side-oven - Mrs. Beaton's, of course

On elbow crooks and freckled wrists, she drips the oil, cuts on her fingers stinging like vinegar.

Too much, intoxicating, filling her pretty head with sickly-sweet confusion – gasping for breath,

wheezing from the burn of excess, as though the lavender fields might soon be pulped to dust –

Those fields in France, crackling with spit-roast hedgehogs, where carefree gypsies danced, caroused

and jumped the devil's cinders, their nostrils teased by a lavender sea, infused with basil and thyme.

An idyll in a bottle, nostalgia's pangs released whenever Aunt Phoebe performs her daily toilette.

Her clockwork days marked out in rhythmic bursts Obedient daughter to family expectations

MARGARET ROYALL – AUTHOR FEATURE

A BOX OF PRECIOUS SECRETS

Inside a drawer in grandma's house I find
A secret box with tokens from a tryst
Still wrapped in silk cloth, sealed with rosebud twine

Victorian postcards, simple, honest, kind,
A silver ring he must have often kissed
Inside a drawer in grandma's house I find.

My heart stands still, it's clear how much he pined
For her, exploring memories of bliss,
Still wrapped in silk cloth sealed with rosebud twine

A photo of them sitting, arms entwined
Her hair untied in strands of golden mist
Inside a drawer in grandma's house I find

Two hearts in decoupage both linen-lined
With spidery writing, hard to catch the gist
Still wrapped in silk cloth, sealed with rosebud twine

I sense that love was always on their mind
And tremble as I touch this precious gift
Inside a drawer in grandma's house I find
Still wrapped in silk cloth, sealed with rosebud twine.

DRAGONFLY

She flew into my cupped hands,
her wings spun from quivering cloud silk,
banishing the kettle-black maelstrom
within me, rekindling extinguished
flames of passion, long pulped to ash
in a broken heart.

Together for a nano-second
we tasted eternity.

RESURRECTION OF A SKYLARK

On hearing Vaughan Williams 'The Lark Ascending'

What if the skylark were reborn,
fledged from within the breast
of a Stradivari violin, attuned to the
heartbeat of wild-flower meadows?

What if the violinist recaptured
that simple bliss in the patchwork of
vetch, clover, dock and ox-eye daisy,
breathing the petrichor of a post-rain evening?

What if the orchestra returned,
their *musica dolce* releasing fragile
wings in tentative flight, surfing the
rising currents, soaring skywards?

Trilling, trembling, trailing the
cloud-skein of a ripening summer,
honeyed *vibrato* trickling earthwards
in *ritardando*, a gentle enchantment.

If so, then he might live again, fly again,
my lover with wistful green eyes and
hair like spilt sunshine. His soul might
soar where the lark first sang *affetuoso*.

Two hearts might beat in unison again and the
ending become the beginning, grief to joy.
Could we not lie together in that same meadow,
Our love intact, untouchable? *Da capo al fine*.

HOW DO YOU

SUPPORT YOUR FAVORITE AUTHOR?

BUY THEIR BOOK

GIVE THEIR BOOK AS GIFTS

**REVIEW THEIR BOOK ON AMAZON
AND GOODREADS**

(REVIEWS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU KNOW)

LIKE AND FOLLOW THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

SHARE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS THAT YOU LIKE

RECOMMEND THEM

TO YOUR LIBRARY, BOOKSTORE,

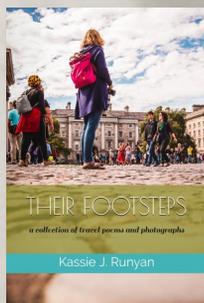
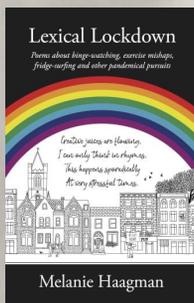
GOODREADS, AND TO FRIENDS

**POST A PHOTO AND LINK OF YOU AND THE BOOK
TO YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES**

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

On the following pages – please find our recommended books by our featured writers for the current quarter. All previous book recommendations are available on our website. Join us in supporting these amazing authors!

Below you can find the current books out by our co-creators, Mel & Kassie, with easy to find amazon links.



Lexical Lockdown

In Their Footsteps

Open Heart Poetry

This is 2020

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Atomic Kiss

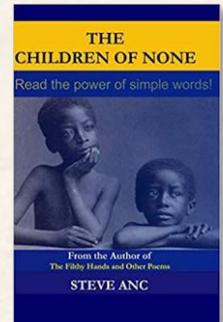
From the bloody pen of The Nuclear Cowboy and the deepest depths of the abyss; comes another book of heartbreak, burnt donuts, and a spirit that keeps on fighting. Drown in an intoxicating and uplifting journey of trial and tribulations, beautiful scars, and of those strung along in toxic games in a world where love is not enough.



https://www.amazon.com/Atomic-Kiss-Brendan-Bigney-ebook/dp/B07Y88XX8F/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=atomic+kiss&qid=1612056171&s=books&sr=1-1

The Children of None: read the Power of simple words!

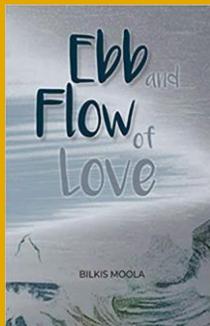
The Children of None is a collection of 43 poems, each poem is written with a unique style and candor. Several poems within the collection stand out as inspirational, heartfelt, and rich in language. The author does an exceptional job of creating unique poems, on themes such as social justice, love of family, culture in Nigeria, and how the process of creating a poem.



https://www.amazon.com/Children-None-power-simple-words-ebook/dp/B08DRSSCWF/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+children+of+none%3A+read+the+power+of+simple+words&qid=1612056206&s=books&sr=1-1

Ebb and Flow of Love

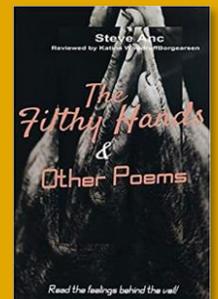
One thing that is admirable about this poetry collection is the energetic imagination and emotional intensity. All poems included show the poet's supreme lyrical triumph. These poems are undoubtedly quite powerful.



https://www.amazon.com/Ebb-Flow-Love-Bilkis-Moola/dp/0992202019/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=ebb+and+flow+of+love&qid=1612056222&s=books&sr=1-1

The Filthy Hands and Other Poems

Oh, filthy hands in a concrete body
And reprobate heart
From the celestial invisible aboard
Came the voice
Take them off

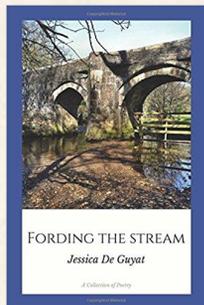


https://www.amazon.com/filthy-Hands-other-Poems-ebook/dp/B084TFR6MB/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+filthy+hands+and+other+poems&qid=1612056240&s=books&sr=1-1

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Fording The Stream

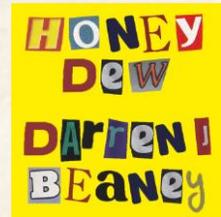
It contains many mystical, magical poems written on the Isle of Iona in the Inner Hebrides, Scotland, during my first few writing retreats with Angela Locke MA as tutor. Some were also written during weekend writing retreats at Rydal Hall, near Grasmere in the Lake District, close to the home of William Wordsworth (Rydal Mount)



<https://margaretroyall.com/fording-the-stream/>

Honey Dew

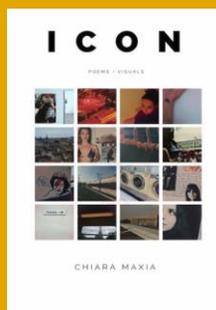
Honey dew – an anthology of true expression. A 21 poem pamphlet – published December 2020 by The Hedgehog Poetry Press.



<https://djbeaney.wordpress.com/honey-dew/>

Icon

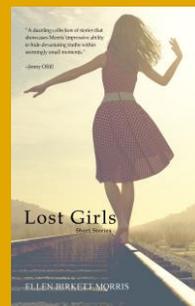
The poems and visuals in her collection are for everyone who has ever been lost on the road or in the air, unsure of where they're going and where to go. They're for everyone who has ever felt a magnetic connection to some stranger-turned-whatever and desperately needs, if not wants, to find understanding



<https://www.lulu.com/shop/chiara-maxia/icon/paperback/product-24452774.html?page=1&pageSize=4>

Lost Girls

Lost Girls explores the experiences of women and girls as they grieve, find love, face uncertainty, take a stand, find their future, and say goodbye to the past. Though they may seem lost, each finds their center as they confront the challenges and expectations of womanhood.



https://www.amazon.com/Lost-Girls-Ellen-Birkett-Morris/dp/1952816017/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3VHT1R63TV7oF&dchild=1&keywords=lost+girls+ellen+birkett+morris&qid=1612056288&s=books&sprefix=lost+girls+ellen%2Cstripbooks%2C144&sr=1-1

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

One Night in January

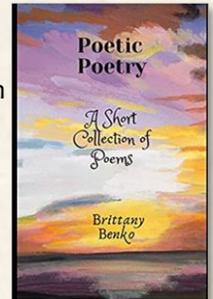
ONE NIGHT IN JANUARY evokes the bite of that month in the breath of a hare and the white blankness of the winter air. Cold hands that have clasped each other and let go, kisses under a starry night, a pose for a photograph in front of Mount Esja: a visceral loss permeates this collection.



<http://www.wildpressedbooks.com/one-night-in-january.html>

Poetic Poetry

Poetic Poetry is a poetry collection that speaks to the soul about everyday life. In this collection, you'll find rhyming and contemporary pieces. Painting a picture with words, readers will enter the world of beaches in the Carolinas, the Blue Ridge Mountains, seasons, love, faith, flowers, the pandemic, the passion of motherhood, experiences with an autistic child, and much more.



https://www.amazon.com/Poetic-Poetry-Short-Collection-Poems/dp/Bo8M8DBNG1/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_o?_encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Poetry For You, Truths For Me

Poetry For You, Truths For Me, is an emotive, personal poetry journey through the pain of heartbreak.

From teenage to adult relationships, this collection contains an array of thoughts and feelings about love, anxiety, grief and fury in rhyme, discovering the true depths of heartache.

Immerse yourself in heartfelt resonating poems that are full of strong and beautiful imagery.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Poetry-You-Truths-Tara-Aryan-ebook/dp/Bo8SDY1DT6>

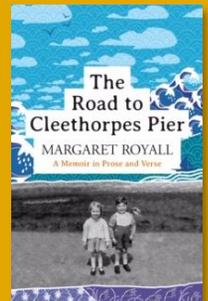


The Road to Cleethorpes Pier

Cleethorpes traditionally boasted five miles of golden sand. It has long been the resort of choice for holidaymakers and day-trippers from the Midlands and Yorkshire. It forms a conurbation with the larger town of Grimsby to the north, famous for its fishing industry.

Readers can dip in and out of the book, reading a chapter a night (rather like the old -style ' bedside books' of the past.

<https://margaretroyall.com/the-road-to-cleethorpes-pier/>



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Señor Fluffy: A Cat's Tale

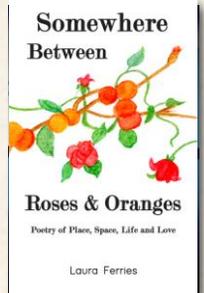
Señor Fluffy is accustomed to butlers and housekeepers, being carried from place to place, traveling the world, eating and drinking the best of the best. So when his human decides abruptly to leave for NYC he is not having it.



<https://www.blurb.com/b/10456185-senor-fluffy-a-cat-s-tale>

Somewhere Between Roses & Oranges

SIT YOURSELF DOWN AND UNWIND with a coffee or a glass of wine and immerse yourself in this floral and fruity spiritual journey. Somewhere Between Roses & Oranges- Poetry of Place, Space, Life and Love. It will take you by the hand, running through the sun, through the rain, through life's wonderful, magical and messy lessons that we encounter when we are bold enough to strike out of the norm.



https://www.amazon.com/Somewhere-Between-Roses-Oranges-Poetry/dp/1790181232/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=somewhere+between+roses+%26+oranges&qid=1609461818&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

War, What Comes After

From Award-Winning Author, The Nuclear Cowboy, comes...

Unrivaled poetry on...
The warrior...
Her epic journey...
And the weight of our decisions.



Explore the mind, war, leadership, strength, growth, healing and empowerment, and even deeper in the case of the warrior that returns home – the inevitable search for what comes after.

https://www.amazon.com/What-Comes-After-Brendan-Bidney/dp/B08M8GVXCZ/ref=tmm_pap_swath_o?encoding=UTF8&qid=1612056535&sr=1-1

Where Flora Sings

poems in the 1st section, 'Flower Power /People Power', directly connect to flowers and plants either by extolling their virtues or by connecting flowers to people in an alternative way. The second section 'Roses and Thorns' gives an in-depth retrospective on the inherent joys and sorrows of life's journey from cradle to grave, seen from the perspective of a woman in her third age, whose life has been punctuated by chronic illness, grief and loss. Yet they are very much an anthem to survival, a way of seeking peace and closure by exploring more difficult themes through the medium of poetry



<https://margaretroyall.com/where-flora-sings/>

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a hand holding a pen over an open book. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the paper and the grip of the pen. The background is dark and out of focus.

LITERARY FEATURE

**TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING
VS SELF PUBLISHING WITH

HAPPY BIRD PUBLICATION

CONSULTING**

TRADITIONAL VS SELF PUBLISHING

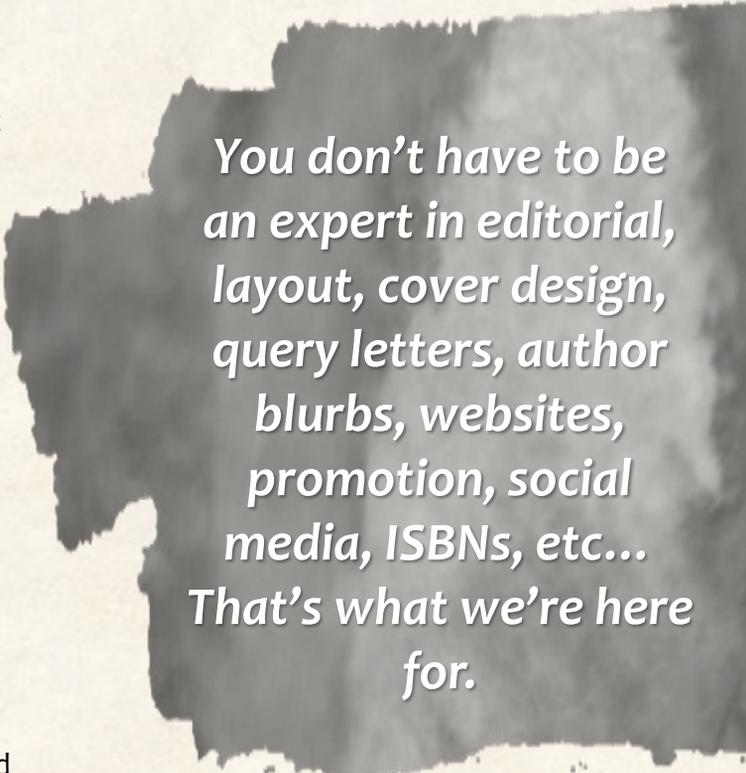
HAPPY BIRD PUBLICATION CONSULTANTS – KASSIE J RUNYAN

You just typed the last work of your manuscript or your poetry collection and you want to get it in the hands of the masses. You are filled with excitement on seeing everyone buy your book and dream of a day where you see your book sitting in the shelf of a bookstore alongside your favorite authors. Or even think that there might be a time where you can quit your full time job and spend your days writing. So how do you get to that next step?

Many people turn to google and start researching, or head to facebook groups which are filled with bad advice, some might just ignore that completely and chose the first vanity publisher or self-publishing platform they find... in a hurry to get the book out the door. Approximately 3,000 books are published every day. And many from authors that rushed the process with a self-designed cover or lack of editing - just trying to get it out the door.

You don't have to be an expert in editorial, layout, cover design, query letters, author blurbs, websites, promotion, social media, ISBNs, author legalities, early reviews, etc... That's what publishing coaches are for. To help you determine what your publishing goals are against realistic expectations... and help you get there. We aren't publishers. We are coaches, helpmates, sounding boards, editors, designers, and a reliable source of truth.

If you are interested in finding out if we would be the right fit for you and your book – request a free 30 minute session at <https://www.happybirdpub.com>. In the meantime, we would like to give you a head start by going over the Pros and Cons of the two most common forms of publishing.



*You don't have to be
an expert in editorial,
layout, cover design,
query letters, author
blurbs, websites,
promotion, social
media, ISBNs, etc...
That's what we're here
for.*

TRADITIONAL VS SELF PUBLISHING

HAPPY BIRD PUBLICATION CONSULTANTS – KASSIE J RUNYAN

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

In traditional publishing – the publisher is the link between your book and your audience. The first step of most traditional publishing paths is going to be getting an agent. That requires you, as the author, to scout and pitch to agents in search of the right one. The agent then pitches to the publishing houses. The goal is to get signed on by a publisher and receive a book advance and then royalties as well.

Pros:

You receive validation as an author – with people knowing that a publishing house sees enough promise in your book to invest in it

The publishing costs are paid by the publisher so if your book doesn't sale you aren't out that initial investment

The publishing house will take care of everything – printing, editing, design, distribution, etc. (although you will need to make sure it's edited prior to agent queries)

The book will be in traditional bookstores

Cons:

It is very time consuming – it can take years of weekly submissions before finding an agent and then a publisher. And then it can take another year or more to publish after the book is sold

You give up much of your control in editing and design

Publishing contracts rarely favor the author. They are intentionally complicated and heavy in legal terminology and tend to favor the publisher

Royalty rates are lower than self-publishing

SELF PUBLISHING

Self-publishing is becoming more common place and no longer has the same taboo that it used to have. There are many self-publishing platforms available and self-published books now account for almost 30% of all book sales worldwide.

Pros:

Every book can get published – even 'risky investments'

Once you are ready to publish (post edit, layout, etc) the process from submission to ready to buy can take as little as 2 days

You can make changes and republish at any time – or just replace in the same listing many times

You can track all of your own sales, manage specials, promotions, etc

You have full creative control

Books get a longer shelf life at bookstores and will be continuously listed on online bookstores

Royalties are typically higher than traditionally published books

Cons:

How well your book does – rests with you. You need to be prepared to invest time and money into up front promotion, mailing lists, reviews, etc

You will cover costs – such as editorial, cover design, marketing, and promotion

You will spend more time away from writing and more time on promotion, marketing, and upkeep

It takes more in-person initiative for stores to stock your book and to prove that you have a following which will drive people to purchase it



See what our
co-creators
are up to!

KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator



<https://www.KassieJRunyan.com>

<https://www.Facebook.com/kassiejrunyan>

<https://www.Instagram.com/kjrunyan>

<https://www.Twitter.com/kassandrerunyan>

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2

Kassie Recommends...

Listening: Anjimile

Seriously google his debut album Giver Taker. He is so unlike many of the artists today in that he is a storyteller... a poet that I haven't heard in so long. Beautiful and breathtaking and think speaks to many of our readers.

Reading: We Should All Be Feminists

I rarely have time to read anymore outside of books I'm writing reviews for or clients I'm prepping for publication or agent submissions. But a very small and important read from the past month – We Should All Be Feminists by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. A wonderful reminder to the world.

Movies: All Godzilla – All The Time

As we near the latest Godzilla movie coming out at the end of March – we are catching up on ALL Godzilla movies from the years (and I threw in King Kong too... because it just makes sense). We have made it to the 70's now and I can hear my husband pacing impatiently in the next room waiting for a break from the click of my keyboard so that we can start the next movie. They are entertaining and honestly give me just a bit of relief from the knowledge that we will not be visiting Japan this year like we had originally planned. At least I can practice listening to Japanese and eat rice balls while watching Godzilla stomp around for hours.

SEARCHING FOR DEATH

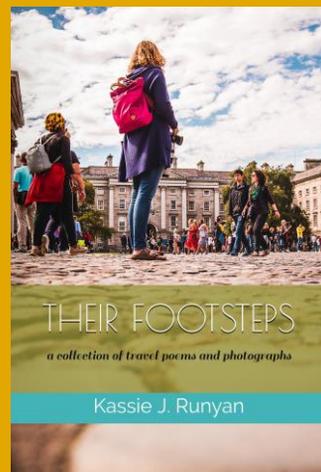
I crash left
and dig my
fingers in.
Dangling,
with only the
slightest tremor,
towards
sweet death.

THE GAME

The game still
braver.
Listening
in the darkness.
Standing threatened;
ominous.
But I
believed the
raving killer.



Purchase your copy of *This Is 2020* [HERE!](#)



Purchase your copy of *Their Footsteps* [HERE!](#)

WE WILL SUSTAIN

Do I make a sound
if you aren't there to hear it,
when I fall or get taken down?
Is there a thud
when I slam against the ground?

I've been here for years
me and my brothers.
Through the pain and the fears,
we've stood here and lasted
and will remain with our tears.

We provide families shade
and a moment's break
as they drive through the glade.
Standing tall and proud.
People took what we gave.

You leave your trash
hunkered in our needles.
Take selfies unabashed
against our trunks
next to the initials you slashed.

The silence is golden,
better than the sounds of a screen.
Us trees, so thickly woven.
Think of us and our future
the next time you feel so emboldened.

We will sustain
against all odds
as mother nature maintains.
You love us and we you,
so here we'll remain.

Just please remember us
as you teach your young ones
to try not to make a fuss.
Letting others build and pollute.
Now it's time to adjust.

AS I LAY DYING

As I lay dying
will I know I'm declining
or expiring?
Will they be crying
and denying?
A priest occupying
and purifying,
ignoring my defying?

Was my life satisfying
or mystifying?
Did I do enough applying
or complying
or flat out buying.
Was I disqualifying
in my intensifying
need for personifying
and verifying
and gratifying
and overflying.

Will I be able to stop trying
and only focus on flying
as I leave my body behind?

MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator

Mel Recommends...

Book: Expectation by Anna Hope

A book that beautifully portrays how the lives we end up leading are far from the lives we had planned out for ourselves. The story follows Lissa, Hannah, and Cate during their ten-year friendship as they navigate their way through failed relationships, careers and through the fitting title of their lives just not living up to their 'expectations.'

Film: For Olivia

A British film starring Hugh Bonnerville as Roald Dahl, and Keely Hawes as Patricia Neal. The film is based on the Stephen Michael Shearer biography about Patricia Neal. I found it to be a powerful and emotional film about the loss of a child and the ways in which the different ways people experience grief can affect a relationship. The loss of their daughter happened at the same time that Dahl's success began to take off with 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.'

Podcast: Your Wrong About

You're Wrong About is an American pop culture podcast hosted by Michael Hobbes and Sarah Marshall that delves into misunderstood media events and how the public have got things wrong on some very controversial topics.



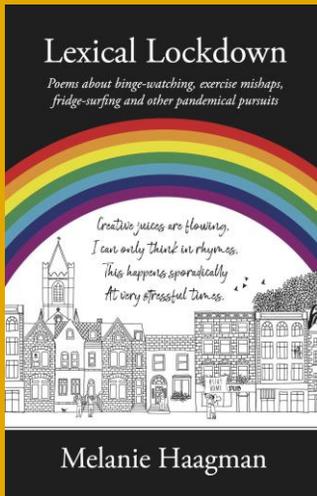
<https://www.Facebook.com/girlonthedge90>

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MEL HAAGMAN – CO-CREATOR



Purchase your copy of
Lexical Lockdown [HERE!](#)



Purchase your copy of **Open
Heart Poetry** [HERE!](#)

A DIET OF CONFUSION...

Mixed messages have stirred
Bubbled and frothed
And due to our worry
Every one we have scoffed.
We are bursting out of the seams,
With uncertainty and confusion,
Waiting on tenterhooks
For a finite conclusion.
But a year on and still
Our staple is contradiction,
Where every rule imposed
Is a cryptic depiction.
It's hard to read a recipe,
Emulating its instructions,
When measurements aren't clear,
It impairs the productions.
So feed us something concrete,
To consume and savour,
Because we miss consistency's
Crunch and its flavour!

THE FEAR OF FAILURE

The fear of failing at anything
Is something we must defeat,
Failure's a springboard
To the success we will meet.
Without the rejections
There's no time for reflections
To change, to grow, to adapt,
Not to make us feel trapped...
But to send us surges of motivation,
That we desperately need
To bounce back, be resilient
And learn how to succeed.
Confront the fear head on,
It's not personal at all,
Because if you want to climb,
You've got to learn how to fall.

Embrace the experience,
You know how to improve,
Don't be paralysed with fear,
But keep on the move...
When we fail, we make progress
It's all part of the process.
Compassion is created,
Even though you're frustrated.
Find peace with failure,
It's a part of life for most,
And those who don't experience it
Are the ones who may boast.
But they lack the compassion,
They've not had the same ride,
And from their success
They won't gain the same pride.

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PIER POETS

1ST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH – MARCH 7th

Pier Poetry gets together on the first Friday of every month. At present we're meeting on Zoom. You can find all the details of how to join us on our Facebook page. Our next open mic is November 6th.

Pier Poetry is an open mic night run in association with New Writing South. We offer five-minute slots for poets of all different styles and levels of experience, especially those getting behind the mic for the first time. We love seeing people trying out new stuff and taking risks. As the Pier Poetry community has grown over the two years we've been running, we've also loved hearing about regular attendees' pamphlets, publications, prizes and projects. Pier Poetry puts equality at the heart of what we do, and we strive to make the night a welcoming space for all.

<https://www.facebook.com/pierpoets>



RUN YOUR TONGUE

Watch for Upcoming Dates

We've been going since 2012 and were based in Kettering until lockdown; now we are running two regular open mic events via Zoom, where we are attracting performers from all over the world, including the USA, Morocco and Australia.

You can find a list of previous headliners here: <https://www.robreeves.co.uk/runyourtongue>

<https://www.Facebook.com/runyourtongue>

<https://www.Instagram.com/runyourtongue>



SOUNDBITES

MONTHLY – THIS MONTH: March 8th

Join Soundbites each month for a poetry open mic event that started live in Leeds in March 2019 and moved to Zoom in April this year following lockdown.

The format is simple – a different guest poet joins each month followed by 5-minute open mic slots. You can check out the guest poets' sets under Soundbites on our website heartlines.uk.

This month, TERRY SIMPSON will be the featured guest!

<https://www.Facebook.com/SoundbitesPoetry>



HUDSON VALLEY WRITERS GROUP

March 19th

Our Open Mic Nights are held from 7:30-9:30pm on the 3rd Friday of each month. Virtual doors open at 7:20 for event starting at 7:30 pm EST. Due to popular demand to participate, we've had to limit the amount of readers to 20. Your donations are welcome during this difficult time for so many, including arts nonprofits.

All genres welcome – fiction, non-fiction, poetry, music, comedy, storytelling, other. OpenMic will give you an opportunity to share your talents in a nurturing, comfortable space with some great people. Bill Buschel is your host.

Readers and FREE audience members all – please register on <https://www.writerscenter.org> to join!

<https://www.Facebook.com/hudsonvalleywriterscenter>

APPLES AND SNAKES

READ. WATCH. LISTEN.

Apples and Snakes is England's leading organization for spoken word with an international reputation for producing engaging and transformative work. Since 1982, the organization has advocated for artistic and social change through the power of performance poetry working with artists including The Last Poets, Billy Bragg, Lemn Sissay, Francesca Beard, Kae Tempest, Charlie Dark, and Polarbear.

Apples and Snakes supports and champions poets and poetry in performance, amplifies unheard voices and challenges expectations of what poetry is and can be. Spoken word trailblazers, the company commissions and produces events, develops artists and runs participation programs across the country.

**APPLES
AND
SNAKES**

<https://www.facebook.com/applesandsnakes>

<https://www.instagram.com/applesandsnakes>

<https://www.Twitter.com/applesandsnakes>

<https://www.ApplesAndSnakes.org>

ROCKPORT POETRY OPEN MIC

ONGOING OPEN MIC

Rockport Poetry hopes to encourage the writing and reading of poetry as an actively supported art form in the Rockport, Cape Ann, North Shore community... and beyond.

This will be a comfortable forum for connecting with kindred spirits, as well as sharing poems and ideas.

In addition will it also serve as a reference source for events and workshops and writer's resources.

Rockport Poetry is intended to be a safe space for the development of strong voices and poets of all ages and backgrounds.

Watch for our upcoming Open Mic Nights and more at
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1295270703870830>

PANTISOCRACY POETRY

<https://www.Facebook.com/pantisocracypoetry>

<https://www.Mixcloud.com/pantisocracypoetry>

We are Pantisocracy Poetry: a Newcastle based open-mic poetry night.

Just before the UK lockdown was imposed, we celebrated our one year anniversary. Happily, we were able to host an anniversary event to reflect fondly on our growth throughout the months. From humble, word-of-mouth beginnings, we have grown to a bustling community of passionate poets and poetry fans alike.

The name of our event says it all about our ambitions, which haven't changed a bit since the first event: just like Coleridge and Southey's intentions to build a brand-new society, one free of prejudice and difference (which were trashed when Southey asked his partner how they should transport the slaves there...), we strive to create a safe space where poets, both novice and experienced, feel confident enough to share their own amazing work with fellow performers against the backdrop of the toon. In keeping with this, the events always have been and always will be completely and utterly free.

In order to get yourself on the bill for any of the events, there is no screening process or, in fact, any foresight required at all - you simply turn up on the night with your poems in hand and a fire in your belly.

Whilst being unable to run live events, we have turned to social media to maintain contact with our community. We have run a number of live 'events' over Facebook and have been blown away by the willingness of local poets to roll up their sleeves, adapt, and get involved once more! More recently, we have begun a podcast, tackling the big issues, such as "What's mightier, the pen or the sword-throat? Do you prefer spoken or written poetry?"

We're very proud of the community that we have brought together over the past year and a half, but we are always looking to grow, so if this all sounds like something you'd like to be a part of, then give us a like, a follow or even a message to ask us any questions, or to just say hello.

Stay safe,
Pantisocracy Poetry, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



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CREATED BY MEL HAAGMAN AND KASSIE J RUNYAN
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