

---

ISSN 2058-7627

# Antiphon



Issue 17

*Antiphon* on-line poetry magazine

January 2016

[www.antiphon.org.uk](http://www.antiphon.org.uk)

Hear readings of these poems <http://antiphon.org.uk/wordpress>

**Edited in the UK by Rosemary Badcoe and Noel Williams  
2016**

**editors@antiphon.org.uk**

[www.antiphon.org.uk](http://www.antiphon.org.uk)

<http://antiphon.org.uk/wordpress>

Copyright Rosemary Badcoe and Noel Williams 2016 and individual authors. All rights reserved. This electronic magazine may only be circulated in its entirety.

**Images:**

Cover: The Connecticut Valley, Thomas Chambers, American, 1808 - 1866 or after

Act One: The Boating Party, Mary Cassatt, American, dated 1893/1894

Act Two: Hunter on Horseback, Gustave Courbet, ca. 1864, French, Yale University art gallery

Reviews: The Dead Toreador, Edouard Manet, French, probably 1864

Act Three: Tennis Tournament, George Bellows, American, dated 1920

Act Four: The Green Wave, Claude Monet, French, dated ca. 1866–67

Contributors: Sisters, Anon, American, dated c. 1840

National Gallery of Art nga images in the public domain, unless otherwise stated

---

# Contents

<b>Prologue</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Act One</b> .....	<b>4</b>
The Tree – Isabel Bermudez _____	5
Camping for Beginners – Juliet Antill _____	6
The Light Box – Susan Stiles _____	7
Not Reading On – David Callin _____	9
Anniversary Song – Sylvia Byrne Pollack _____	10
Fire-Eater – Myra Pearson _____	11
The Return Trip – Claudia Gary _____	12
Pelagic – Sarah Watkinson _____	13
<b>Act Two</b> .....	<b>14</b>
How Could I – Siham Karami _____	15
Dead Reckoning with Planchette – Susan Grimm _____	16
Tagged – David Callin _____	17
Sky Edge – Tracey O’Rourke _____	19
Names: Spelt, Spoken, Felt – Skendha Singh _____	20
“He Is <i>Close to Death</i> ,” We Hear – Ann E Michael _____	21
My Caribbean – Clark Holtzman _____	22
25 Vendémiaire, An II – Page Nelson _____	24
<b>Interval – Reviews</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Jenifer Smith, Reading Through the Night _____	25
Chris Dodd, Feeding out the Rope _____	26
Scott Elder, Breaking Away _____	28
Helen Evans, Only by Flying _____	31
<b>Act Three</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Nothing to Say – Kevin Casey _____	34
Notices – Mark Leech _____	35

I Am Not Joan Rivers – Anne Harding Woodworth	36
The Green Apartment – Pam Thompson	37
Skype from America – Rasma Haidri	38
What I Am – Juleigh Howard-Hobson	39
Bloody Jackdaws – Juliet Antill	40
Castaway – Hilary Hares	41
<b>Act Four</b>	<b>42</b>
The Brush – Judith H Montgomery	43
Orange – Jane Frank	45
On the Day of the Dead – Kenneth Salzmann	46
The Art of Food – Tim Love	47
The Field – Vishvantara	48
Miasma – Mary Makofske	51
A Clear Out – Beth McDonough	52
Herring Loss – Lisa Kelly	53
<b>Issue 17 Contributors</b>	<b>54</b>

# Prologue

The late, great Douglas Adams wrote a book called [\*Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency\*](#) in which the detective utilises "the fundamental interconnectedness of all things" to solve the *whole* crime and find the *whole* person. The best thing about online poetry is connecting with people I've never met and sharing something fundamental about how to interpret the world, because they are such thoughtful people, and their take on things so interesting. So turn sideways to the universe for a while and read these words, and I hope they help wash down the beverage of your choice during the long, dark tea-time of the soul.

Rosemary Badcoe

# Act One



## The Tree



Going through the baubles, I see the years I missed  
in figures I don't recall: a wooden drummer boy, a tiny angel  
with crushed velvet wings. The tree is half-dressed  
with flying pigs, Black Piet and Father Christmases;  
light falls on the spruce through a tall window  
beside the cedar's branching spread and wood-smoke  
coats the air from yesterday's open fire. We work  
until it's covered in its baubles;  
it has not forgotten me, though I've forgotten this:  
the balancing of left and right, this decking of top and bottom.  
The years are passing faster than I can reach  
– to the tallest branch, the furthest needle –  
and pin them on, each shiny bauble, and say,  
'now this is done, or that gone' and stepping back  
to see what comes of love,  
I look but cannot tell if all is really well:  
I've lost the knack to make the balance,  
it has clouded, my photographic eye  
that weighs a picture, decides to keep it or discard.  
The star you placed at the very top is made of straw.  
When did she appear? In which troubled year? Who for?

*Isabel Bermudez*

## Camping for Beginners



I can see the tent you are pitching  
even before I knock.  
I'm embarrassed to have nothing  
to offer, no fold-away forks,  
no emergency flip-flops.  
I pet the dog and the kettle roars.  
You reach for a cafetière  
as if khaki gore-tex were not drawn  
sparse and tight behind you, a slight  
pucker teasing on the western slope.  
You spoon in grounds,  
negotiate cupboards for cups.  
I say *I think it might rain*, and  
*I'll get the milk*, not wanting to see you  
moonlit in the Frigidaire,  
ho-humming between half-fat  
and full cream. You lean on the counter  
and play with your head-torch, wait  
for the water to boil.

*Juliet Antill*



## The Light Box



And they were there again  
    the rolling hills – untended –  
just scattered in the shadows  
like a dream itself, or a paper tiger  
nestled close to a hidden flame, and the stars,  
by the thousands – unconcerned –  
simply flooded the sky,

gathering forward, like an eager crowd gathers  
at the carnival entrance.

We stopped the car and walked  
up a familiar hill, the homes, set gently back  
    toward the forest, trees once  
worshipped, had not changed  
at all, to my eyes, nor had the deep ditches  
with their milkweed,

and thorns, and silent wasps,  
even the dents in the road  
retraced my steps.

And that was the dream, essentially,  
except then there was the part where my father  
and I ended up at the bottom of another hill  
    – unfamiliar – it seemed  
and he said, *It's better to walk  
from here* – even though we were  
walking already –

but our progress was slow, each blade of grass  
a cause for wonder, and swarms of birds  
from every species, and he named them all,  
    one by one,  
that is what slowed us down,

so much, and when everything had been named,  
we came upon a box with a light so faint,  
    it drew us closer, to see the contents,  
and I waited for him to give it the name,  
    – yet he hung back, and so I  
waited, and wait still.



*Susan Stiles*

## Not Reading On



My mother has just handed in  
her mobile library card,  
which saddened the librarian:  
she took it rather hard.

This lady had been on their books  
for more than fifty years.  
That's a lot of Catherine Cookson;  
it's a lot of Georgette Heyers;

it's a lot of assignations  
in the garden after dark;  
it's a lot of situations  
with a dog that didn't bark;

it's a lot of heaving bosoms;  
it's a lot of bitten tongues;  
it's a lot of kissing cousins;  
it's a lot of loaded guns,

and it's goodbye to all that,  
though she's pretty good for her age,  
but she loses each and every plot  
each time she turns the page.

*David Callin*

## Anniversary Song



Listen, love,  
what I wanted to say  
dissolved in this afternoon's  
plummeting rain. Lord knows  
we need rain but the timing  
was off. No umbrella,  
words written in chalk  
on my hand

Listen, love,  
what I meant to say  
has already molded – overripe  
cheese, fuzzy peach in the back  
of the crisper drawer.

Listen, love,  
what I might have said  
is in the pants press  
I gave to Goodwill.  
What I should have said  
was festooned with blossoms,  
garlands of fuchsia crepe-  
paper petals.

Listen, love,  
what I will say is  
I'm heating the leftovers,  
and supper will be  
on the table at six.

*Sylvia Byrne Pollack*

## Fire-Eater

One wonders whether it was all intentional –  
if the fires that bloomed at the beginning  
of everything we see opened up with love  
from the touch of a great creator who drew  
breath with a mouth full of gasoline, then spat  
the stars into burning being – or, if for  
a desire to be seen, we imagine  
our importance on a screen projected past  
the cosmic curtain, our gods, the audience.

And if there is a fire-eater, coughing out  
galaxies like a lonely carnival sideshow freak,  
crunching his feet in shattered peanut-shells,  
each shuffle splintering dusty realities,  
walking like a tourist through a hall of oddities,  
munching popcorn in a sticky chair while  
lives explode and flare across a canvas,  
it doesn't make much difference –  
someone's watching the performance.

*Myra Pearson*



## The Return Trip

This is the spoon you pressed into my hand  
to eat the healthful breakfast in my pack –  
"Drive safely" – promising you'd stay my friend  
even though love and I might not be back.

This is the fast-food haven where I took  
a respite after only the first hour  
to cry the knots out of my chest and look  
at puffy eyes and splotched cheeks in the mirror.

This is the car that stopped in front of mine  
with barely room to avoid oblivion.  
This is the gas receipt that gave luck's sign  
in gallons: 7.777.

This is the new-found feeling, mute and numb,  
that sat with me alongside Herren Beethoven,  
Schubert, Brahms, Bach, during the ride to come,  
each echoed cadence sounding like an omen.

Those are the memories now laid to rest  
and sung to sleep. May next year be our best.

*Claudia Gary*



## Pelagic



Rigged for winter gales and the wild northern air  
we ride the night swell, lift from the crest foam-light  
taking what weather comes; swoop for a sprat  
side-slip on up-draughts, hang on the wind, debonair

until breeding time comes and makes each of us one of a pair  
on a rock face reeking with guano, and life's a fight –

*gitawaay Kittiwake gitawaay – with fledglings to flight  
gitawaay to the sea before the turn of the year.*

We nest on heights where boulder-lift sweeps our ledge;  
washed in our element we take one step, extend  
wings that bear us there in the surf's echo –

or down, glissading on streams of wind  
sail us up, above the cliff's edge  
to the dark sea rioting below.

*Sarah Watkinson*

## Act Two





## How Could I

What years I lost without you, just for him –  
you who brought me poetry, who laughed  
as if the glass I broke was never shattered.  
You whose easy overlooking eye  
spurned the petulance of petty things  
that cut our soft anemones inside.  
Simply mother, grey-brown-headed wren  
whose breezes, hardly felt, became our air,  
always unpretentiously gentle  
doing what you did without announcement,  
the coffee made, the kitchen bright, the table  
set as we presumed it would be set,  
a tone of reassuring daily-ness,  
a background pulse, a barely noticed love  
through peaches, pickled cucumbers, and bread,  
a redolence of roast, a lovely oven  
brimming with your ordinary dreams.  
You who turned the soil of your own beauty,  
planting aromatics, nothing fussy,  
wild with overgrown, green-smelling leaves –  
no trellises, just straight out of the dirt –  
a shoot of living breath, and worn-out hands,  
a presence in the rooms we left behind.  
You who without saying, understood.  
And still would, could I only have you back.



*Siham Karami*

## Dead Reckoning with Planchette

I.

In those dusky, swollen days, humid  
and vaporous, we oozed like untapped trees.  
Lowering our curves into the chairs,

we became the table, our knees trembling. Oh,  
we were young then, we were young. Fingertips  
and knees. How to understand the space

of the future? We licked up the letters  
from the board. *F* is for *foretaste*,  
*U* for *ulterior*. *T* is for *tense*. You get

the picture, but we didn't. It was all around us,  
thick. We couldn't see the forest for the heath.  
Here finally something to study (we were good

students), a way to handle the great greasy  
folds of it, the smothering sheets.

II.

Maybe it wasn't fog but snow. Childhood  
as winter, but we don't know we're cold. And then  
the terrible melting, the sun intensive, intrusive.

We're the chick not hatched at birth, humming  
inside the shell, the white curved dome  
like a space to take notes. Nothing will ever be

so clean. What is the future? – that the fortress  
breaks. Fortune does not smile down or turn  
its back on our laundry motions or our walk down

the stairs. Flow eventfully sweet After.  
The fortune cookie sticks out its tongue.

*Susan Grimm*



## Tagged

Summer 2012; *Winter 2011*; Summer 2012

Quia natura mutari non potest  
idcirco verae amicitiae  
sempiternae sunt.

We are brought up, short,  
by this outcrop of Latin  
in an English graveyard.

There is no translation.  
The vulgar are excluded.  
We have to ask someone.

Since nature is unchangeable,  
therefore real friendships  
are eternal. It's Cicero.

What sempiternal  
meant to Cicero  
is more than I can say,

but now it's thoroughly churched.  
Pie Jesu Domine,  
dona eis requiem

sempiternam.  
Soundtrack by Fauré.  
*The In Paradisum*

*was reverently piped  
into the church, while the faithful  
bobbed up and down,*

*a dance as mystifying  
as the bee's, describing  
the way back to the hive.*



*A rumpled priest  
was brandishing a sprig  
of ironic rosemary,*

*asperging,  
with his enchanted water,  
the offending item.*

*(All, all have offended.)  
Fauré, lacking the fierce  
certainty of the ultras,*

*omits the Dies Irae,  
and all are ushered in:  
the day is drained of wrath;*

*Hell's disappointed owners,  
seeing no-one is coming,  
finally shut up shop.*

It seems a sight less likely  
than a quiet mouldering  
under a hopeful stone

in an English graveyard,  
but even my dissenting bones  
may join in what

is fondly wished for her,  
this girl, this branch  
of my too common stock,

at the requiem's soft close:  
may she have eternal  
or sempiternal rest;

to sleep (not sleep) forever  
or, if she is woken,  
to be woken kindly.

*David Callin*



## Sky Edge

*For A.C.*

Is this Icarus or Ariel? This kid on a skateboard –  
earth-bound, sea-bound boy – who comes surfing  
up beside me, on gritty tarmac, in the shimmering heat,  
here at the back end of a thirsty summer,  
with a greeting – his simple *hello*, startling me  
in its suppleness; its quicksilver message  
a gift, fluttering with welcome and openness –  
a child's candour hovering in adult form.

And I, an almost stranger, am moved to look  
with deeper eyes upon this boy-man I've barely met  
to salute his easy bravery, his generosity  
and feel my feet, my shoulders, ache for want of wings.

*Tracey O'Rourke*



## Names: Spelt, Spoken, Felt

A fix: red push pin on corkboard globe;  
a flag flutter on mountain top.

Spelt like a detail on some medieval map –  
El Dorado, Atlantis, Cloud-cuckoo land.  
Heard of, like a promised shore.

It marks the spot. But,

uproot it from the tongues that first tell it,  
and its elements are disarrayed, borders  
fluctuate, no longer can one take the north

for granted, as in the wind mangled course  
of ships. Syllables bilged, scuttled or grounded;  
sounds keel under a foreign freight.

But once the tongue aligns (imaginary  
lubber line) you can catch the true wind,  
sail; brush the capes: Cod, Good Hope,

Comorin... chance upon untold histories  
that mull your brain like sun scented cloves,  
and make each port of call seem a caress;  
until the ship, welded to yield riches,  
thrills with its whistle – and you can claim  
the one name that made your heart its home.

*Skendha Singh*



## ***“He Is Close to Death,” We Hear***

The phrase seemed strange  
when I was a child. I wondered  
if it signaled a kind of movement,  
neighborly, and whether it was  
the man who took himself close  
to death (walking to *death’s door*,  
perhaps). Or maybe it was death  
that took the initiative,  
slipping into the sickroom  
to rearrange the bedclothes,  
speak into the vulnerable  
ears of the dying, softly.

*Close to.* The words suggest  
intimacy as well as proximity.  
The man close to death must be  
simpatico, must share his feelings  
or his secrets, must trust; and death  
would do the same because  
closeness of that sort is mutual –

or so I thought  
when I was young and close to  
my sister and my parents and not  
as close as I am now to death,  
which I sometimes glimpse  
waving at me from a distance  
in a neighborly way.

*Ann E. Michael*



## My Caribbean

*or, the Sea-Feather*

I imagine Samuel Sewall,  
the future diarist of faith and disaster,  
as a boy peering over the gunwales  
of the little boat for a sign  
that this was the place  
they'd all been looking for –

the la-la-land they'd sailed for,  
for which they'd left behind a seawall  
at Dover and disaster  
too common in a place  
soon gone from the gunwales –  
a sign

like any sign  
the persecuted forsake the familiar for,  
and seeing it there at the gunwales,  
adrift in the cold, briny sewage,  
flotsam the company cannot place,  
exactly, as the new disaster

to be, thinking it a sign of disaster  
escaped, *and believing it*, the sign,  
to be a place-  
holder, godsend, for  
the coast they can see well  
now, lifting then dropping from the gunwales.

But Samuel, himself now at the gunwales,  
sees instead the first of many disasters,  
a life of them, being a kind of see-all  
reader-of-signs,  
God's tricky messaging, and for  
a moment, the new meaning of the new place





God brings him to time and again, a place  
shrouded in prayer, defined by flight, by gunwales.  
He sees it for what it surely is, not the hoped for  
release, but the given disaster  
to be embraced: a sea-feather like a road sign  
confirming a standing itinerary, flashing *Sewall*,

*Samuel Sewall*, know thyself by this place,  
know from the sign drifting by the gunwales,  
and know the disaster you're here for.



*Clark Holtzman*

## 25 Vendémiaire, An II \*



Hoarse from question and denunciation,  
the Tribunalists quietly flourished their verdict,  
sent the woman, bereft of husband, children  
and Versailles' pretty things, back to her bed of biting straw  
where in half-sleep's delirium it seemed a brocaded servant  
stepped down a mirrored hall so that she must set her Age of Reason smile,  
take from his white fingered hand (light split by the barred window)  
the beribboned proclamation of the day – execution at noon.  
This she foresees almost contentedly, as if a last levée  
but not the lurching ride in the open cart,  
the streets coiled into one vast animal,  
its multitude of mouths opening with a roar.

*Page Nelson*

\* The date of Marie Antoinette's execution under the Revolutionary Calendar



## Interval – Reviews

### Jenifer Smith, *Reading Through the Night*, The Garlic Press, pp 28 £5

The poems in this well-produced pamphlet take us back into the narrator's childhood and a gentle coming of age. Those who remember Crackerjack and skipping rhymes will understand the era, but an appealing feature of these poems is that they stretch beyond the narrator's own life, giving us glimpses of how she as a child recognised the longer histories of her grandparents and wider family.

She knitted two pairs of dungarees with matching pullovers  
for my teddy bear. One night her mother and her father,  
long dead, he in morning coat and silk top hat,  
stood at the foot of her bed; told her she would be alright.

('Bungalow')

The past and its effect on the present is important. An unpleasant experience for two small girls

...caught unawares by the pale young man  
refused to be afraid until afterwards.  
They locked their sturdy knees, would not  
kneel at his command, were unrepentant.

('Girls')

leaves one, now a woman, wary of encounters: 'to her dog's surprise,/ finds herself running'.

*Before* sticks on to the *now*, and the poems flow between the two, the glimpses of earlier lives familiar to those who have great aunts and uncles of their own. The sentences are long and conversational, and at first read I thought them straightforward. Reading again, I find them very skilful, their easy diction carefully controlling the temporal shifts. I'll quote the following in full as it illustrates these points:

### **Still Talking**

we slip quickly down  
into the underground at Embankment,  
carrying our day with us, our figure of eight  
meanderings, lunch amongst young Japanese,  
Malick Sidibe's photographs, millefeuille at Paul's.  
And your luminous self-portraits. We are still deciding  
whether I'll go home now, when, mid-sentence,  
your train arrives and you step in, and I step back.  
Framed in the window, I see your smile, your raised  
hand, a glimpse of my undergraduate mother  
riding the tube, the all-clear sounded. The train  
moves as if in a film, out of the station.

Arriving home I turn to the phone  
which rings before I dial:  
*We didn't properly say goodbye.*

RB

### **Chris Dodd, Feeding out the Rope, Smiths Knoll, 28pp £5**

Chris is described in his bio as having lived in Scotland, Trinidad, Canada and the USA, and also as having worked as a geologist. This wide travel is well reflected in the subjects of his poetry; and it also seems that, as a geologist, he strides vigorously over the landscape, and doesn't merely regard it passively from some backroom.

I was first struck by 'Hill-Run on Bennachie', which contrasts rocks and vegetation with the more animal experiences of the runner passing over and between. The short lined,

stop-start nature of the poem neatly captures the fast breathing of the protagonist, as you can clearly see in this fragment, the end:

Peterhead smokestack  
bounce through boulders  
to the pines  
past bolete mushrooms  
gorse  
hop dry dog shit  
hit the gulleyed path  
narrow  
jump two  
water polished  
steps

car park,

calves,  
glutes,

high beech trees.

Lungs.

Moss on the wall.

('Hill-Run on Bennachie')

I loved the juxtaposition of body and scenery images; and in particular how the final line captures succinctly both that scenery detail, and also a perfect moment of the tired runner coming to halt with eyes resting upon it.

Another notable poem is the following, 'Easter, Dollis Hill' which focuses on the character of an ex-lover's family, their engaging cultural differences and history, and ends on the poignant note of the ways in which they are missed after the break-up.

'Shoal' describes the experience of diving amongst the eponymous shoal, explores its nature and appearance, while relating back to the observer and his companion:

The shoal changes direction,  
every fish together –

a single great steering machine.

Do we do that?  
Turning as one  
without thought or sound?

('Shoal')

Also worthy of note is 'Bean Tins', a brief prose poem recounting tin-and-string telephony and other childhood experimentation, but my final favourite is the closing poem: 'The Bone Carving'. Subtitled (*Magdalenian, Southern France, 15,000 – 9,000 BC*) this describes a single archaeological find, possibly a museum exhibit: a carving of 'Three horses at speed'.

We move from elucidating the detail of the carving to the image of the artist himself:

the carver has sketched for years  
on snow, lake-clay, birch-bark  
to reach these three, hold them here  
as they gallop together  
heading south

('The Bone Carving')

A collection enjoyable for its diversity and where many of the poems bring some small surprising insights or scenes to entertain the reader along the way. A love of place and the great outdoors abounds in this. The style of these poems may not be the most lyrical, but it is well suited to capturing the moments, scenes and scenery that the poet has collected for us.

Ian Badcoe

## **Scott Elder, *Breaking Away*, Poetry Salzburg, 36pp, £4.50**

As individual poems, many of the pieces in this collection are engaging. In tone and topic they are generally mysterious, fragile, allusive, the subjects hidden away behind oblique referencing, especially using what I (perhaps prejudicially) think of as the American style of the "stretched metaphor" – where two things are compared in a radical way, without apparent clarity in the grounds of comparison, e.g. 'Portrait in Winter': 'My fingers / stuck in the pigment. Barbwire and thistle / caught in my clothes. / His element // was the wind'. For me, sometimes these stretches work, sometimes they seem forced – but that could

largely be the sensibility I'm working from where relying entirely on evocative expression with little to tie it down seems sometimes an abrogation of the poet's responsibility. Even where subjects are quite clear, such as the aftermath of a gunshot or the fall of Humpty Dumpty, the elements offered in the poem tend to the evocative rather than the precisely descriptive. Indeed, there's a general lack of specificity in the poems; Elder largely eschews the contemporary fetish for the particular. Instead we tend to get abstraction or an off-the-wall simile whose specifics are hard to pin down. (But then maybe off-the-wall imagery is the kind best suited for Humpty Dumpty.)

Even where I puzzled over the imagery, its effects could be striking. I suppose a possible model is John Ashberry, or what might loosely be called the surrealist image: 'If you touch the sun with the tip // of your tongue, it will not burn.' ('Drowning at Sunset') I'm not clear what this means and it's obviously neither possible nor true, yet I find it a powerful idea, and, clearly stated like this, it seems to have an emotional, childlike meaning which I can easily imagine myself into. Such evocation can be quite beautiful, even when we're not really sure why it works.

However, I'm not sure that a series of striking images is, in itself, enough for a poem and the problem with the beautiful in Elder's poems (for me, at least) is that similar effects are repeated again and again. One small example is his fondness for abstract words, especially those ending in '-ess'. The fading, disappearing effect of such words suits the intangibility, the wistful or unpindownable tone of most of the poems, so there's a noticeable use of words such as 'voicesless', 'likeness', 'darkness', 'stillness', 'endless'. The key word here is 'noticeable'. An effect should not be noticeable, not until you look for it. But these words tend to be given prominence in their poems, either being placed at emphatic points (line and stanza endings) or made repeated use of in a poem. In general, they convey an absence of something, so it is absence, lack, which seems the dominant theme in many of the poems. Hardy made good use of this effect in 'The Voice', but he had the sense not to use it again and again in his work.

Alongside the repeated abstraction, many of the images, effective as they are, call on the same ideas and even the same vocabulary. Across the collection of twenty-nine poems notions of darkness and shadow, fading, absence, breathing, listening and mirrors recur again and again. In such a short collection these repetitions make it feel as if we're reading the same poem repeatedly. If there was a greater range of poems, or this imagery was spread across a large collection, they would not seem so prominent, but here the repetition of particular ideas or imageries was immediately noticeable. A small example is hair-stroking. I was first pleased by the line 'the wind's trickle still in your hair' ('Reading the Words'), which I rather liked, until I noticed in the following poem 'and runs a finger through her long black hair' ('Gift of an Artist') and then in the next 'desire trickling in her veins' and 'The wind picks through her clothes and hair' ('Breaking Away'), (and I was

annoyed that ‘trickling’ occurs again in ‘A star fell in a trickle’ in ‘Penelope’) then in ‘Before the Fall’ ‘*Your hair, she murmured, is thinning ...His fingers drifted through moss and lichen*’ and in ‘The Lady in the Mirror’ ‘strokes back her hair. A dark sea swells / between her fingers.’

I guess I would enjoy such repetition if I felt it had power or significance, but in these instances I can’t see any such interplay across or between the poems. I can’t see any motif that is inflected from use to use, and, in fact, some of the repeated uses feel like a gesture made when nothing more original has been suggested to the poet. Yet this sort of repetition seems so obvious, I’m left thinking that there must be an intent which I’ve failed to appreciate.

For example, the poem ‘The Lady in the Mirror’ comes about two thirds of the way through the volume and brings many of these repeated images together: mirror, hair strokes, dark sea, iron bell, antique clock, falling, stillness. An ungenerous reading is that the poet is struggling for ideas. A more generous account would find in the poem a cumulative effect. Perhaps Elder is looking for a Cocteau-like fairy story impact, where the constant evocation of specific archetypes adds up to a meaning that can’t be otherwise pinned down (and all these elements are, of course, common fairy tale motifs, even to the point that you’d find them catalogued by folklorists). Or perhaps these motifs have individual significance for the poet and we’re supposed to see a trail of inflexions across, say, an evolving personal relationship. If so, it’s beyond me.

The pleasure I get from these poems is in their individual elements and their separate constructions. But the effect as a collection is not a progressively cumulative one for me, rather each successive poem loses something by, it seems, trading on an impact already encountered. I don’t think there’s much in the separate pieces one would not appreciate, although the fondness for the archetypal abstract sometimes leads perilously close to cliché or a rather empty grandness (both seem potential problems in the last line of ‘Reading the Words’: ‘until dusk, too, had inevitably gone.’, which would probably be a better poem without this line.) All of which makes it a little difficult to come to a summative judgement. Each poem is well worth reading, but I’d read only a couple at a time, then put the book aside before reading any others, to avoid cross-contamination between them. However, I freely confess I may be missing the point.

NW



## **Helen Evans, *Only by Flying, Happenstance*, 28pp, £5.00**

This pamphlet of twenty-three poems has the high quality of presentation we've come to expect from Happenstance and, as is usual from their productions, the poems are of characteristic quality, too. They're cleverly wrought, most of them addressing the theme of flight from different perspectives, some quirky and wry, some profoundly serious. Almost every poem is different in form – from the expected sonnet, via the obligatory humorous list poem ('Search Engine' being a collaboration with Google) to the shape poems which mimic the movement of flight, the climb of a spider or the shape of an engine (or a wing, or a SAAB fighter or a dart). I suppose we generally expect this range and variety from contemporary poets, especially those with MAs in Creative Writing, who're typically explicitly pushed to tinker with form (I can say this, as I include myself as one such poet). I'm not sure how interesting such experiments are, though, intrinsically. It really comes down to the question of how the experiment is used. Are they variation for the mere sake of variety, or is something illuminating being done through the choices that unusual form permits?

Perhaps there's a certain interactivity in such poems for the reader – turning the page on its side to read 'Engine Test', for example. And certainly there are differences in expression which may result – I've known several discussions of how unusual spacing should be represented in reading, whether internally or aloud. A poem such as 'It's Like When', does capture the breathless, fragmented shift and slide of flight in a small aircraft (Helen Evans pilots gliders). And I can certainly admire a poem which makes good use of unusual vocabulary, as in the lines: 'the laminar flow of a lenticular // smooth steep cloud'. Such poems are fun, and there's a great deal of joy in this collection. One can feel the pleasure, the excitement, the almost child-like thrill that Evans gets from taking to the air, replicated in the rhythm and the shape, alongside her desire as a poet to offer us not only versions of the experience, but 'readings' of it.

Fortunately, she's not heavy handed with the rather obvious metaphors which would come to all of us with flight as a subject. In fact, she's uncommonly restrained in this respect, aiming most often for a literal descriptive, sometimes semi-technical, voice which fixes the account as 'realistic', but then subtly nudges us towards an irony, an implication, a secondary meaning which we can take if we wish. In 'Soaring', for example, she pits our expectation of flight ('fantasy / of freedom or escape') against the reality of desperately seeking a thermal, any source of heat, in order to get some sort of elevation: 'The stench of tyres / from that torched car'. It's no great analogical stretch to extrapolate from this to the gap between any aspiration, ambition or expectation on the ground and the less than ideal struggle for its realisation.

I like the playfulness of these poems, and I like the way Evans can both exercise control and abandon it when she fancies. This, I guess, parallels glider flight in some measure. Myself, I've only flown a light aircraft once, for fifteen seconds, and it frightened the life out of me. I can see the thrill, though, of engineless gliding and I can see, too, its equivalence in the poet's thrill of a language that can, like a thermal, lift her to somewhere unexpected, at one and the same time being both in absolute authority and yet entirely dependent on the uplift of whatever words come. The book ends:

on that limitless energy you can feel  
only by flying it  
(*'Grace'*)

So pervasive is the focus on flight that these poems which don't touch on it seem somehow out of place, even though, like *'T Realises He Is a Romantic Lyricist'* they may be amusing or like *'Home Farm'* or *'Yet I will wait for the light'*, intensely serious:

Seventeen people  
thrown alive  
into the well  
at Chapelfield.

Editorially, the non-flight poems are interleaved, but, despite their excellence, the six or seven poems which don't touch on flying feel obtrusive to me. I think I'd prefer a shorter pamphlet focused on the central theme, leaving the rest to form the beginnings of a first full collection, where we might expect more unexpectedness and therefore range. Arguably she's trying to get too much into too small a space here. Even so, this is a mature, considered collection and, above all, entertaining.

NW

## Act Three



## Nothing to Say

By semester's end, he'd begun to appear  
again at parties, standing in other  
people's kitchens, his eyes fallen leaves  
cartwheeling in the wind. And covering  
his head, he took to wearing a bandanna,  
like a red bandage intended to keep  
life's dust and daylight away from some wound.

The vanguard from that oversaturated  
landscape of grief and fear, where every cloud  
and tree lolls and sags – mute symbols sinking  
in their burden of silence, each face and shape  
an ineffable glyph bowed beneath  
its own weight – we asked for no report,  
and offered only awkward courtesy,  
careful to avoid mentioning the night  
they found him breaking bottles in the quad,  
casting no shadow in the sodium lights'  
citrine tremor, with nothing to say for himself.



*Kevin Casey*

## Notices

*from the World War I commemorative walking tour  
'66 Men of Grandpont' in south Oxford, 2015*



We are furnished with service records:  
regiment, campaign, date of death.  
They hang among walls and cars.  
Swifts scream, plunge.  
Names of fathers are noted,  
number of siblings,  
years they knew this door.  
The photos are visa-sized, show  
steady looks for serious days.

Hot days, with only a gesture of breeze,  
it's awkward to stand looking down  
at their names, up at their windows.  
A heavy bee tours hollyhocks.  
Six gardens down, the grind of a plane  
accompanies a life's paragraphs.  
Names recorded, not remembered,  
except at the edge of the mind,  
in late June, on bright roads  
they would know, but not recognise.

*Mark Leech*

## I Am Not Joan Rivers

But will someone, please, impersonate me?  
I want to look at myself in the flesh –

see my right hand as a right hand,  
my left as a left. Impossible in mirrors.

Reflection cannot contain periphery.  
When my eye looks to one side,

I want to see real edges and shores,  
to gather what's there, watching you be me.

You must be slightly younger,  
so you'll stay longer and remind of laughter.

I want you to have light brown hair  
and good thighs, smooth arms, thick eyebrows.

I want you to whistle at times,  
usually while you stand at the sink.

I want you to sing songs that get stuck  
in your head for hours and hours.

I want you to play the bugle. Taps at sundown.  
Taps at Arlington. Taps for your father and mother.

You'll do things I won't recognize,  
things you've seen me do I don't know I'm doing.

You may even hurt someone with words.  
You will know who and why. I won't.

*Anne Harding Woodworth*



## The Green Apartment

I'd have headed for St Pancras if he hadn't  
reminded me of the apartment in Elektron Towers,  
and smoothed down my fur collar, and his eyes  
weren't eyes any more, and I used my own memory then  
saw it slicing its green blade through their living-room



window, you had two choices, either press  
yourself invisible against a wall, or step into its blaze  
like it was one of several rivers you were considering  
to swim in, and I looked again and the side  
of his face was silvered with time, and when he moved,

the mottling started, like a mirror worn out with old  
mercury, we were thinking it into myth as we stood,  
different ones. I thought myself into a street  
in Blackwall, ignoring a couple of fat drunks around midnight,  
fumbling in my bag for the post-it with a number,

and the key to the room where I could undress  
my imagination in green shade, or green light, both,  
and he would be drawing plans, starting to dig footings  
as if he was thirty again, and it was all to come,  
as if marriage wasn't something a person could walk through.

*Pam Thompson*

## Skype from America

The birds sing  
a foreign song  
and children  
sound like canaries  
to you  
who cannot feel  
I am trying  
to nudge  
your fingers from your eyes  
with the arrow  
of my cursor.



*Rasma Haidri*



## What I Am

a curtailed and rabeted sonnet

*Water is H<sub>2</sub>O, hydrogen two parts, oxygen one, but there is also a third thing that makes water and nobody knows what that is.*  
- D. H. Lawrence



I am the secret lifeblood of flowers.  
Without me every fresh blossom lowers  
its head, ever fading as the hours  
pass. I am in the grey clouds that hang, straining  
with their weight in the leaden air, training  
out across the ground, and in the raining  
pelt itself. I am sweat glistening on skin,  
I am the draught that quenches. I am kin  
to all that pours out, and all that pours in  
I am *das wasser, aqua, viz, vandou*  
*vesi, voda, vand, woda, vatten, d'eau.*

*Juleigh Howard-Hobson*

## Bloody Jackdaws

Dad used to rage about the bloody jackdaws,  
the way they nested in the chimneys,  
brought down soot. And our house had a hundred  
chimneys, a roof full of pots – we towered up  
like an old factory over the pigs.

They never nested in the one we used of course,  
which was a shame. I wanted to hear those devil-  
birds squawk, liked the idea of a nest in flames.  
And after school when I lit the fire, I'd put my ear  
to the flue, fancy I heard them flapping.

Where we lived was small, too small for fireworks  
or burning Catholics. But a brief bonfire  
sixty feet up, wisps of straw dazzling the night,  
the incandescent Phoenix rising!  
That would have made up for things.

*Juliet Antill*



## Castaway

The water is a fractal work of shard and depth,  
the island tethered against the dock of blue north.

The smells are coconut and sea egg. On the far side  
of the trees some yellowed bears are calling spring.

I've learned to lie still, to welcome rain,  
find I am consumed by the pull and suck of tides.

At dusk the pine trees scrap for the red moon.  
I place my bets in pebbles, seldom win

and here, where there is no law, I find  
I'm stealing seashells, overwhelmed by guilt.

Last night a carrion crow appeared. It dropped  
the muscled leg of something strange.

I've come to understand the purposes of gourds.  
I miss white sheets, the shipping forecast, Sunday toast.



*Hilary Hares*

## **Act Four**



## The Brush



Easel propped on feather-  
grass that quickens  
the river's edge, the artist loads

his long brush, oblivious  
to us in that heady, out-  
of-body glide the Greeks

called *ecstasy*. Intent  
only on giddy water-  
light, his culled palette –

azure, apricot, marigold, –  
he sets to burn on canvas  
the sun's hot swath

of scintillating chips  
as you and I drift, not  
touching, down to dock-

side below the café,  
apparently idling after  
*un déjeuner* in June – but

when you take my grape-  
colored coat, your fingers  
graze my nape. That

graze, and your averted  
gaze, and mine, charge  
the air. My dress brushes

my breasts, as we lean,  
still not touching, against  
the unsteady rail.

All about us – the river  
weaving glimmers of shot  
light, the sun arranging

its thousand petals, and this  
world disappears, all  
*shook foil* and tremble.



*Judith H Montgomery*

## Orange

Your body: a tank of liquid pigment,  
fizzy and full up to your neck,  
just enough room left for worries  
to bubble in your head.

There's a bottle stopper plugged  
in your chest where they top you up  
and straws in your arms  
where they add salt or glue.

They keep you in a cold box  
with the endless gravy and mash,  
the cruel machines that beep  
and whine, the plastic bags that drip.

The colour in the tube is hard:  
a metallic orange you would never  
buy from a shop in its pure form  
but mix a version of your own,  
for warmth.

*Jane Frank*



## On the Day of the Dead

This is the day we welcome the not-yet-dead. They come to our crypts or graves to bury us beneath armfuls of marigolds, to dine with us on candied pumpkin, *pan de muerto*, sugar skulls, jars of *atole*. They make a resting place of the cold, packed earth at the base of flowery *ofrendas*. With *copal* incense and seashell rattles, with *Catrin*as and *calaveras* said to honor us, the living-still struggle to carve in stone or custom a wedge between themselves and us.



*Kenneth Salzmänn*



## The Art of Food

After the gold-leaf halos,  
the discovery of oil and perspective,  
hungry birds pecking crumbs from  
The Last Supper, scared off by believers.



Gods became landowners, shrinking  
to reveal landscape, picturesque poverty,  
pinpricks at Vermeer's vanishing points –  
his widow giving two paintings to the baker.

On a line of silk, de Nerval walked a lobster.  
Dali made the lobster into a phone,  
dressing models in fresh seafood for his  
Dream of Venus, the scallop shells empty.

During the siege of Leningrad, people  
daren't walk their pets. Painters  
gave in first, chewing their own still-lives,  
before poets ate their words.

Meanwhile, Kurt Schwitters, exiled  
in the Isle of Man, couldn't get plaster  
of Paris, so he used porridge, letting it go  
green, then blue. The sea, he said. The sky.

*Tim Love*

## The Field

Out of nowhere a sudden memory:  
a view through a kitchen window  
of a sloping green field.



The kitchen's on the ground floor, window  
above the sink, so no surprise  
there. But *where?*

Wherever is linked to my companion  
(male) who lives here. Alone.  
Good, proceeding.

But the unidentified *he* doesn't own  
wherever it is, and the lease is short term.  
In fact

that's what he's talking about, in the mystery  
kitchen, he's saying  
he'll miss the field

when he moves. He doesn't have  
ties. Neither do I. So we can live  
anywhere. I can tell

we're graduates, it's the earliest eighties, so we can pick  
any job or house  
off the England tree

we've vaguely assumed our grandpapas fought for  
and saved  
as a coming of age present

for us, the spoiled, the government granted,  
the family fortunates.

We're not lovers.

He's no-one I'm close to, do I wish I was?

Don't think so.

No. It isn't

the house *or* the man – they are frames  
for this balding, knobbling  
grass.



ii

Come on, it was just  
a field, the surprise of *field*  
at the back of one's house,

a dinner-party talking-point. Perhaps  
it aroused my envy? So distant,  
so fleeting,

I can hardly believe the memory  
survived – yet something  
stored it,

and something triggered it  
but talking-point-envy  
would hardly persist

or matter today to this  
thirty years' child of London's  
East End

with – mind – no regrets, and I mean it  
or mean I will mean it  
before I die.

iii

An envy, though, I must have felt, of *place*  
– precisely, of friends  
of the gods of a place –

where that place was accessibly,  
liveably  
wild?

If so, an awareness of that  
has had to wait thirty years  
to resurface,

has had to wait until now  
for the place  
not the man

to loom first out of memory. Through cycles  
of various attempts  
to grow me

a home: cycles of cutting, root-powdering,  
transplanting – and,  
if you like, blooming.



*Vishvantara*

## **Miasma**



from slime and rot, deflated frogs and putrid fish, from cattle dung,  
rain washed into the swamps, miasmas rose in search of living flesh,  
or so they thought, and why not say that now – miasma shrouds you,  
since we can't explain this illness, though it has a name,  
though doctors say it thrives in charges, changes of the brain

yet it rises like an ill wind from a bog, spiking like fever,  
twisting branches into arms and claws, ceiling lights  
into a camera eye, and each of us into an enemy

*Mary Makofske*

## A Clear Out

Your day off clatters that rattle box  
full of half-dead pens, upends some steel-  
milled stick's purpose.  
I thread the collet up shaft; show  
how it readies to clasp  
that absent scalpel blade. Cardboard-packed  
6B pencils nose graphite in crackle-green  
Venus skins. Two orange combs.

You shake out bottom dwellers, condiment  
our table. One clagged putty rubber  
two metal sharpeners, a Konica roll  
of undeveloped film. We've been  
digital forever.

Our old dog quiets at our feet, breathes slow  
to know her last ill days, and yet  
her tail metronomes. We count extra time  
until the vet's trip, drop  
that unread spool in the bin.

*Beth McDonough*



## Herring Loss

Half heard, now half remembered  
what was it I thought you said  
as I beg my brain for the word I know  
begins with *b*? The sense of something  
on the tip of my tongue, which lurks  
behind bottom teeth as lips purse *b*  
goldfishing empty speech bubbles.

The Christmas cracker joke you told,  
*What did the fish say when he swam  
into a wall?* has an in-built sinker,  
if not the right line, hooking *codswallop*,  
all manner of red herrings, as I bang  
my head against a brick wall, and hit  
upon it was not *b* but *d*. *Damn!*

*Lisa Kelly*





## Issue 17 Contributors

**Juliet Antill** lives and works on the Isle of Mull.

**Isabel Bermudez** was born in Bogota and came to England as a young child. She has worked as a schoolteacher and a documentary film-maker. Her first published collection of poems, 'Extranjeros' is available from Flarestack Poets.

**David Callin** lives, if not quite at the back of beyond, certainly within hailing distance of it, on one of Britain's offshore islands, in what he likes to call the Deep South of the Kingdom of the Isles. He has had poems in number of magazines, online and off, including *The Journal*, *Envoi*, *Snakeskin*, *Antiphon* and *Angle*.

**Kevin Casey's** work is forthcoming or has recently appeared in *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *Paper Nautilus*, *Rust + Moth*, *San Pedro River Review*, and other publications. A new chapbook, "The wind considers everything –," was recently published by Flutter Press, and another from Red Dashboard is due out later this year.

**Jane Frank's** poems have appeared in *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Westerly*, *Writ*, *Uneven Floor*, *Yellow Chair Review*, *Antiphon*, *The Lake* and elsewhere. Jane teaches in the School of Humanities at Griffith University in south east Queensland.

A 2014 and 2016 finalist for the Howard Nemerov Sonnet Award and 2013 semifinalist for the Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize, **Claudia Gary** writes, edits, sings, and composes tonal chamber music and art songs. She is author of *Humor Me* (David Robert Books 2006) and several chapbooks including *Bikini Buyer's Remorse*. Claudia's poems appear in anthologies such as *Forgetting Home* (Barefoot Muse Press 2013) and *Villanelles* (Everyman Press 2012), as well as in journals



internationally. Her articles on health appear in *The VVA Veteran* and other magazines. For more information, see [http://www.pw.org/content/claudia\\_gary](http://www.pw.org/content/claudia_gary).

**Susan Grimm's** poems have been published in *Poetry East*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *The Journal*, and *Blackbird*. Her chapbook *Almost Home* was published in 1997. In 2004, BkMk Press published *Lake Erie Blue*, a full-length collection of her poems. In 2010, she won the inaugural Copper Nickel Poetry Prize. In 2011, she won the Hayden Carruth Poetry Prize and her chapbook *Roughed Up by the Sun's Mothering Tongue* was published. She started blogging at *The White Space Inside the Poem* in 2012. In 2014, she received her second Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Grant.

**Hilary Hares** obtained a BA in Creative Writing from the University of Winchester in 2010 and is currently studying for an MA in poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University. Anthologies: *Lines Underwater* 2013, *Inspired by my Museum* 2014, Hampshire Writers' Society Anthology of the Best of 2011-2014. Competitions: Christchurch Writers Competition 2013 (First Prize for Poetry), The Plough Prize 2011 (longlist) Collaborations: *Elemental Dialogues* ([www.elementaldialogues.wordpress.com](http://www.elementaldialogues.wordpress.com)), Writing Hampshire ([www3.hants.gov.uk/writing-hampshire](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/writing-hampshire)). Magazines: *Bare Fiction*, *First Time*, *South*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *Orbis*, *The Interpreter's House*, *The New Writer*.

**Rasma Haidri** is an American expatriate living on the Norwegian arctic seacoast. She teaches college English. Her poems have been widely anthologized and published in literary magazines in several countries, although mainly in the US where she has also received awards for poetry and creative non-fiction.

**Clark Holtzman** lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He has published work in traditional and online journals, including *elevenbulls*, *Red China*, *2 River*, *Antigonish Review*, *The Lyric*, *The Small Pond* and *Negative Capability*. A chapbook, *The King of Spain*, was published by Peloria Publications. 'My Caribbean' is from a book-length manuscript with the working title, 'A Fool's Alphabet'.

**Juleigh Howard-Hobson's** writing has appeared in many places, including *Trinacria*, *The Raintown Review*, *The Barefoot Muse*, *Pemmican*, *Sugar Mule*, *The Lyric*, *Able Muse*, *HipMama*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Flea*, *Atavic Poetry*, *Soundzine*, *Sein und Werden*, *Poemeleon*, *Switched-on Gutenberg*, *qarrtsiluni*, *Autumn Sky Poetry*, *Umbrella*, *The Chimaera*, *Fourteen Magazine*, *Aesthetica*, *Fickle Muses*, *Postcard Poems and Prose*, *Caduceus: The Poets at Art Place Vol 8* (Yale University), *Sweet Lemons 2: International Writings With A Sicilian Accent*; *Legas Sicilian Series Vol XIX* (Legas), *The Best of the Barefoot Muse* (Barefoot Pub), *Poem, Revised: 54 Poems, Revisions, Discussions* (Marion Street Press), and *Mandragora* (Scarlett Imprint). Her fourth and most recent formal poetry collection is *Remind Me* (Ancient Cypress Press). Writings are forthcoming in *The Absinthe Anthology* (Hyacinth Girls Press), *Daughter of the Sun* (Bibliotheca Alexandria), a yet to be titled book of modern riddle poems edited by Kate Light, *Think Journal*, *Fine Linen Journal*, *The Raintown Review* and *War Literature and the Arts*.

**Siham Karami** lives in Florida. Recent work can or will be found in *The Comstock Review*, *Measure*, *American Arts Quarterly*, *Unsplendid*, *Think Magazine*, *The Ghazal Page*, *Sukoon Magazine*, *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Rotary Dial*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Angle Poetry*, *String Poet*, *The Centrifugal Eye*, *The Raintown Review*, and the anthologies *Irresistible Sonnets*, *Poems for a Liminal Age*, and *The Best of*

eyedrum periodically, among other venues. Twice a Pushcart Prize nominee, she has won the Laureates' Prize in the Maria W. Faust international sonnet competition, and blogs at [www.sihamkarami.wordpress.com](http://www.sihamkarami.wordpress.com)

**Lisa Kelly** is half Danish and half deaf. Her pamphlet *Bloodhound* is published by Hearing Eye. She is a regular host of poetry events at the Torriano Meeting House in London and is studying for an MA in Creative Writing at Lancaster University. She is on the board of *Magma* and co-edited issue 63.

**Mark Leech's** most recent chapbook, *Borderlands*, a follow-up to his *Chang'an Poems*, was published in 2015. He has also published chapbooks of Old English and Spanish translations, and a sequence of long poems about London's hidden rivers. He blogs about the interrelations of humans and the environment at [www.openfieldblog.wordpress.com](http://www.openfieldblog.wordpress.com)

**Tim Love's** publications are a poetry pamphlet *Moving Parts* (HappenStance, 2010) and a story collection *By all means* (Nine Arches Press, 2012). He lives in Cambridge, UK. His poetry and prose have appeared in *Stand*, *New Walk*, *Rialto*, *Oxford Poetry*, *Journal of Microliterature*, *Short Fiction*, etc. He blogs at <http://litrefs.blogspot.com>

**Beth McDonough** often writes poems of place, particularly of the Tay where she swims, and of a maternal experience of disability. She also likes to riddle with Anglo-Saxons. She first trained in Silversmithing at Glasgow School of Art, and is currently Writer in Residence at Dundee Contemporary Arts. Her first shared pamphlet is to be published in May 2016.

**Mary Makofske's** book *Traction* (Ashland, 2011) won the Richard Snyder Award judged by David Wojahn. Her other books are *The Disappearance of Gargoyles* and *Eating Nasturtiums*, winner of a Flume Press chapbook competition. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Calyx*, *Mississippi Review*, *Poetry East*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Quadrant*, *Natural Bridge*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Zone 3*, *Paterson Literary Review*, and in 12 anthologies. Individual poems received the Robert Penn Warren Prize, the Iowa Woman Prize, the Lullwater Review Prize, the Spoon River Poetry Review Prize, The Ledge Prize, third in the William Matthews Prize, Honorable Mention in the Oberon Prize, and three Honorable Mentions and a Second Place in the Allen Ginsberg Awards.

**Ann E. Michael** is writing coordinator at DeSales University in the valleys of eastern Pennsylvania, USA. Her latest collection of poetry is *Water-Rites* (Brick Road Poetry Press), and she blogs about poetry, gardens, education, and philosophy at [www.annemichael.wordpress.com](http://www.annemichael.wordpress.com)

**Judith H. Montgomery's** poems appear in the *Bellingham Review*, *Cimarron Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Cave Wall*, among other journals, as well as in a number of anthologies, including the forthcoming *Veils, Haloes, and Shackles: International Poetry on the Oppression and Empowerment of Women* (Kasva Press, 2016), and *Pomegranate: Contemporary Poems on the Demeter/Persephone Myth* (2016). Her chapbook, *Passion*, received the 2000 Oregon Book Award for Poetry; *Red Jess*, a finalist for several national first book prizes, was published by Cherry Grove Collections (2006); *Pulse & Constellation* (finalist for the Finishing Line Poetry Prize, 2007) followed. Her new manuscript, *Litany for Bloom and Wound*, centers on injury and healing in women's lives.

She holds a PhD in American Literature from Syracuse University, and teaches poetry workshops throughout Oregon.

**Page Nelson** has just returned to his hometown of Charlottesville, Virginia after a decade assisting students (he hopes) as Cataloger and Reference Librarian at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. His recent debut novel, 'A Book of Emblems', is proudly and necessarily self-published.

**Tracey O'Rourke's** work has appeared in *Ten Hallam Poets*, *Matter*, *Antiphon* and in the anthology of the 2013 Montreal Poetry Prize. She continues to teach and write in Palma.

**Myra Pearson** is an American poet from Virginia. Pearson grew up in Washington, DC, and graduated from Radford University, where she studied literature and poetry. She currently lives in Seoul, Korea, and teaches English at Duksung Women's University. Her poetry has been published in *Grey Sparrow Press*, *Tulane Review*, *Dark Matter Journal*, and *Chiron Review*. She has completed her first book of poems, *Familiar Spirit*.

**Sylvia Byrne Pollack**, former cancer researcher and mental health counselor, enjoys poetry, grandkids and life in general. A Pushcart nominee, her work has appeared in *Floating Bridge Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Clover: A Literary Rag* and *Antiphon*, among other print and online journals. She received the 2013 Mason's Road Winter Literary Award for her poem "Gregory" and was a finalist/medalist for the 2014 inaugural Russell Prize.

**Kenneth Salzmann** is a writer and poet who lives in Woodstock, NY, and Ajijic, Mexico. His poetry has appeared in *Riverine: An Anthology of Hudson Valley Writers*, *Beloved on the Earth: 150 Poems of Grief and Gratitude*, *Rattle*, *The New Verse News*, *The Comstock Review*, and elsewhere.

**Skendha Singh** loves the Arabian jasmine (which isn't Arabian), Delhi winters, and the Vedanta philosophy. As a child, she was told that she could write. So she went on to do a Masters in Writing Practice and Study just to find out if that was true. The investigation is ongoing.

**Susan Stiles** lives and works in the Washington, D.C. area. She's been writing poetry off and on (more off than on) for about 10 years and her work has appeared in *The Dalhousie Review*, *Innisfree*, *Red River Review*, and *Storyscape*. She's experimenting right now with a couple of children's books and also drafting a collection of short stories loosely based on her travels.

**Pam Thompson** is a poet and university lecturer based in Leicester. She has been widely published in magazines, was a winner of The Poetry Business competition in 2005 with her pamphlet, 'Show Date and Time', (Smith-Doorstop, 2006) and was the winner of the 2015 Magma Poetry Competition Judge's Prize. Her latest collection is 'The Japan Quiz', (Redbeck Press, 2009). Pam is one of the organisers of Word!, a spoken-word, open-mic night at The Y Theatre in Leicester.

**Vishvantara** has been commended twice in the National Poetry Competition; her first publication, 'Cursive', from Happenstance Press, was launched in September 2015. She has won the Poetry London competition and been a Hawthornden Fellow. She lives in London in a Buddhist Community and teaches at the London Buddhist Centre.

**Sarah Watkinson** is a Plant Scientist at Oxford University who returned to writing poetry in 2012. Her work has been published in magazines including *Clear Poetry, Ink Sweat and Tears, Nutshells and Nuggets, Pennine Platform, The Rialto, The Stare's Nest* and *Well-Versed*. She won first prize in the 2015 Ware Poets' Open Sonnet Competition, second in the 2014 Battered Moons Competition, and third in the 2015 Ealing Autumn Festival poetry competition. She grew up in Yorkshire and is based in Oxfordshire.

**Anne Harding Woodworth** is the author of five books, the most recent being *Unattached Male*, published in 2014 by Poetry Salzburg. She has three chapbooks, with another, *The Last Gun*, forthcoming in 2016. Her poetry, reviews, and essays have appeared in journals such as *TriQuarterly, Crannog, Poetry Salzburg Review, Antigonish Review, and Painted Bride Quarterly*. Harding Woodworth lives in Washington, D.C., where she sits on the Poetry Board of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

---

# Issue 17 2016

*Antiphon* on-line poetry magazine

[www.antiphon.org.uk](http://www.antiphon.org.uk)

<http://antiphon.org.uk/wordpress>

