

# Antiphon

## Welcome to Issue Three of Antiphon

Spring 2012



This issue includes a range of poems contemplating the theme of technology, some addressing it directly, some more obliquely. We're presenting these as a **celebration of the centenary of Alan Turing**, the man generally considered to be the father of computer science.

### Poetry and Reviews

We are pleased to publish new work from, amongst others, Conor O'Callaghan, C.J. Allen, Priscilla Atkins and Fiona Moore and reviews of Timothy Donnelly, Niall Campbell, Matthew Clegg and Kate Ruse.

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## Prologue

One thread of an online forum I take part in asked if poetry editors need to be poets. Why, we asked ourselves, would any poet want to be an editor?

Probably you don't need to be a poet to edit a poetry magazine, but it certainly helps. The two roles complement each other. An editor needs to have a feel for what a poem is trying to do, where it has come from, what the poet might want to achieve. The more the editor understands about the actual practice of creating a poem, the easier it is to decide if something "works" or "fits" or "is clichéd". In fact, an editor who is also a poet can sometimes get under the skin of a poem and see why it is the way it is, and perhaps also how it might be better.

A good poet needs to be a good editor of their own work, but can also learn by editing the work of others. A poet who's an editor has to brush against all sorts of ideas and approaches which he or she might never otherwise encounter. Making a conscious decision about whether unexpected poems are "good" or "interesting" or "work well" forces you to be more aware of a whole host of considerations you might not normally attend to in your own work. So judging the work of others also helps you formulate your own poetics, though largely in a sort of case by case way: you gradually learn what things work in poetry for you, and what you want to avoid.

The editors in this forum had a long list of things they wanted to avoid in poems sent to them. I won't bore you with the list here, but what it boiled down to was that editors wanted to be excited. They wanted to be energised, aroused, surprised, intrigued, made to sit up or even spin around, made to think and made to feel. Editors spend a lot of time reading a large amount of not very exciting material. So when something special or different or startling or simply brilliantly executed lands in their inboxes, that's when they feel that the job is worth the effort.

And, of course, editors like the buzz of putting work that's excited them in front of others. We're all keen to excite our readers. Rosemary and I are really pleased with Issue 3 of *Antiphon* for this reason. Each issue, we've felt, has offered more work that has surprised and delighted us, each time in slightly different ways. Again we're able to bring you a wide range of styles and impacts, from the mysterious to the energetic, from the dark to the illuminating. We asked for poems on the theme of technology to celebrate the Turing centenary. Our initial idea was to have a separate Act of these poems, but apart from a few that address computing and technology head-on, it became difficult to separate them from the other poems - like the technologies themselves, the ideas provide a backdrop for wider themes. We have therefore scattered the strictly technological in with work concerned with very different ideas, and we think it provides an interesting contrast.

We're very pleased with *Antiphon*'s success. So now we're wondering how it might develop. We're thinking that we could include more poems, or more reviews, or perhaps more articles. We're wondering about offering a pdf version readers can print and keep. Would a featured poet be a good idea? Should we have a themed section in each issue? Would a "readers' letters" section be a good idea? Or perhaps a popular vote for the best poem in each issue?

We'd like you to tell us what works in our magazine, and what you might perhaps like to see more of. Email us with your views and ideas, and we'll see whether we can implement some of the best. We want *Antiphon* to grow, and we'd like our readers to help feed that growth. You can [email us](#) here, or you might like to add a note to our [Facebook page](#).

And, if you are going to write to us, you might want to polish up a sonnet or two, too. Issue 4 will have a sonnet theme. Send us your sonnets. We want to see how you can give the sonnet a contemporary twist, but we're keen on the traditional forms, too.

Noel Williams

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### Alan Turing



Alan Turing was an English mathematician who was highly influential in the development of computer science and the creation of modern computers. *Nature* magazine recently called him 'one of the top scientific minds of all time'. He defined how a computer could be created to read instructions and follow a list of rules to produce an output, and what type of problems it could tackle. He was also involved in the cracking of the Enigma machines used by the Nazis in World War II to encode messages – particularly important in reducing the loss of shipping by Nazi submarines. He later worked on ideas about mathematical biology, brains and artificial intelligence – including the [Turing Test](#). He was convicted of homosexuality in 1952 and died from cyanide poisoning in 1954, believed to be by his own hand. His achievements are now being more widely appreciated as war-time papers are declassified.

[Alan Turing on wikipedia](#)  
[Alan Turing Centenary](#)

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We're also pleased to promote a memorial to the wonderful poet, short story writer and man, Archie Markham. The *EA Markham Fellowship* was established at Sheffield Hallam University, UK, to honour the founder of the MA Writing. The 2012 award will be for poetry. Aspiring poets are invited to apply for the course by November 1 2012, submitting a sample of no more than 8 poems and indicating that they wish to be considered for the Markham Fellowship. The chosen winner will be admitted onto the course, all tuition fees paid. See Sheffield Hallam University for more details.

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# Act One



## Atlantic Time

Eastern Standard is a block-graph  
peaking in the middle distance  
behind windsocks, freight cranes,  
hay waving between runways.  
Turbulence, for once, feels lovely.  
One drouses over Providence  
and is oblivious to rounding  
back an hour outland.

The other arrivals will be days yet.  
There is space still to seem  
a soupçon more than one  
can mostly get away with.  
One eavesdrops patois French  
and sprinkles it onto those native vowels  
one circumnavigates the houses to pronounce  
like seeds onto a raising loaf of bread.

The cell phone is inclined to reset.  
Its clock shaves a fifth off the lag  
the second one's face is turned.  
One even asks the correct zone  
of the 1940s corner store  
one bursts from a cloudburst into.  
They shift in shop coats. They change  
one with schooners, caribou.

The bathroom is communal,  
though the corridor remains deserted.  
One rubs a porthole in the steamed glass  
and sees that one has donned this jolly  
neutral all along as one might a top hat  
bought in Oxfam and worn exclusively  
out of town as though to the manor born.

The odder coves, they lap it up:  
the farmers' market stalls,  
the home-knits and million dollar relish,  
the denims with creases pressed in front.  
A Cape Breton hen party moving  
onto shots christen it Old World hot.

Only with the lobster bar tallying  
the night's takings does it cut no ice.  
Amid liquors glittering upside-down  
like sleeping bats, a senator blubs  
for his wiener pixilated online.  
One tips to excess and leaves alone.  
The sidewalk is wet with cellophane.

Tomorrow, the night desk smiles,  
everyone else is due to arrive tomorrow.

The cell keeps resetting automatically.  
Each time it does it makes this sound.  
Something to do with signal,  
a sort of dead reckoning via satellites.  
The sound the cell makes is this minute  
plosive like gull call far offshore.  
But for my laptop's wing-light  
the hemisphere is in shade.  
Tomorrow all the others will descend.  
There it goes again.

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*Conor O'Callaghan*



## T.S. Eliot Takes the Turing Test

How close to sense his responses are,  
almost lucid, almost clear,  
almost what the judges want to hear.  
How quick the switch from hanging men  
to Shakespeare quotes and dogs again,  
dogs that are the friends of men,  
dogs that dig the corpses up, then on  
to chess and games of cards.  
We'll pin him down (it could be hard).

His mind moves to and fro,  
through April, mountains, Marie and snow.

A babble bot is all he is,  
a cocktail shaker filled with words,  
a blend of English, German, French,  
a mix of quotes and little sense.  
He starts off well, begins to juggle  
many thoughts until he struggles  
and then lets go his grip,  
*Twit twit twit*  
*jug jug jug jug jug*

His mind ranges left and right  
through pubs and typists late at night.

A mountain stream that bubbles forth  
with words from all the works of men  
that gathered here from street and wharf,  
from bars and books, from Lil and Ben.  
A trick of language, sleight of tongue,  
the flash that takes the eye away  
and hides the swiftly passing bung.  
A mind that simply cannot stay  
upon the topic that we choose.

This is a bot,  
you lose,  
you lose.

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*Ben Johnson*

## Island Paradise

We are tectonic action's afterthoughts—  
Hot spot eruptions, leakage at the cracks  
Of seabed spreading and subduction zones.

Continents dwarf our cartographic dots—  
Giants adrift on monumental tracks,  
Grinding the planet's bones against its bones

While we swoosh lacy archipelagos  
Or poke our single crests above the waves.  
Land ho! Come, life-disseminating birds,

Spatter our rocks with guano! Then seed grows  
And falls and grows again and falls. Its graves  
Fill with nutrition like a page with words.

In time we are like Eden, but in time  
We're all hotels, casinos, bars, and crime.

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*Chris O'Carroll*

## **Dame Eleanor Cobham leaving for the Isle of Man**

*"Another notable English prisoner in Peel Castle was Eleanor Cobham, the wife of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, sentenced to perpetual imprisonment for witchcraft by King Henry VI. of England—vide Shakespeare, 'Henry VI.,' Part II., Act II., Scene 3, Hall of Justice." ("From King Orry to Queen Victoria", 1899, Chapter 6).*

Walk not so fast, my lady, though your feet  
are torn and bloodied by the flinty street.  
Although you wish the bitter penance over,  
at this hard journey's end you will discover  
you're walking out of history, and Shakespeare,  
to languish in a very little sphere;  
your world contracted to the boy that brings  
your daily bread, and little creeping things  
to be your courtiers in your dripping cell.  
So be not over-eager, gentle Nell,  
to quit the buzzing brightly coloured scene,  
but make your dainty exit like a queen  
who goes, and would not go, but knows she must,  
to twilight, then to darkness, then to dust.

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*David Callin*

## How to put a genie back

First hold the bottle's green glass  
up to the light, scour its innards for skin flecks,  
the smallest tongue lick. Make sure

he's really gone. Next, cajole. Say, *Please*.  
This will obviously fail. Then stretch  
your arms wide. If you're lucky,

you'll catch him for a while.  
Grasp and squeeze tight until green  
blood seeps from his eyes.

Watch as he slinks to the floor,  
marvel as he whispers away to the damp  
of the dark. Troubled now, set a trap;

wait for it to spring, which it will,  
but the cage will be empty, just one  
green thread from his cloak

on the floor. So sharpen your sword,  
raise it high, brandish and flourish it,  
howl. And, as he passes by smiling, lop

off a leg, arm, perhaps his head, laugh  
a little as it rolls green at your feet.  
Gather the pieces, try jamming them in.

You will suck at this; each bit's not  
even part of the sum. How to put a genie  
back? It's like holding onto the sun.

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*Claire Dyer*

## Moving: Sendai, March 2011

A green light encircles everything:  
the startled planks, the bewildered  
steamboats. All is trembling,

the sea itself an uvula caught  
in the act of a luxurious yawn.  
The roofs of houses break

its surface, somewhere, tremulous  
as the backs of stretching cats.  
There is stretching here too

as the stricken stand up  
with the coffee-cup eyes  
of the recently abducted,

splendidly oblivious  
of rigging and masts, the tools  
required to sharpen a saw.

They stamp their feet, shake  
sea kelp from their hair  
and something moves

just under the skin.  
Something that is not blood.  
Not even water.

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*Brian Edwards*

## Act Two



## Computer Generated

There is no *in the beginning*,  
only a name, a first entry,  
written in some hamlet,  
barely a place, cluster of small walls.  
A Challacombe, some Smisby,  
a Gringley-on-the-Hill.  
What happened there?  
What happens everywhere.  
Mild muttering men repair  
broken roofs in inconvenient winds,  
pray for better weather,  
love women. Places of small magics,  
grandfatherly wishes.

By chance, there is a record.  
By same, by grace, there is  
a scrawl of the clerking cleric,  
a day of marriage noted, two  
whose lives were walking  
distances between the fields.  
Faint legible marks, but enough.  
There will be your own in  
archaic and ornate spelling,  
scribbled to the best guess  
of a man of cloth listening hard.  
A Redfern or Redfan of Smisby,  
Antcliff or Ancliff of Gringley,  
some Rodd or Ridd of Challacombe.

Our old illiterates, they knew.  
They knew amongst the first  
plants of the season, the broad  
or twisting blades of oat  
and barley. They knew amongst  
the piled peat, the salted.  
But nothing of the small vastness  
of computers; no inkling.  
Apart perhaps from the rumoured  
mind of God, omniscient  
to the last ant or stillborn child.  
They spoke before the age of  
correct spelling, when words  
walked as the vicars said,  
once written, forever fixed.  
And then foxed. Fixed for  
the darting fingers of the  
databases, the indexes of  
the all-knowing search engine box.  
Guess as the vicar guessed and

hear that day's ancestral voice,  
near the kissing, fields ago.  
Guess as the vicar guessed and  
hear the only voice of Genesis.  
In the beginning was that word.

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*Seth Crook*



## Desire Lines

*“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”*  
*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Drought or drench draw them more clearly, teach  
the secret geometry of hidden  
or half-arsed purpose. For each

ribbon of rained-on intent,  
tramped-down meander of yearning  
that hardens into lane or jitty,

even a city street, another ten  
remain as freehand scrawls and scribbles,  
at best, the chords and tangents

of long-forgotten arcs. A season's growth  
softens edges, a work-crew and a one-off budget  
tame the snake in the grass, or divide head

from tail, but a week of winter, a few days  
of scorching sun, can reunite both  
or sharpen the top-down perspective,

until each waste-ground's a history  
of every passing idea and impulse, half-buried, half-  
realised, but still being dreamed.

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*Matt Merritt*

## Probably Not the Best Summer Job in the World

Leave the sun to blaze on foyer doors,  
scuff up stone steps, change into pink shirt,  
kipper tie, purple suit with wide lapels,

climb behind a Perspex box, sell tickets  
with grubby fingers, hand over Maltesers,  
pop-corn, hot-dogs, ices,

get caught mid-impression by the manager,  
an imitation of his voice hung like a jammed  
frame in his stare,

mooch and ghost with dilated eyes  
through drifts of smoke, blasts of Pearl and Dean,  
muffled sobs, roller-coaster screams,

find lovers joined at the lips after the credits  
have rolled, glide a banister to catch Michelle Pfeiffer  
before she turns into a hawk,

exit via the fire escape to meet you for a quick half  
between shows; apart from this last, no, I don't wish  
I was back there, since you ask.

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*Roy Marshall*

## The Engineer's Child

As if his measurements, in precision,  
could create life's simulacrum; with steel,  
with brass, in billowed steam, but it would rise  
as if awakening. This science was

his alchemy of parts, of creased blueprints,  
and of equations. Engineered, it spoke  
to him; wordless, though he knew it uttered,  
*Father*. At night, when metal ground so hot

on metal that it blushed as maidens might,  
he sometimes felt the burn of lambent eyes  
against his skin, shuddering in his bed

as he imagined love that grew without  
an instinct or a soul. It loomed above  
him as he lay awake, a monolith.

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*Philip Kane*

## On Offering the Loan of an 1886 Edition of Mrs. Browning's Poetical Works

A friend of mine steps back, complains  
about my dusty book, maintains  
it's full of germs and mildew. *Who*  
she says, *would risk disease? Screw*  
*Aurora Leigh*. She squirms, restrains

herself from saying more and cranes  
her neck away from coffee stains  
and scribbles on page fifty-two.  
A friend of mine

agrees that each old book regains  
the errant note, that touch sustains  
in chocolate fingerprints, a clue  
that we're of one like mind, and through  
these battered pages she remains  
a friend of mine.

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*Marybeth Rua-Larsen*

**Panic is called on unresolvable fatal errors; it syncs, prints "panic: mesg" and then loops**

This is an artificial heart. This heart was written by routine operations. These veins were constructed in machine language, in bit patterns. They were programmed. The last four beats were selected by a series of synaptic gates: and; or; not; nor. When. But. If. How.

This system's fuse has blown. Its earth is loose. This wholly unnatural system does not know if it is made of pistons and valves and pipes or circuitry. Pressure or charge over time. But it is not made of flesh. This body cannot breathe, lacks lungs and throat, and its mind

has no subconscious, and its many limbs are not organic, but have panels marked CAUTION. Do not remove. Authorised personnel only. Its wired jaw fell off. Fatal exception error. This is an artificial heart. Please reboot.

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*Harry Giles*

## Interval

**Niall Campbell**, *After the Creel Fleet*, HappenStance, 2012 £4.00

This is Niall Campbell's first pamphlet—he received an Eric Gregory Award in 2011, and a Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship, and is originally from the Western Isles of Scotland. Antiphon regularly receives excellent submissions from Scottish poets. They can be relied upon for lyrical phrases and beautiful cadence and this pamphlet from Niall Campbell is no exception, though he makes less use of resonant Scots words than some. These are rarely poems of place, however, though a few begin from that premise - 'An introduction to the gods of Scotland' characterises cities by the gods that formed and represent them:

### *Aberdeen*

The eyeless. The enduring. The cautious that hid his great gifts,  
for the greater part, out of our reach. Who prefers his churches  
straight and grey. He is depicted always on the rock-face. He  
wears nothing but the grey doe-hide he skinned the first day.

### *An introduction to the gods of Scotland*

His poems have an assured tone: reflective, often mysterious, something deeper below the surface. The best of his shorter poems encapsulate one perfectly formed central image yet hint at an unresolved wider meaning: the nightjar, a bird that sings at night, able to

...

witness more than we do  
the parallels.

Its twin perspective;  
seeing with one eye the sack-  
grain spilled on the roadway dirt,  
and with the other, the scattered stars,  
their chance positioning in the dark.

### *The tear in the sack*

Others, though containing similarly well-observed images, I felt were a little less effective. The syntax of 'The fraud' seemed a touch clumsy and the central conceit of a childhood dog, long buried, summoned by the narrator to symbolise death ('bore not a dog's teeth/but a long, black mouth') felt less effective than some of the other metaphors. A number of the shorter poems, such as 'Thirst' and 'Winter home', whilst containing beautiful, crystal-clear images, left me wanting a bit more. I am also a little unsure what to make of the prose-poem 'Interrupting Boccaccio' – a poem about wells and love – where the loss of line breaks seems to have also led to the loss of his usual tight, focussed images.

The poems I liked best got their teeth into their subject-matter a little more and ran with it. The title poem, one of the best here, resonates with the long, hard tradition of a fishing fleet even though no boat is mentioned. Its initial couplet: 'I never knew old rope could rust, could copper/in its retirement as a nest for rats.' grabbed me immediately and the continuation of the extended metaphor is skilfully handled.

'When the whales beached' is a good example of the way in Campbell's poems one thing leads to another. Here, it is an image from the present that leads the poet back: a beached whale reminds him of grandparents, one following the other, who climbed "the aching shore together, and didn't fall short". Sharp images framed in couplets are enhanced by carefully considered line and stanza breaks. 'Glassblower', too, caught my eye with its interesting comparison of creating music with creating glass.

The best of these poems are deft, skilful, lovely; I look forward to reading more of him.

RB

**Timothy Donnelly** *The Cloud Corporation* 176 pp, £9.99  
Picador, Pan Macmillan, 20 New Wharf Road, London N1 9RR

#### YOU THINK I SHOULD BE CONCERNED?

As seems to occur with the advent of each new century, the limitations of the well-made personal lyric are once again in question. Much of Timothy Donnelly's *The Cloud Corporation* can be read, in its range and ambition, as an implicit critique of that lyric. One of the book's best poems, 'The New Hymns', even addresses it head on:

I don't want to have to  
locate divinity in a loaf of bread, in a sparkler,  
or in the rainlike sound the wind makes through

mulberry trees, not tonight. Listen to them carry on  
about gentleness when it's inconceivable  
that any kind or amount of it will ever be able to

balance the scales...

I want to press my face  
my face against the cold black window until  
there is a deity whose only purpose is to stop this.

A glowing critical reception has focused mostly on the political bleakness of the book. While, clearly, this is a big part of it, there is more to this work than mere anger and satire. Donnelly's poetry comes with a religious edge that almost all of its reviewers have overlooked. Only Stephen Burt alludes to it, but predictably terms it 'Puritanical'. And indeed, the book's final poem 'His Future as Attila the Hun' does seem possessed of a Miltonic impulse 'to lay waste the empire'.

However, what distinguishes Donnelly above most of his peers is the sheer exuberance of his tone and line. As if working with Frost's dictum that poetry should take as its subjects those things that are 'common in experience and uncommon in books', he locates weird versions of pastoral in the unlikeliest corners of 21C experience: debt, technology, globalization. Possibly the finest single poem in the whole book, 'The Rumored Existence of Other People' appears to be about accepting a takeaway delivery: a magnificent five-page meditation on the sheer strangeness of receiving and paying for, on your own doorstep, food made by other poorer hands. Disgusted by much of the stuff of our world, sure, these poems are nonetheless also half in love with the very corporate verbiage they seem to lampoon. At the core of this poetry lies a semi-Catholic pleasure principle that, by Donnelly's own admission, owes much

to Wallace Stevens.

While Donnelly is a more overtly political poet than aesthete Stevens ever was, he has clearly learned from *Harmonium* the value of that cadence that is as playful as it is serious, as breezy as it is grave. Donnelly's title poem cogs its structure directly from Stevens's 'Sea Surface Full of Clouds': the lush meandering tercets; the many sections, each with variations of the same first line. Donnelly's volute dandyish titles seem intentionally familiar in structure: 'The Malady that Took the Place of Thinking' is surely Stevens's 'Poem that Took the Place of a Mountain' recast for our age.

Since 'malady' is one of Stevens's key words, you could say that the poem is as much a rumination on poetic influence as it is a satire of political apathy. In particular, Donnelly shares the epicurean delectation that Steven's work seems to enjoy in its own terms of suffering. Take the concluding stanzas of 'Partial Inventory of Airborne Debris'. Though prompted by the horrific images from Abu Ghraib and civilian connivance in torture, its concluding stanzas seem knowingly to take their cue from the final line of Stevens's 'Banal Sojourn': 'One has a malady, here, a malady. One feels a malady.' What we get from Donnelly is a tongue-in-cheek amplification of the same riff:

...Actually I'm doing

much better now, maybe  
a little, what's the word,  
*soporose*, I guess, I think

maybe I just needed to  
work it through and now  
in its wake I feel a little

what was it again, a little  
*soporose*, that's right,  
that captures it in a way

no other word could ever  
even hope to, I suppose,  
I just feel *soporose*, so

*soporose* tonight, uniquely  
*soporose*. You think  
I should be concerned?

I can think of no other poet who would attempt, let alone pull off, such a comic turn on ground as dark as this. Is Donnelly having a sly *post factum* dig at Confessionalism, where the issue ultimately was never the news but the poet's own neurotic solipsistic processing of the news?

In a review-essay of Don Paterson's oeuvre, and referencing Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence*, Donnelly has spoken at length about the poet's 'knowledge of self as both replicable and replica'. Perhaps our 'malady', in an age of flarf and found texts and degree courses in 'Uncreative Writing', is the sampling that takes the place of writing. Donnelly replicates whole chunks from such diverse sources as the Report of the 9/11 Commission and the novels of Charles Maturin. 'Dream of the Arabian Hillbillies', for example, one of the



book's funniest poems, is composed of lines from Bin Laden's declaration of war on America and the theme song of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, 'The Ballad of Jed Clampitt'. But Donnelly has such a gift for constructing original and often startlingly beautiful work out of sampled sources that his poetry, for all its of-the-moment postmodern chic, echoes Eliot and Pound and what we might reasonably now term old-fashioned Modernism.

Every generation has a default poem and, truth is, most of us who call ourselves poets do little other than mooch around in the margins of the default poem of our moment. Like or loathe his work, it is impossible to accuse Timothy Donnelly of that. Only time will tell whether or not *The Cloud Corporation* is as important as it presently seems. Either way, there is no denying the scope of its project. If ever there is to be a reconciliation in the poetry wars, between the tradition and the *avant garde*, it will happen creatively rather than theoretically, in poems rather than in discussion of poems. It may be that it has already happened.

Conor O'Callaghan

**Matthew Clegg** *Lost Between Stations*, 30 pp and 40 minute CD, £6.50  
Longbarrow Press, 6 Tenby Close, Swindon, SN3 1LN

I liked handling this pamphlet. Taller than the norm, there's a physical elegance to the feel of it (although, as a reviewer, I wasn't too pleased by the affectation of no page numbers). Inside we have 25 pages of poetry, a long epigraph from Homer's *Odyssey*, and, on the final page, a useful note from the poet.

The poem itself can be read, perhaps, as seven separate poems, but it's really one long poem in seven fits or cantos. Clegg's note tells us we'll find parallels in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Homer, and these are pretty much evident, though the poem is not dependent on these echoes, and despite some rather erudite allusions, there's no requirement that the reader knows *Don Juan* or *The Leech Gatherer* in order to appreciate this narrative. I think this is one of the strengths of this work: it is readily approachable whatever background you bring to it. One can imagine the "ordinary" reader, unfamiliar with poetry, getting a fair amount of pleasure out of it, yet the literary geek will find his or her rewards, too.

The style helps. Clegg has aimed for something which, in his phrase digests "raw and non-literary experience whilst still employing the devices of literary presentation". He succeeds. The bulk of the poems strike one as fair representations of colloquial voice, tempered occasionally by a literary sophistication, without simply falling apart in conversational ad-hocery. He can achieve this by exerting very tight technical control over what he's doing, with an adeptness sometimes concealed by the apparent lightness of touch.

Yet there's a fair degree of variety in the poem, too, some of which might test our hypothetical ordinary reader, should he or she ever pick up *Lost Between Stations*. Clegg is very capable of compressing his meaning, and of running two or three senses together in a single phrase or image. He's not averse to the occasional pun, to allusion, or to self-referential commentary. I thought the lines which concludes *Fit the Fifth* brilliant in this respect, for example:

I made my way home  
Where my own Pen waited, slender and faithful.

"Pen" is, of course, Penelope awaiting her wanderer, the poet's pen and, I think, a pen of containment or restriction. Much of the debate in the poem comes from the tension between

stasis and change, between the odyssey (wandering around to end by “finding yourself”) and the stay-put, generalised to an account of identity and role, especially in relation to those one accidentally encounters, even in staying still. The security of home is limiting and defining. The risk of the wanderer is the loss of self in accommodating everyone else. Simply as an account of adolescent (self)discovery, the poem works very well in reporting the confusion that leads to emergent identity, but in grappling with issues of identity, conformity, finding a place (in the widest sense of "place") for the self, it goes well beyond reportage of remembered angst.

I think there are some moments in the poem where it's perhaps a little banal and others where it's maybe a tad self-conscious. But these don't really spoil it. At worst, the reader might feel that there's a small let-down into ordinariness, given that the poem as a whole is trying to make something more meaningful than the mundane events that gave rise to it. I guess we could see a parallel with *Ulysses*, in the attempt to replace one Everyman with a more contemporary one where the balance of the contemporary everyday and the literary reward don't always quite gel. And, as with Bloom, Clegg's protagonist never really leaves the confines of the familiar, even though that familiar can yield continual surprises. So the poems themselves represent this, simultaneously being (as in the last Fit) “10 by 10 cells” but at the same time discovering that such limits also hand back “my freedom, and my notebook”. For the poet, the limits of the ordinary world offer the same as any self-imposed limits of form, a means not of restriction but a means to expression, to release, to identity. Perhaps that identity only appears in “telling stories”, but stories may be true, or may be made up. Or, as here, they may be both.

NW

**Kate Ruse** *Corridors* 32 pp, £3.00  
original plus, 17 High Street, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 6BQ

There are two interesting projects in this chapbook, both of them worth pursuing, both of them illuminating, as a pair certainly justifying the cover price, but ultimately neither of them is entirely satisfying. The pamphlet is nicely presented (despite an odd shift of font on p. 5 and some issues of apparently random alignment between text and image) and the poems are certainly capable and very sympathetic to their subjects. Even so, the book as a whole seems a little uncertain and perhaps even a touch disjointed in its purpose.

On the one hand we have two sections, each consisting of a series of poems on an interesting artist. The first, on the dancer Nijinsky, is essentially a birth to death verse biography. The second, on Kafka, chooses a narrow period of his life focusing on his conflicting feelings around love and marriage (although, interestingly enough, sex does not seem especially relevant). There could be several parallels between these two contemporaries, their madnesses, their conflicts, their anxieties over failed relationships, but such parallels do not seem to interest Ruse. Yet the poems keep rubbing against similar phrasing and images, as if the reader is perhaps supposed to note such parallels in the imagined versions of their lives. If so, they're too obscure for me. Instead I found the repeated images, such as “powdered snow”, “down below” the surface, “corridors” of mental activity, “feathered seeds” of thoughts and words rather seemed to suggest slight failures of imagination, as if the poet found only limited perceptions of the subjects rather than enriching relationships between the two artists.

That's not to say there aren't some great ideas and great images here. Clearly Ruse has assimilated the lives of her subjects and understands them as closely as a biographer might. For example, the idea of Kafka's concern with his thinness of body and self-image,

compelling him to eat in order to be like Buddha and fatten his spiritual profile, is marvellously conceived. Or the use of spacing within lines to create rhythm in the Nijinsky poems mimicking both dance and madness is often particularly well done.

But I don't think the poet quite knows what she intends with the poems, leading to some rather uncertain moments. For example, the musical drive of rhythm in 'Loves' is suddenly defeated by a very prosaic pair of lines:

The snow creaks      birds screech  
far off voices of skiers  
skim    like smooth stones over water

He walks through villages closed after winter.  
At Campfer he avoids the war bulletins  
posted outside the telegraph office.

(Loves)

This seems to me endemic to the volume: a conflict between the lyrical phrasing and insightful images, but descends also to shore these up with prose biographical detail. This leads to poems where the poet writes from jarring perspectives: in one line inside the poet's head, then outside, then offering independent images that stand alone to be interpreted, then providing a commentary to explain how the reader should feel about it. The last poem in the volume is a good example of this shifting perspective:

The wind and field mice scurry through disturbed channels.  
The murmurous silence that rocked him in the past  
now shrieks shrill and hideous in his head.....

With half a mind to leave he flexes his body  
as if to test the younger man inside him.

(A State of Danger)

That wonderfully ambiguous "with half a mind to leave" would surely work much better if the poet didn't feel compelled to give us a perspective to adopt on it (with the "as if" clause) and do we really need to be told that the "disturbed channels" are to equivalent to what is "in his head"?

It seems that Ruse herself is not secure in her approach, as the poems are bolstered in several ways, as if they might not stand effectively on their own. There are prose biographies of Nijinsky and Kafka, but almost every poem additionally has an epigraph which also provides biographical context, often repeating what's in the prose account, and occasionally offering what are really quite trivial notes, such as the epigraph to 'Loves': "Nijinsky liked to take walks in the countryside around St Moritz" which precedes the quotation above, in which "He walks through villages". Then there are also visual illustrations which, though each is nicely done, are not all particular enhancements of the poems, but merely reinforcements of a particular motif within the poem, so stand more as incidental decoration than developing what the poem offers.

Undoubtedly I now know more about Nijinsky and Kafka than I did, and Ruse has offered some plausible imaginative insights into these intriguing artists. The poems are sometimes adventurous, often insightful, contain some great moments, but ultimately I found them too

often unsatisfying. Ruse is a poet who seems on her way to somewhere exciting, but I'm not sure she has arrived there yet.

NW

### **The Turing Test for Poetry**

Alan Turing famously proposed in 1950 that if you held a conversation with an unknown persona, perhaps one concealed in another room, and were unable to tell if that persona was truly a human being or computer, then any such computer is 'intelligent'. Or at least, as intelligent as an everyday conversationalist: a machine that can successfully imitate the conversational game.

In the 80s, the early days of microcomputing, I was interested in this notion of machine intelligence and wrote several computer programs designed to replicate properties of intelligence. Each was a subset of the conversational game: generating new ideas, solving problems, making decisions, creating stories and, indeed, writing poetry. All worked, up to a point, but none would be able to pass Turing's test without the aid of a human editor. All these programs essentially were manipulators of text and, like all such programs, all followed quite simple rules.

It worries me that some poets seem to work in a same way. Put them in Turing's room, ask them to write a few verses, and see if a reader can distinguish between them and those composed by computer. I feel that sometimes the difference would not be noticeable.

There are, of course, those poets who feel that if they've written fourteen lines of rhyming iambic pentameter then they necessarily have a sonnet. But it's not this particular group I'm anxious about here, it's those poets who learn a basket of technical tools and then appear to consider their frequent use sufficient to make poetry. We need such tools, of course. They're spanners that normally we can use to tweak and tune the engine of natural language into poetry. But the poets I'm irritated by are those who toss those tools into the works of normal language expecting the resulting grind of gears and screech of sparks necessarily to be a poem.

I'm not averse to technique. Nor to experiment. Nor to the exploration of new tools. But I don't think in themselves they're sufficient for a good poem.

We can, according to Chomsky (and who am I to argue?) generate an infinite number of original sentences using a very simple phrase structure grammar, that is, a grammar which produces phrases of proper "well-formed" structure. (This is, parenthetically, the kind of grammar that also defines most computer languages.) With such a grammar, and a dictionary to feed it, one can make previously unencountered sentences. For example, here's such a grammar:

Sentence = NP + VP

NP = (article or possessive pronoun) + (adjective) + noun + (PP)

VP = verb + (PP)

PP = prep + NP

Give it a normal dictionary, and it can produce interesting sentences such as "The penguin walked along a knife" and "I tiptoed through the steelyards of my dawning carpet". This simple grammar can create an infinite number of sentences and any sentence could be infinitely long.

Some poets seem to string words together a little like this. It creates semantic surprise. Others have discovered that, though novel, a grammatical sequence of unexpected words rarely produces poetry. They may therefore choose to use another rule the computer could apply: find a point of little meaningfulness and split the line there into two. This creates syntactic surprise:

I tiptoed through the  
steelyards of my dawn car  
pet.

Splitting a line on a preposition or article, or at a syllable boundary, are possible ways to do this. (Interestingly, such poets rarely split within a syllable. These units of sound seem to hold fundamental nubs of meaning).

Of course, more capable poets know that a poem, as a whole, can't simply be an accumulation of such fragments. So they might call on additional rules for 'coherence' or 'progression' to produce an overall movement through the poem. Here's an example of such a rule: "First, create a sentence in the first person. Then, follow this with an impersonal, contextual sentence. Finish with a sentence containing an abstract noun."

I tiptoed through the  
steelyards of my dawn car  
pet. Beyond, a  
hurricane gaped across  
stubbled flood. Emptiness  
rises, white as defeat.

Both Turing and the 80s lacked the internet. In a final enhancement of our poem, we can trawl the googleverse seeking some esoteric particulars to tie our poem to the real. Use a web-spider to trawl the web. Find one cultural reference for the title, preferably including a gerund. (It can be useful to have a default title subroutine which substitutes the name of a 30s jazz musician or obscure artistic movement in case of difficulty) and an exotic placename of unusual spelling to substitute for any noun phrase. Here's such a poem:

#### *Appreciating Metamodernism*

I tiptoed through the  
steelyards of my dawn car  
pet. Beyond, a  
hurricane gaped across  
Tenochtitlan. Emptiness  
rises, white as defeat.

This, I contend, a computer could write. It's not enough. Yet here at *Antiphon* we routinely turn down poems not too far from this. Experiment, fine. Make up rules and break them. All good practice. But such poems do not pass the Turing test for poetry. Where is the music? Where is the heart? Where is the conviction that another soul sits somewhere in its darkened room, desperate for its voice to be heard, recognised, known?

NW

## Act Three



## Twenty-seven

I obsess in strange burrowed ways,  
words springboard, collide—  
I hear *twenty-seven pages* and think:  
twenty-seven is also this cycle-day.  
I want it to slip and pass,  
I want it to forget itself  
as I have forgotten the life dominated  
by numbers, measuring of days.  
Months cease to be calendar pages  
but divided rotations, like a dishwasher,  
the rhythmic *chug-chug* in the night,  
the light above the sink the only one left on.  
The sun lowered hours ago, and days  
fight with days' chronology, my moon  
not howled at, merely sniffed, scorned  
or curious, earthbound mutation,  
shuttles cast about among the stars.

---

*Molly Sutton Kiefer*

## Watchman

Mossy shadows of a furtive sentry  
jump in the corners of our eyes.  
It takes a moment to make out his cape,  
see its wool slipping through gaps.

As if practiced, he sweeps at webs  
balls them into sticky gobs.  
His lantern glows through cracks.  
Not just wind crawls into the seams.

The ground is thick and heavy,  
moldering in peat, bursting smells  
of worm and dirt wherever he steps.  
The way here is how it's always been,

and when he sees our cheeks have dried,  
he'll drop his cape, turn and smile.

---

*Larry Jordan*



## Dogbelly's Visit to the Engineering Über-Glossary

Finally to embrace the language of engineers:  
routers with their resonant protocols,  
a signal that spins, branches, and sprawls,  
eventually demultiplexes in electro-smears.

I'm downshifting gears to cruise this pleasure dome  
of extended service platforms, crypto-worms  
in funky superframes, techno-terms  
I know pretty well from drunken fits. So I'm headin' home

with a designated router, with info  
tunnelin' and a network jitter without the bug.  
You bet I need to translate my nightingale jug-jug  
into systematic flowchart, and not this slow

savouring of broken honeytokens,  
their unspoken linguistic wham-O where I can dream  
of a First-In First-Out buffering scheme.  
Site-scope me, baby, curl me up in end-to-end encryptions.

O Jesus. I can hear the sound of their hybrid  
coaxial throb routed and rerouted, optimized  
for ultimate efficiency, and my eyes  
see nothing but cybernetic squid

on the screen. Node to node to node.  
A series of corroded frames.  
Hot swappables equaling the divine Names  
of the Atomic Arp. I can't see the road

for the traffic signs. Gimme some inter-  
face, some synchronous optical clocking,  
some walki-talkin' tall to keep me from cocking  
the trigger. Let me abandon the world to its digital splinter.

This is the way the world will end.  
Guaran-damn-teed. Six-bone, all alone,  
with nothing but the network drone.  
Not with a bang. Hell no. But with an acronym.

---

*Edward Schelb*

## Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

Adrenalin supported by caffeine,  
no doubt a benefice to rodeo  
clowns, helps in each attempt I make to save  
my day when it's been thrown off by some bull,  
e.g. a printer gone recalcitrant,  
our baby eleemosynary in  
his diapers, or activating supper  
out of motley snippets in the fridge.  
I'm superhuman in my casual  
banana-yellow polka-dotted tie  
of attitude. When she gets home, I'll have  
a kiss, a hug, a sweet lobotomy:  
the wrangler's medication that I crave.

---

Mark Blaeuer

## Museum in a War Zone

Here, this unreal world: where the excavated torso  
of Venus invites our gaze, where Christ  
is always being crucified, where a barefoot girl  
stands in a photograph, blankly pubescent.  
We walk through an echoing silence, knowing  
that all things are possible while the dead still live,  
while the sky remains one color, while the limbs  
of a lacquered nude are poised in its dance.  
For a moment, we are a portrait. Then the lights  
must dim. The doors must be locked behind us.

Outside, it is winter. The possibility of sirens  
waits in the darkness as you walk  
past some nameless rubble, back to a place  
familiar from hunger and the smell of dust.  
In thirty years, an echoing museum  
will acquire the print of a white-boned corpse  
crushed by a beam, and quietly display it  
as an artifact of the century's foreign war.

---

*Rebekah Curry*

## A Moody Day

Late afternoon, a May day that keeps  
revising itself: sun in / out / in. Finally settle  
on a book. *A Few Days* (James Schuyler)—  
poo-poo-ed by at least  
one critic: *he's over-doing it*,  
the trope of the la-dee-dah:  
here is a flower in a vase, why not  
write an ode to it? Oh, and by-the-  
bye, I'm listening to Scriabin  
(where's the accent in *Scri-a-bin*, anyway?).

The sun pops and I pop out  
to a deck chair, open the lush  
green summer cover (thank you,  
Darragh Park). Jimmy does sing (he's on  
the right meds) to snowdrop and velvet rose  
and that rose of a girl who takes  
care of him (though it's assistant Tom  
he has a crush on, he admires Helena's  
youth), also, a small "MADE IN ITALY"  
notebook—*How it takes me back!*  
he sighs and I am taken  
to a soft, leather-bound unlined journal  
Mike gave me for my birthday—two years  
before his death. Five years now—seven

since that b-day (I still remember the black  
turtle neck he was wearing—so damn  
Aryan). Tightly bound pages  
that never worked out. I loved the bury-  
your-nose smell, though, and the story  
of trudging up a Tuscan hill, partner Mark  
in tow, to buy it. Too bad sweet Marcel,  
the papillon pup, chewed the wrap-around  
leather tie to a crispy point. It was an *objet d'art*  
and I let it be mouthed. I felt bad. Then Mike  
died. I felt worse. Now, Marcel's dead too.  
The day tastes different

---

*Priscilla Atkins*

## On Definitions

With all the ways time loops in the quantum foam, definitions slide away. Her mother could have said, *a life defined by sorrow*, but it might have been sparrows or tomorrow which is a problem when tomorrow loops around today; her physics teacher would have said *don't confuse your quantum world with your mechanical space—no one hoists anvils under an imaging machine*; though isn't that the point, there is "no one" on that infinitesimal scale, so we define life in the particle zoo: Quarks—up and down, bottom and strange; Leptons—neutrino, electron, muon and tau. Imagine the first instants of the universe, where light and gravity interact in long waves, when our metaphors turn upon themselves before they intersect in novel geometries.

---

*Carol Dorf*

## Act Four



## Hanged Man's Lullaby

The tinker sleeps while his dog keeps watch  
and his feet warm. They both growl quietly.  
A brazier flickers by the caravan door.

The tailor sleeps, slumped across his table,  
barricaded behind bolts of tweed,  
the lamp turned down low.

The soldier sleeps, still counting everything:  
rations, hits, days, seconds, his comrades.  
Sleeping, he counts his body parts.

The sailor and the rich man sleep in each other's arms,  
their pale legs sweatily intertwined. A pair of britches  
on the floor, money on the windowsill.

The poor man sleeps next to his wife, five children  
and his old dad. Hungry mouths open, they dream.  
Let's leave them undisturbed.

The beggar man sleeps on damp newsprint  
in a back alley. A scavenger fox approaches,  
sniffs, yawns, cocks a leg.

The thief does not sleep. He is dead, hanging  
from the gallows outside town. His face, turned  
as if in search, is hidden by angelic-golden curls.

A breeze plays lightly with him, then leaves.  
Overhead, a skein of geese flies by, telling jokes,  
laughing, singing an old nursery rhyme.

Only the thief, unsleeping, broken-necked  
at the end of the rough hemp, knows  
their raucous voices, recognises the song.

*Here comes a candle to light you to bed...*

---

*Jane Røken*

## King Alfred's Cakes

They cling beneath the dying ash, a troop  
of mourners shucked in black. Each year  
another cerecloth forms and serves to hide  
the primal spore. Paternal growth becomes  
entombed within itself; but when exhumed,  
the grey concentric feathered rings, once spewed  
of ink, rekindle long dead flames again  
and raze the ancient tree to ash.

---

*John Nash*



## Thinking about the Aftermath of a Bomb

The egg hurled in the dark  
explodes on the window, a blind firecracker.

Curtains open to a starburst  
clouded by sun. The fluids have set  
and resist the application of hot soapy water,  
their posthumous baptism.  
Some bits are hard to find—  
smears of albumen flung sideways,  
or yellow drops under the bar of the sash.

The empty milk bottle bounces  
once like a ghost  
off the kitchen tiles, and shatters.

Splinters of glass appear weeks later  
in places that have been swept and reswept.

The wine spilt across the table  
trickles down to the floor  
and forms a small black pool

whose shadow  
nothing will eradicate.

---

*Fiona Moore*

## When Kidnapping Becomes Socially Acceptable

There is a desert between us.

Wide wide uninhabitable stretches of land.

There is a tree. Snap off a branch and it becomes a divining rod. It will ponder the fact that it is amazing that we get to see each other naked when we are alone. And why when we are in public places this seems even more fantastic. In the next life we are both albatrosses. We will be efficient and have ritual dances and enjoy being together.

I've tied you to the tree and kept you alive by feeding you capers.

I read you bedtime stories with titles like *Five Ways to Conserve Electricity*.

I will take a photo of you tied to the tree to keep by my bed. The photo will be memorized until I am not sure if I am looking at myself or a stranger.

You never smile in photos but that is pedant fact. You are allowed anatomy charts for conducting lessons. Show me where the soul lives.

Occasionally I will untie you so we can drink instant coffee together.

Eventually I'll have to kill you. I'll use dynamite and iron-clad logic. You're as old as you'll ever be and so am I.

---

*Amanda Dales*

## Landscape with Artists

Trees, tree-shadows, thunder-flies and leaves.  
The artists at their *fête champêtre* vaunt  
their souls like pocket-handkerchiefs and laze  
and laugh beneath an unforgiving sun.

Sunlight like a searchlight hammers through  
the clouds. A poet dreams about the moon,  
as poets do, of stars that usher in  
the velvet night. A painter swoons before

a buttercup. We expected as much.  
They view the mountain-tops in cloudy air;  
they eat their figs; they drink their wine and beer.

The day swims blearily, half-etherized.  
They watch and wonder. Mutterings of thunder  
in the distance. We are not surprised.

---

*C. J. Allen*

## **In the pub**

The three of us discuss the danger of confusing  
continuous with categoric variables,

the folly of losing definition by inappropriate  
banding, the way a bell curve represents

reality—the majority inhabit the middle-ground,  
outsiders are few and far-flung—the mode,

the median, the mean being useful tools to distinguish  
the most common from the mid-value

and the average (to work this out just add up  
all  $n$  values and then divide by  $n$ ).

We remember formulae—Einstein's  $E=mc^2$ ,  
 $\frac{4}{3} \pi r^3$  for the volume of a sphere,

the solution for a quadratic equation, we recall div,  
curl and grad, quantum uncertainties,

reduce the inverse square law to keep your distance—  
especially from a radioactive source.

Between us, we know  $\pi$  to twenty decimal places,  
can extract knowledge from a heap of raw data,

can turn a pleat of words to a folded paper bird  
that glides on outstretched wings.

---

*Helen Overell*

### Contributors to Issue Three

**C. J. Allen**'s poetry has appeared in magazines & anthologies in the UK, USA, Ireland & elsewhere & has regularly been awarded prizes in numerous competitions. His most recent collections are: *A Strange Arrangement: New and Selected Poems* (Leafe Press, 2007), & *Lemonade* (a red ceilings press e-book, 2010 <http://issuu.com/theredceilings/docs/lemonade>). *Violets*—winner of the Templar Press Short Collection Competition—came out in November 2011, & *At the Oblivion Tea-Rooms* (Nine Arches Press) is published in May 2012.

**Priscilla Atkins** lives in the USA—Midwest, but in a past life shipped a small car to Hawaii and stayed ten years. Her studies have been at Smith College (Massachusetts), the University of Hawaii, and Spalding University (Kentucky). Her poems appear in *Poetry London*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Poetry*, and other journals and anthologies. The language on the *Antiphon* website, from both editors and poets, makes her heart leap. The fish skeleton gracing *Antiphon* issue one is to die for.

**Mark Blaeuer**'s poems and translations have been accepted by approximately five dozen journals over the past 35 years, including *Bone Orchard Poetry*, *The Centrifugal Eye*, *Lucid Rhythms*, *The Road Not Taken*, and *Victorian Violet Press and Journal*. He is also a man of society: the Arkansas Native Plant Society, the Garland County Historical Society, and the Society for American Baseball Research.

**David Callin** lives, if not quite at the back of beyond, certainly within hailing distance of it, on one of Britain's offshore islands. Dabbles in poetry when he can. Seems to spend most of his spare time in the garden, whether he likes it not, where he is trusted with a few menial tasks, but occasionally slips away to the pub. He has had poems in *Envoi*, *erbacce*, *The Journal*, *Iota*, *Other Poetry* and *Orbis*, and also online in *Snakeskin* and *Lucid Rhythms*.

**Seth Crook** taught philosophy at various universities before moving to the Hebrides. He does not like cod philosophy in poetry, though he does like cod, poetry and philosophy. He has poetry appearing in *Snakeskin*, *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Centrifugal Eye* and *Message in a Bottle*.

**Rebekah Curry** is a student at the University of Kansas, where she is majoring in Classics. Her work has previously appeared in *Inkscrawl* and in the anthology *Begin Again: 150 Kansas Poems* (Woodley Press, 2011).

**Amanda Dales** is currently a MA student at the Academy for Live and Performing Arts in London. Originally from Albuquerque, New Mexico she was Emory University's Aristine Mann Award winner for best poetry written by an undergraduate.

**Carol Dorf**'s poems have appeared in *Qarrtsiluni*, *Sin Fronteras*, *Spillway*, *The Beltway Quarterly*, *The Mom Egg*, *In Posse Review*, *Moirra*, *Feminist Studies*, *Heresies*, *Fringe*, *The Midway*, *Poemeleon*, *Runes*, and *13th Moon*. They have been anthologized in *Not a Muse*, *Boomer Girls*, and elsewhere. She is poetry editor of *Talking Writing*, and teaches mathematics at Berkeley High School.

**Claire Dyer** writes poetry and fiction and works part-time for an HR research forum in London. Her poetry has been widely published and, as a Brickwork Poet, she has performed conversations in poetry on set themes at venues around the UK. She has an MA in Victorian

Literature & Culture from The University of Reading and her website is [www.clairedyeronlyconnect.co.uk](http://www.clairedyeronlyconnect.co.uk)

**Brian Edwards** lives in Japan. Recent work has appeared in *Other Poetry*, *The Journal* and *Orbis*, and he is currently working on his first collection. He is an editor at After Literature.

**Harry Giles** has lived on four islands, each larger than the last. The latest used to run a fifth of the planet, badly. Now he writes (recently in *Magma*, *PANK*, *Drey*, &c.) & performs (theatre, poetry, workshops, &c.) & runs a live lit event series called Inky Fingers & tries to make people recycle & can be found at <http://harrygiles.wordpress.com>.

**Ben Johnson** lives in the New Forest, England. He has been hooked on poetry ever since he heard a brief fragment from a poem on Rob Roy by Sir Walter Scott in a film. After writing alone for several years the world progressed far enough for online poetry forums to spring up. His writing has benefited hugely from the honest feedback he has received from so many others.

**Larry Jordan**'s work has appeared or is scheduled to appear in *Straight Forward*, *Miller's Pond*, *Tifferet*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Antiphon* and *the Comstock Review*. He lives and writes in Lexington, South Carolina.

**Philip Kane** lives in Chatham, Kent with his partner and a large collection of swords. He is the author of several books, so far; his latest poetry collection, *Unauthorised Person*, is due to be published during the summer of 2012. He is also artistic director of the Rochester Literature Festival, a founding member of the London Surrealist Group, and founder of Wolfshead and Vixen Morris.

**Molly Sutton Kiefer**'s chapbook *The Recent History of Middle Sand Lake* won the 2010 Astounding Beauty Ruffian Press Poetry Award. Her work has appeared in *Harpur Palate*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Gulf Stream*, *Cold Mountain Review*, *Wicked Alice*, and *Permafrost*, among others. She serves as poetry editor to *Midway Journal* and curates *Balancing the Tide: Motherhood and the Arts | An Interview Project*. She currently lives in Red Wing with her husband and daughter, where she is at work on a manuscript on (in)fertility and finishing her MFA at the University of Minnesota. More can be found at [mollysuttonkiefer.com](http://mollysuttonkiefer.com)

**Fiona Moore** lives in Greenwich, London, and has had poems in various magazines, last year including *Poetry London* and *The Rialto*. She has a blog at <http://displacement-poetry.blogspot.com>. Pamphlet forthcoming from HappenStance.

**John Nash** finally settled down as a self-employed bookbinder and writer in Northampton, UK. His work has been, or is due to be, published in various online and print magazines including *Antiphon*, *Triggerfish*, *Cake* and *Ink, Sweat & Tears*.

**Roy Marshall** lives in Leicestershire. His poems have appeared in *The Rialto*, *Smiths Knoll* and other magazines. His debut pamphlet *Gopagilla* is published by Crystal Clear pamphlets.

**Matt Merritt** is a poet and wildlife journalist from Leicester, whose published collections include *Troy Town* (Arrowhead, 2008) and *hydrodaktulopsychicharmonica* (Nine Arches, 2010). He blogs at <http://polyobion.blogspot.co.uk>

**Conor O'Callaghan** teaches at Sheffield Hallam University. He has published three collections of poems. The most recent, *Fiction* (2005), was a PBS recommendation. A fourth collection will appear in 2013.

**Chris O'Carroll** is a writer and an actor. His poems have appeared in *Angle, 14 by 14, LightenUp Online, Literary Review, Measure*, and other print and online journals, as well as in the anthology *The Best of the Barefoot Muse*.

**Helen Overell** has had work published in magazines including *Scintilla, Staple, Other Poetry* and *Acumen* as well as online in *The Glasgow Review* and *Qarrtsiluni*. Her first collection *Inscapes & Horizons* was published by St Albert's Press in 2008. She belongs to The Mole Valley Poets and takes part in seminars and workshops at the Poetry School.

**Jane Røken** lives in Denmark, on the interface between hedgerows and barley fields. She is fond of old tractors, garden sheds, scarecrows and other stuff that, in the due course of time, will ripen into something else. Her writings have appeared in a number of online magazines.

**Marybeth Rua-Larsen** lives on the south coast of Massachusetts and teaches part-time at Bristol Community College. Her poems, essays, flash fiction and reviews have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Raintown Review, The Shit Creek Review, 14 magazine (UK), The Poetry Bus (Ireland), Verse Wisconsin* and *The Nervous Breakdown*. She is on the editorial team at *The Newport Review*, a book reviewer at *New York Quarterly* and was named winner in the Poetry category for the 2011 Over the Edge New Writer of the Year Competition in Galway, Ireland.

**Edward Schelb** is a poet and critic who currently lives in Washington, D.C.. Among his works is the Dogbelly sequence, a series of satirical poems from the perspective of a burnt-out rhythm guitarist from a retro Texas swing band. He originally performed the poems with the late musician Dennis Monroe, a legend on the Rochester music scene. Among numerous critical essays, Schelb has authored full-length studies of Robert Kelly and John Yau.

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