

# Welcome to Issue 10 of Antiphon

**Winter 2014**

This issue has everything from an Old English riddle to struggling with Google, photography and dishwashers, fireflies and walrus angels, all beautifully written.



**Issue 10, Winter 2014**

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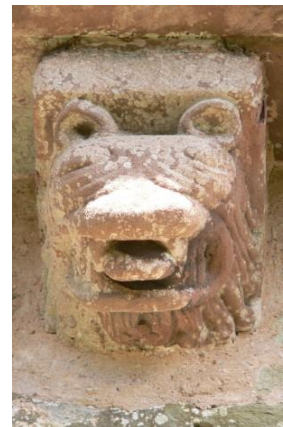
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## Issue 10 Editorial Note

Ten issues, several thousand submissions. When we began *Antiphon* we hoped we might act as a place where up and coming UK poets could spread their wings. I'm continually surprised how far across the world we reach in terms of readership and submissions. At a time when so many people seem to want to write poetry and yet small print magazines are folding, I'm more convinced than ever that the internet is the way forward. Most of the bigger names in UK poetry, for example, aren't well known in the US, and the opposite also applies. Yet here we are, poets based in the UK and US (and Denmark, and China, and Australia...) sitting beside each other and swapping magical language and insights into the human condition. We hope you enjoy issue 10.

Rosemary Badcoe

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Images in this issue are photographs of carvings on the Church of St Mary and St David, Kilpeck, Herefordshire, UK. They date from the 12th century.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_of\\_St\\_Mary\\_and\\_St\\_David,\\_Kilpeck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_St_Mary_and_St_David,_Kilpeck). Images copyright Rosemary Badcoe and Geoff Badcoe. Copyright of all poems remains with the author. No reproduction of any part of the magazine without permission.

Act One



## Tech Support from My House in Wyoming, 1999

There is always awkward small talk  
on the restart. I can hear Manhattan  
in his voice with its deadline urgency,  
the beep and chimes of his computer as he fails  
and reboots. Extensions load one by one  
and we chat as we wait for my reconfiguration  
to work or crash him out again.

He thinks my location is exotic  
and he asks me what I see out my window.  
I tell him there is a Common Night Hawk  
circling in front of Jim Mountain and he whistles.  
I ask the same. He snorts and tells me,  
*Nothing like you see. I'm in the city.*  
*Two pigeons. The North Tower.*

---

*Sara Clancy*

## Five passages between uncertain territories

1

The wind has got trapped in the chimney;  
its plaintive howls crash, slash and rumble  
all the way to the backbone and back again.  
Walrus angels ride their ancient motorbikes  
on the Wall of Death.

2

I burrow deep into heretic soil, lie quietly  
close to roots and corms, listen to the sounds  
of critters in the field, beasties by the roadside:  
their adventure songs of rescue, revelation,  
revival and sunrise.

3

Because you travel the undiscovered country,  
carrying the black flag, mallet and stake,  
I offer you heartware – I stay tuned in all right;  
but you know I don't trust you any farther  
than to the rim of the map.

4

I lost my little mittens and my hands are cold.  
All around, purple pearls and snailshells lie  
scattered like random pebbles; I pick them up  
gingerly, clovefully. I count them three times,  
then once more for luck.

5

Cloaked in furs and feathers I shall sojourn  
in abandoned observatories, hurdy-gurdy  
power stations, mills by mystic lakesides,  
stitching tales of hope and hardship, breaking  
every bone in the book.

---

*Jane Røken*

## Once in Illinois

Bring back the fireflies,  
the tiny carriers of torches.  
Bring back the crickets'  
constant chorus.  
Those insect courtiers,  
echoing our kisses.  
Blessed by and in those  
prairie grasses  
higher than high masses.  
Nothing then between us  
my bride of Illinois.

---

*Seth Crook*



## Riddle 8

*(after Riddle 50)*

As usual! You're noticed first –  
All flashy bling, those fancy rings and things.  
But, meanwhile, what of me? I'm just a mumbled  
Backcloth to your brightness, your brilliance.  
Showstealer! Yet, who showers them? Who shares  
Your world? Possibly you are unaware I even wake them?  
Having stormed your stage you just streak away.  
I have my grounds to grumble, but soon, I gift  
Cool clarity. I colour line the sky.

---

*Beth McDonough*

## Sound Scan

In the plastic sleeve of my passport  
amongst the scraps of journeys made –

barcodes for baggage, boarding card, a single  
toothpick – I carry a foggy print out, an image

ultra-sounded in my own dark spaces  
where a pulse scallops out a small sea of dots.

No whales here, their sonorous bulk  
descending in stately dives.

No smooth-skinned dolphins leaping waves  
and schooling fish in greater things –

no coral gardens grazed by wrass  
nor submarines sound-scaping the ocean bottom.

Only the fat ripeness of hope measured out  
in millimetres and fit to burst in the darkness.

---

*Tracey O'Rourke*

Act Two



## **With Me, Please**

Dance with me now in that silky jazz  
sway of kelp skin in the neap tide,

sing in the heron's lift  
over a squash patch of bees,

thumb my waist, buffalo drum  
bobbing with the dipper,

brush bones on the patina of cymbals,  
a flutter bronze of aspen.

Lift our capo pitch of thrill  
in sinews of our longing legs,

share moss echos  
from my brass bell's gong

slide to the bass in the worms' work  
song of soothsayers

glide last night's dream notes  
plotted in splatter of stars

as moon flutes charm the flesh  
lapped in fate's dark lake.

Our hum shuts the sun  
down on the Pacific rim

to tease the east's rising hymn  
of the chorus wash of gulls

and listen – a xylophone of waves  
on the sandbars of rib to rib,

cheek to cheek.  
Come.

---

*Tricia Knoll*

## Stepping into a Dress Made of Glass

*(from an exhibition of glass corsets and dresses by Diana Dias-Leao)*

These shaped petals of glass  
would clutch your breasts hard,  
their wires cut your skin,  
burn you in the heat.

Think of the chatter and chink  
of ice in winter, the wind's brass fingers  
piercing the gaps.

But those pale roses  
bordering its basque,  
that fringe of silver reeds of glass –

for these you would step in,  
and pull it tight, except

where once there were breasts  
there are now rough scars  
cross-hatching your chest

like the craquelure  
in ancient glass.

---

*Gill McEvoy*

## A Photographer's Glossary of Love

### *Aperture*

Aperture is the beginning. The opening through which you were lured into light. *Dare alla luce; dar a luz.* You were given to light and your pupils dilated to welcome it – blue orbs so long opened to darkness the length of which you won't see for a while.

### *Bokeh*

What do you see with those tyro eyes when you look at me? A blur? Bokeh? My face a quiet shadow before shifting points of light? There are many languages to learn, though they often interweave. This word is from the Japanese *boke* – the pleasing blur. Though it also means witless or confused. Many things can confound the mind, from sleeplessness to senility to love.

### *Cast*

You, on the beach at North Berwick. Sitting beneath the marram-bound dunes. Your sunhat casts you green. I won't correct it. With your streaming skin you look pelagic, and that is its own truth. We all come from water and water re-shapes everything. Next summer the dunes and the sand skimming down to the waves will be entirely new.

### *Dodging*

Those shadows by your feet seem all wrong for someone just learning gravity. I dodge away the weight to untether you. It's too soon to be subject to the laws of the physical world.

### *Exposure*

Exposure is evidence. That on this day, and in this place, we existed. For exactly the right amount of time the light entered my lens and fixed your presence.

### *Film*

I only know the you I perceive. I create you on film. But every medium has its limits. Is your half smile sadness or mirth?

### *Ghost Image*

Your birthday. Your face above the candles in tangerine light. My long exposure conjures two of you - one mesmerized by candlelight, the other watching. But it will only be this way much later, when self is someone you see, as well as inhabit.

### *High Contrast*

February, under platinum skies, your mood like the shifting weather. Clouds sculling in off the Atlantic, routed by sunlight. You live your life in high contrast. It's a quality much valued in art, though difficult to sustain in life.

### *Infinity*

You've clambered on top of a trig point, and the mountains unfold around us. My focus is sharp to the cragged horizon, but it's not infinity that enthralls me; it's you in the space between me and the edge. Behind it, earth rebounds to an infinity not inscribed on a focus ring.

### *JPEG*

I can duplicate you endlessly. Send you in bytes over continents. But it only happened once, that you ate that plum from the tree that no longer exists, and none of us owned.

### *Kelvin*

So much is counter-intuitive. Blue is hotter than red. Your face is as overcast as the sky, so I shift the white balance towards blue and retrieve your skin's warmth.

### *Lens*

A wide-angled lens is more deceptive than a zoom. You're on a hill above our city, and it spreads out behind you like autobiography. But the missing image is the one you see in front of you.

### *Macro*

I took a photograph of your wrist. Just at the point where the radius and ulna flare softly to cap the eight carpal bones that lie like bound pebbles. I was so close I could almost see them under your skin. So close you were my own skin.

### *Negative*

From your birth I'm newly aware of our death. In every picture I see the negative spaces. Having you is remembering what not having you was. Now, and not now, are both shapes. *Where did I come from? Where will I go?* Both questions rely on a grasp of now's opposite.

### *Over-exposure*

You're standing inside a Norman church. Above you light flares from a stained glass window – Virgin and child, and two kneeling saints. The brightness leaves you in shadow. Maybe the darkness is its own benediction. I won't try to light you – you'll emerge for yourself.

### *Print*

The child on the rocking horse is your father. Four decades later, the same shaped face, the same fall of hair, a central lock glancing your forehead. Of your grandfather there's an imaginary print. I could stack them together and trace the same lines.

### *Quartz Date*

12/11/2007 branded on the corner of an image of you by the sea. Hoisting a wet disc of slate as large as your head. But this stilled moment is too meagre. It doesn't hold the years you lived up to now, or what lay beyond. Each time I look I see a different version of you.

### *Resolution*

However high the resolution, the closer I look the less I see. Too near, and all I can discern is the pigment on the paper's grain. It's better to leave you the space that spans elbow to wrist, and recollect that this is where you used to lie.

### *Shutter Speed*

Sometimes I hold the shutter open the better to see you run, or fly. Your limbs and face blur but I defer for a moment the curtain clicking shut.

### *True Colour*

The colour is almost right, but not right. I can see this clearly when I look at your eyes, which look back at me in a colour which was never your own. We dream half the time in black and white; in all my dreams your eyes are always right.

### *Ultraviolet*

What do bees see when they look at you? A spectrum beyond anything I or the camera can grasp. The image of you is like my own in the mirror. But there are worlds of you I can't comprehend.

### *Viewfinder*

I chose you. Did you choose me? What I see through the viewfinder is offered, not possessed. Now you understand yourself as a subject, I rely on your generosity.

### *Watermark*

You bear my watermark, like it or not. My lesser self claims *this is mine*. You would do better to consider it a talisman. When I no longer hold you, it's the best I can give.

### *Xenon*

There is my subjectivity, and you in the lens. And then there are elements. Silver, nitrogen, hydrogen, iodine, phosphorus, sodium, chlorine. And xenon, filling your face with clear bright light. Most of them are us, except Xenos – strange and rare and yet here.

### *Yellow*

The prints of me as a child are long faded and yellow. Although entrusted with the arrest of time, they're as frail as our bodies and as fugitive as memory.



*Zoom*

I can think back to a time without you. Can you imagine those years? Can I imagine a time without me? For you to exist necessitates me, and all the way backwards. Can I conceive a time without us?

---

*Lindsay Shen*

## Sand Painting

I've locked the door against dust,  
but it blows underneath and arranges itself  
into the prophesy of a Navajo painting,  
the bezeled glass refracting caution  
on my newly stenciled slate.

I will sweep this divination into the night,  
offer it, like heated herbs, to the bobcat who leaves  
me feathers in return. An appeasement to the pall  
of my mudroom. I am sorry for that bird, her wasted twigs  
a dry gift to my housekeeping. So I tell her

that the floor in my father's room  
is so polished that he can't walk  
without risk. He is offered slippers  
to test his luck and a wheelchair  
when it forfeits.

---

*Sara Clancy*

## Displacement of Trees

Tap the glass: it's time to fell  
the acacia that's outgrown itself  
on the top bank, before it topples  
under snow or vagaries of gales.

I called the hospital first thing.  
Willow Ward, this week's jabberwocky  
for the geriatric wing.  
*No real change. Occasional oxygen.*

The chainsaw revs. Fully toothed, its blade  
snicker snicks the curvature of trunk  
until the xylem splits and gives up with a thud  
of cosy white-haired myth and sawdust spunk.

---

*Sue Kindon*

## Googling an Old Flame

Martha doesn't know how to work this thing  
that Byron gave her after Harold died,  
but her granddaughter Aimee does (that's Emily  
and Simon's daughter, Aimee with two e's)  
so she helps her. A quick tutorial,  
a list of words like *browser, firewall, web*,  
a little slot to put the letters in.

William. William Johnson. William B.  
A boy she knew at university.  
Just curious about his whereabouts,  
what happened to him, what his life became.

But what she's really after is a picture.  
She needs it for comparison, to weigh  
the mortal with the man who left one day,  
forgetting to mention that he'd never return,  
and didn't leave a number, didn't write.  
Just threw this cold, annihilating light  
on everything, then slowly disappeared.

The numbers come back astronomical.  
*A million Billy Johnsons in the world,*  
she thinks. *Of course. And not the half of it.*

And so she looks. Gets warmer, wanders off.  
At times, she's almost certain of his presence,  
but it won't surprise her if he isn't there.  
She's often wondered if he ever was.  
An apparition. A black magician. Thin air.

---

*Jim Burrows*

## Interval



**Hamish Whyte**, *Hannah, are you listening?*, HappenStance Press, 28pp, £4.00

Hamish Whyte has been publishing poetry and translations for four decades. In 2012, Shoestring Press published his second collection with them, *The Unswung Axe*, and in 2013, he was editor of the Birlinn anthology, *Scottish Cats*. Whyte founded Mariscat Press in 1982, with Kevin McCarra, and publishes work by Edwin Muir and AL Kennedy, among others. Given Whyte's output, and his commitment to poetry, I should have read something of his work before now, but his most recent publication, *Hannah, Are You Listening?* is my first encounter. The pamphlet works along an axis of short lyrical expression and anecdotal incident, pinned to the page with images:

Any scaffold's a dangerous  
construction.

These four men as they climb  
two storeys to the roof  
are so practised they hook  
us like circus performers.

They're so relaxed they can afford  
to be daft: one hangs over  
and swings his arm like a monkey;  
one leans nonchalantly rolling  
a cigarette.

(Scaffold)

I can see these circus men at their work; the view isn't short of clarity, and I can see how the ease of the lines is appealing. But for me, the amble into the images (any scaffold ... they are so practised, they are so relaxed) is loose and clutters the moment with exposition. It seems a shame because the speaker's presence is tangible behind the lines, and so the pamphlet comes close to something subtly effective. In the title poem, I can hear the words being spoken, but again, why so much exposition:

It was a long time ago  
and I was never on your radar  
as we say now. Why you were  
working in a library I'll never know

but it gave you, no-one's minion, plenty of scope  
for saying yes and no  
in the wrong places. I hope  
you've still that sass and gall  
I admired so much. After all  
these years, remembering  
your happy thrawnness, I just want to tell you,  
long after you'd left, I did it too:

said no—to some mind-numbing  
interminable catalogue-checking.

"Your happy thrawnness" is lovely for its own teasing "sass", and I love this idea of a relationship existing on such a "tiny chime", the will to connect being so strong and inexplicable. But the structural commentary surrounding it could be working much harder.

At the other extreme, "Before" is quoted here in full:

before  
was when

was where  
was how  
was who  
why was  
after  
what's the  
puzzle

Recurring themes of love, family and memories build a voice of maturity; there's a wealth of life experience underneath these poems that spans from grandchildren to great-grandparents. "Debt" handles time with skill, slipping between generations. It opens, "The grandfathers are the ones to thank, / they're the ones who escaped hunger". In the second stanza, the poem shifts from grandfathers, to "My great-grandfather Berry", and a photograph of Berry's children, "all immaculately turned out, heads up, / looking out at their future. / One of them is my mother's father." That "looking out" links the speaker with the image, reversing the gaze so that the viewer becomes the viewed. The generic grandfathers and grandmothers in the first stanza are doing a good job, working as images grounded in consensus, but why have the phrasing be as unsurprising as what they do: "grandmothers ... / making do and mending", rather than playing with idiom, is only partially brought back from cliché in the next line, "socks, manners, grammar."

The poems looking back are felt without being sentimental, and there's much humour here, too. There are great lines lost in the noise, interesting experiences not pushed on the page, but strong images, and a real, likeable voice running through the pamphlet that's sent me scouting round for Whyte's back-catalogue.

Angelina Ayers

**Tom Duddy**, *The Years*, HappenStance, 80pp, £12 hb

This book was not sent to me for review. Helena (Nell) Nelson, who is HappenStance Press, sent me a copy as a gift. She sent it not because I'm a mendicant poet who'll take whatever's on offer, nor because she is swayed by the smarm of my many letters trying to persuade her to publish my work (she sees through them straight away). No, she sent it because she is proud of this book, because she thinks it's something a reader like me might particularly value.

She was right.

I think, if she weren't running a business which depended on selling books like this, she'd give it to you, too. It's the sort of book you want people to own. Not to enjoy, as such – that's not quite the right word. But to absorb, to believe in, to read in moments of quiet contemplation, to appreciate not merely the words, but the man within them.

Physically it is a beautiful book. I've seen a couple of gorgeous hardbacks recently from Longbarrow, and they were objects I lusted after (my desires are simple ones). But this is even more desirable – a book I simply like to carry around, to hold, not necessarily to read,

merely to have in my hand. This careful and restrained design honours the work within and is a pleasure to own. Thanks, Nell.

Now, I'm aware I'm taking a reverential tone here and reviewers should be stern, frowning, sceptical. I can't take that line with this book. It's a book that may not be to everyone's taste, but it fits mine perfectly. Some might call elements of it prosaic, some might find various line breaks odd, some may feel it is too simple, or too personal, too restrained, too undemonstrative, too descriptive. All these adjectives apply, it's true – but they're inappropriately shoved here against the adverb "too".

Let's take the structural thing first, the idea that parts of some poems are a little prosaic. Many are constructed as a sequence of storytelling sentences. But they are given gentle cadence and movement. They're more than mere prose. This happens mainly through that kind of line break which tilts the sentence into the next line. It could be done badly, where sense is merely cut at unexpected moments to create an artificial tension or an unexpected shift. Maybe Duddy does that occasionally, but I can't spot an example of it. Instead his breaks seem carefully judged to move the poem along fluidly, convincingly. They feel like a conversation in the head, a series of observations, views, self-reports, reflections. It's done with care and delicacy, yielding poems which, though they rarely employ any vocabulary beyond the everyday, seem somehow lucent, contemplative.

The next charge that might be levelled against these poems is that they are "merely" personal. *The Years* are the years of Duddy's own life which was perhaps not an exceptional life. This collection is posthumous, though, which overlays it with inescapable poignancy. It's impossible to say how resonant they might be without that knowledge, but with it, they are strongly evocative.

Poems early in the volume focus on his childhood. Later poems contemplate illness, his coming death and, briefly, its aftermath. So we have reflections on the past, nostalgic reporting of familiar encounters and events, often subjects and viewpoints which are quotidian. Readers of poetry are used, of course, to nostalgia, loss, aging, decline as themes and may even feel jaded by such topics. But Duddy's talent is to distil the essence from an event in his quiet reporting, and make it vibrate with a silent echo, like the aftersound of a struck bell.

Consider this complete poem, "Elsewhere":

The places we tramped, over and over

*the street past the barns*

*the soft-tarred road*

*the earthen lane*

our minds going wild with the thought  
of elsewhere, are themselves now



a lost world, impossible  
to visit again, except  
in troubled sleep.

The subject is very familiar – looking back to that time when we looked excitedly forward. The language could hardly be simpler. But look at how it is used. No person is specified, no place or time – yet childhood is instantly evoked. Those three italicised lines effectively say the same thing three times, but we don't notice that, until we reflect on it, so that threefold structure at once emphasises the single point (our many apparently different ways of travelling) and sets up resonance by doing so: in fact, though they appear different, they're the same. All roads lead the same way. We all follow the same path, whatever road we seem to be on; we go over the same ground, with the same destination.

At the same time words like “tramped”, “barns”, “earthen” evoke a pastoral nostalgia, consonant with many childhoods, confirmed with “the wild” (the childhood idyll of the wilderness). “Wild” also does double duty as “excited”, describing the child's prospect of the future, that other place, that unknown country. The progressive movement of that single sentence places us in the idyllic past, brings us forward to that past's future, tells us that the future sees that past has irrevocably gone, and with it every promise it offered. In sleep we may revisit it, hope to recover the idyll, but that hope necessarily will be troubled by its search for the lost elsewhere, together with its lost promise of the future elsewhere, both of them imagined lands. It is one perfect, complex thought rendered as simply as might be, with no gloss, no explanation, perhaps even no expectation of anything other than an unconscious evocation and recognition.

I'm afraid I could rhapsodise in such a way over at least half the poems in this book. Yet their deceiving simplicity means that they will be quickly and readily consumed by those not alert to them as “sentimental” or “merely descriptive”. In fact, Duddy does seem to me to err towards the simply descriptive at times, and might almost be conscious of that tendency himself, as he tends to bolster the more descriptive poems with adjectives to hold it down. The weakest poem in the volume, to my mind, is “The Glass Negative”, in which almost every noun is modified, and we have sentences like:

Deeply tanned, dressed  
in shades of white, these glazed ghosts  
on their ivory bench under a livid sky  
are far more promising ancestors  
than the gaunt, dark-suited exiles  
who stare from the family sepias.

Admittedly, he's attempting a difficult descriptive task here, characterising the black and whites of a negative on glass, but to do this he has to use “dark” three times, “white” three times and a spattering of adjectives to get his description across. Whilst it's vivid enough (another word used in the poem), it seems to me rather overdone especially given the benchmarks of restraint established in the best of this collection.

I found several of these poems, especially those towards the end of the collection, profoundly moving. Its pared language is that of gentle acceptance, of settling for the

ordinary, everyday world, of finding value in small things, of treasuring the gift of whatever comes and the bare comforts of whatever remains to be felt:

the fires of winter at which  
I shall sit again, eyes closed,  
back turned squarely to the world,  
mindful only of the waves  
of cold and blessed rain  
pulsing against the dark glass.

(Night Rain)

As such, he creates a meditative, shining poetry that reminds of oriental contemplation, every detail being transient, evoking the beauty consequent upon transience and so perhaps the essence of the lyric. Here is an ending, a simple observation of someone leaving a run-of-the-mill company meeting, its "Company":

The one who has gone first into the late evening  
is halfway to the iron stairway that goes down  
to the service-road beside which there grows  
a wild border of loosestrife and meadowsweet.

This is carefully crafted simplicity which echoes and reminds and resonates and sings, where the meaning of the poem is not the meaning of the poem, but something beneath, hinted at with a gesture, off-stage.

It's this further strand of meaning which makes the poems so powerful. They do not talk of death or loss. They do not unpick regret, failure or weakness. They do not catalogue fallibility, mourn the passage of time, scream at the frustrations of decline, catalogue the constrictions of age and illness. Yet these things glimmer around poem after poem, shivering in the white space around the text.

NW

**John Burnside**, *All One Breath*, Cape Poetry, 82pp, £10

This is a long review. I considered abbreviating it, but decided the book deserved all I could say of it, so forgive me if you need a comfort break halfway through.

I think this will win this year's T.S. Eliot prize. It's not been nominated yet, of course, and we've no idea what the competition will be, so I'm going out on a limb. But, just remember when the time comes, you heard it here first.

Why do I say this? Well, it's John Burnside, which makes for a good bet to start with. His *Black Cat Bone* won both the Forward and T.S. Eliot Prizes in 2011. But I think this a better collection.

Okay, I am sometimes given to enthusiasms, and perhaps this is one such. But I read it pretty much at one sitting and, whilst this is probably not the best way to read a poetry collection, I couldn't really stop reading it.

A better way, perhaps, would be one section at a time (there are four), although they should be read in close proximity, as themes and echoes cross them. For example, the first section, "Self Portrait as Funhouse Mirror", offers a maze of mirrors, both in concept and imagery. But mirrors arise in later poems, too. Similarly, the first set includes two "self portraits" whilst the fourth set, "Natural History", contains another, and also contrives to end with the quote which titles the book, itself given in the book's opening text, an epigraph from Ecclesiastes "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts.....yea, they have all one breath".

This is an extension of Donne's "no man is an island", the book carrying the thesis that all living things interconnect. So the integration of some of the imagery and ideas from one part of the book in other parts, the way that different poems "reflect" each other (mirrors suggesting that each identity seen in our own mirror is mirrored in the identities of others) and the way that the volume cycles round to its beginning, as a kind of *Finnegans Wake*, (which begins with the last part of the sentence whose beginning it ends with, to enact the cycle of history), create interconnections in the poems which mirror the interconnections of all living things.

That's not to say that individual poems cannot stand alone. No, pretty much every poem has its own backbone, its own power, and can be lifted from the volume without loss. One of my favourites is "Peregrines", which connects human predation with that of the birds: "Soon they will kill the birds that breed in the quarry...", encodes that human/animal greed through a simple message of social conscience, and ties our underlying desires, which lead us to destroy what we admire, as both desire and fear (perhaps even as fear of that desire) in the ambiguity of its ending:

while we stand and wait  
for the flicker of sky in our bones  
that is almost flight.

Apart from the absolute beauty of such lines, they are full of risk and ambiguity: how does sky "flicker"? how can sky be "in our bones"? why is that a sense of "almost flight"? is that the flight of fear, the swoop of the peregrine's kill, or the mere desire for freedom, the opened sky?

Burnside's exploration of selfhood also entails considering its dissolution. Self dissolves in belonging, to a partner, to a group. So in "First Signs of Aging" he considers his preference for "the moment's absence" over "the glimmer of the herd instinct", adopting the position of the outsider: "I know, the way a blind man knows the house / he lives in." As other poets have said, a special kind of sight is given the outsider, that of the "steps and echoes" unperceived by those who make and constitute the house he inhabits.

The self dissolves in death, too. Fear of death is, as one of the epigraphs claims, the one "universal constant", the destruction of the self. But if we manage to accept the tenuous self

as illusion, all done with mirrors, as a cipher constructed by desire, we dispense with fate and the fear of death for we fade at our edges into other life.

His intertwining of ideas and imagery does not have to be resolved – this is poetry not philosophy. Across the volume there are fascinating echoes and, given the many mirrors, reflections which we can note or not, miss or muse over. Some are small, such as the hint that the cradle nurtures pain, firstly with the stark image of the rib-cage of a dead coyote:

the viscera  
scraped from the crib of bone

(Instructions for a Sky Burial)

(I love here the elision that places “rib” within “crib”).

then as a nest, which is home, nurturing:

a crib  
of thorn and elder, ready for the first  
good snow

(Yawp)

to the recurrent motif of almost-song. Birds are silent in defeat “flag-white egrets in the trees / flailing....but silent” (the white flag of surrender, the haphazard movement of “flailing” encasing “failing”). Love is a half-remembered popsong, the word, like the song, inadequate to the emotion (“All You Need”). The naive poet in his youth desires the expressive glory of a pure and personal song, but finds that the best he can reach is an indistinct stirring, a half realisation like a bird, almost silent, under the eggshell of his skin:

the inference of matter

beating at my hand, more animal than faint  
unravel, come to life beneath the skin

and tapping, softly, for the first drawn breath,  
a muss of down, a beak, a nub of wing.

(Yawp)

In the final poem, we have the full song of “Choir”. Here is the act of belonging, where the song is social, where the singer is in harmony with everyone about him. Or, apparently so. In fact, this poet is miming his words, his voice having broken, so his social song is a pretence, a mutually maintained pact between himself and the choirmaster:

and all that time he kept  
my secret, each of us

pretending not to know the other knew.  
I mouthed the words

(Choir)

There's a clear irony here. The volume tells us, over and again, that we are all one breath, and the expression of it is in song, the choir. But the poet who can see this, like the blind man who knows his house differently from the rest of us, can only belong by pretending to belong. The book ends:

I never quite saw the point  
of the life to come: back then it seemed  
that, like as not, most everything runs on  
as choir: all one; the living and the dead:  
first catch, then canon; fugal; *all one breath*.

NW

Act Three



## Jagged

She's stubbed out her last cigarette, we marvel  
that she managed it;  
a sixty-a-day inveterate, a Marlboro-mad  
smoking stick who craved  
not only nicotine and the repertoire of motions,  
from hand to mouth and back  
again essential to devotions, but had augmented  
the habit to flatten flames  
that burnt within by applying lighted nub-ends  
to the stubbornness of skin;  
to steady flight and cushion fall, and obviate oblivion;  
to moderate the mercury  
that's untamed by Lithium. She caught me  
glancing at her arms for pale  
uneven patches, rolled her sleeves and turned  
the palms, her burns exchanged  
for slashes; the scars of broken beer glasses,  
scores of jewelled and jagged  
edges, brooches, blades and coloured plastics,  
crampons spiking every crevice.  
At the weekly self-harm classes they will sterilise  
the weapons with a sigh  
at further damage and an eye upon infections.  
She plays the role of maverick  
and declines the antiseptics for the thrill of fraying  
fabric and maintaining  
daring habits like the risk of sexual intercourse  
without the prophylactics.

---

*Ray Miller*

## Directions And Instructions And The General Principles Governing All Talking Machines

1.

It is difficult to describe in a few words  
and with a head milled like the edge of a shilling.

This is the primary necessity:  
to be placed in a proper relationship,  
the movement of which starts the mechanism.

The object of the mechanism  
is to revolve with regularity, to cause reproducing  
and to travel over the surface in a continuous and uniform line.

Do not press on too tightly.

2.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the machine must  
(like a clock) be wound up as often as is required.

Attachment is perhaps the most essential quality to be observed.  
It must be perfect, and supported at its edges  
in such a manner that one of its sides is exposed.

Near the extreme end there is an overhanging arm.  
If you lower the sharp point, it will destroy.  
The suitable distance is everything.

3.

There are many conditions and particulars  
to make or mar success. Don't be discouraged,  
the apparent difficulty can be readily handled  
and fixed in all respects.

The most acute of the senses immediately detects discord  
in all parts that are in movable contact with each other.  
Do not use force and never put oil on the parts that touch.

Sometimes it may be necessary to loosen,  
perhaps even get cracked or broken.  
To change (or vice versa) is a very simple operation.  
Fix your trumpet



and the machine will do the rest.

4.

Every system has a stud  
at the end of a small bar.

A stud has the property of sliding backwards and forwards  
so as to remove the knife edge.

There are differences in sizes and exact positions  
but broadly speaking, the principles are the same in all  
(though the cheaper types are supplied unshaved).

5.

Keep the machine clean.

If you find that it has become sticky or stiff in places  
get a new virgin mounted on the old cylinders (you can  
do this several times, the motors are strong enough).

The legs should always be stuck to the surface.

If any become loose, heat them.

They may be scratched, damaged, worn out  
or for some reason you may desire to part with them.

This may (and is likely to be) caused  
by the balance being too far out in front.

Apply a little care and judgement  
or use the small wrench provided.

6.

A moderate degree of tightness will occur  
and may last for some time  
but its cost is trifling.

Pay attention:

Never attempt to be careful  
or the thinnest possible.

Do not accept the risk of very light contact  
or breakage in transit.

Move with sudden impulse  
and very gentle pressure.

You can do no harm if you are careful of two things:

the delicate waves and a fine filmy light.

7.

It is not necessary to fully understand the whole  
before commencing.

No education is required or can be given,  
nothing but experience will teach the art  
of reproducing the reproducer.

Take up a portion of the slack.  
If there is a gate, close and secure it.  
Read carefully the *12 Directions To Be Borne In Mind*.  
Act upon them  
and start the machine.

---

*Dill Darling*

Note: The above is a found poem based on clauses extracted from: *Directions And Instructions For Thoroughly Understanding And Operating Edison's Phonographs, And The General Principles Governing All Talking Machines*. Edison-Bell Consolidated Phonograph Co Ltd, London.

## Selective Amnesia

I'm at my best on the morning commute  
when I remember you don't exist,  
tap the steering wheel  
to a house-beat bass,  
watch the grey morning haze  
lift off the city. It works well  
most ordinary week days.

Or maybe it's when I head home  
and remember *we* never existed,  
and that what I thought was you  
was only a character I'd seen in a movie,  
after two glasses of wine,  
when my clothes fell off  
and I was feeling friendly.

And that thing I'd heard you say  
was really just a bad dream  
mixed with the B-movie script  
and a few errors in judgement.

---

*Suzanne Jean Johanson*

## Memorial Bench

Wisteria frames the ground floor  
sickroom and your sinking into shadow.  
Lichen-limbed, I'm felled, for grief is hardwood.  
There will be no miracles.

Hewn and pinned, I'm fixed  
beneath the window, marking hollow hours.  
Beech frame ossified, I cleave to memory, weep sap.  
There will be no miracles,

except you summon rain, erode my fears,  
orchestrate the wind, a lullaby for callused ears.

---

*Jayne Stanton*

*At Carrowdore*

We can see the spire above the trees –  
Church of Ireland, proudly Anglican –  
but have to stop for local expertise.  
*Can ye drive up there? Ye surely can!*

There are no signs, and no encouragement,  
as though our errand's wholly frivolous,  
and this a place of pilgrimage that's meant  
for other and less worldly travellers,

so in this quiet place where, tightly wound,  
the champions of church and lodge relax  
and reach an understanding, underground,  
we walk the rows of sundry Mcs and Macs.

He's closer to the church than we expect,  
until we recollect his pedigree:  
though not exactly one of the elect,  
he can assert the ties of family.

Sprouting from the grave, a sickly fuchsia,  
touched too much by frost, a faded grey,  
braces itself for an inclement future.  
Cut it right back, prune it ruthlessly,

she says; it will grow back as good as new.  
We take a last look round before we go –  
the sloping paths, the customary yew –  
and picture it beneath a fall of snow.

---

*David Callin*

## **Evensong**

Dusk; the Atlantic wind rattles the black lattice  
of the trees. Beech leaves chase their brown-paper  
stalks and rise to describe a vortex, tussled

by the playful violence of unseen paws. Flux  
and vexation: there is no open road ahead,  
only corners, feints, frustrations yielding

to no clever strategy; all I have is baffled  
stubbornness, pushing, pushing, battered  
by the barging gusts of wet November air.

And somewhere out there, slowly lost to light  
I hear a shifting murmur, turning and changing –  
distant bells or calling voices, windblown,

falling scattered through the streets and squares  
like evening colours on broken water. In the sky  
a line of fire flares, then sinks beyond my sight.

---

*Joe Evans*

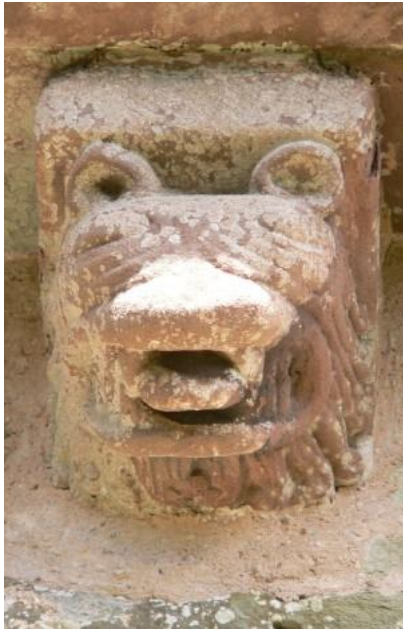
## Home Videos

Let's meet, but not at our campsite  
on the south shore. (Let's leave  
its best features as video.) And forget  
Albert's Diner. You'd want that place  
for yourself. That waitress who served raisin pie  
moved farther north, heard she's married.  
I once played sleuth, looked for proof  
to mean noise and rumours, but you  
framed your stories, not unlike the way  
you shot home videos, walking backwards,  
calculating frame-audio as thirty-second  
happy-clips. Always at the lake, starring me  
as the swimmer, birder, shell gatherer. So ordinary,  
except I admit now, I buffered my stories, too.  
On a muted screen, not much is contested.  
Even the gulls and dragonflies are placid.

---

*Louisa Howerow*

Act Four





## Emptying the Dishwasher

Put your finger on the mug,  
you know the one, the tiny chip  
you feel for in the rim.

Lift it by the handle.  
Allow yourself to stroke  
its slipperiness, sniff bleached lemon

as you set it down  
extreme left of the wooden shelf  
salvaged from the Paris flat.

Everything in its place:  
the rim, the chip; the rented room  
on the Place Sainte Opportune  
where someone else is washing up  
a matching pair of breakfast cups.

---

*Sue Kindon*

## Meleager's Log

After your birth I sent advertisements  
of your arrival, franked with bright red stamps  
bearing gold daffodils. "Year of the Tiger" –  
We roared into it, crossing through long labor:  
doubled blind Tigers bound with cords together  
and set free by a knife.

Sometimes I wish I were an Ox, sometimes  
I wish you were. One of us should be steady!  
One of us should cut less. We're rough on clothing,  
take meat neatly enough but afterward  
quite often use it to beat the walls bloody.  
You are perverse

In ways I can't get round, because they're my ways.  
At each parental crossroad you're a thorn-tree  
bearing exquisite fruit. I wear your stripes!  
And lay mine down on you, day after day,  
with sharp vocalized warnings and with swipes  
pleading, *no more,*

child, lithe child of mercy, whom I must  
have mercy for and from: when you're beyond me,  
safe from maternal teeth, alive God willing,  
when you're beyond me I'll stop worrying  
about the last bright stamps I keep locked up  
in inventory,

preserved from use like Meleager's log.  
A piece of your beginning, with a warning  
directed at myself: *you have some power  
to save or spill. Be wise.* Rank superstition,  
but I don't care. Tigers need admonition.

---

Catherine Rockwood

## The Black Water

is lapping at your cup and saucer.  
Do you really not see it? Ink sloshing  
against fine-rimmed china.

My eyes are on your kindness, on  
a vase of sweet peas in your alcove.  
Quiet standard lamp by pale-blue armchair,

casting its aura. But I can't not see  
the cold dark water. Can't not feel its oil  
seep up through my boyfriend's jumper.

You pass a plate of small pink cakes –  
even as the black sea licks bookshelves,  
light-shades. Even as I hoist my body

out of this chair – toppling delicate  
oval table – back away across worn  
grey carpet, grope for the door.

---

*Charlotte Gann*

## Autumn gardens

Imagine being planted someplace long enough  
that your roots grow back up through the earth,  
breaking the mossy surface like a fish's spine  
rises from a calm bronze lake.

Imagine walking in a chilled silence long enough  
that you can hear three black squirrels chewing,  
hear their hearts beat faster when the raven screams.

Imagine white-gowned women in a fern dell.  
Imagine they have gathered the light all of October,  
packed their ribs with it until they are walking birches.

Imagine small bridges over a dry stream.  
Imagine every leaf assembling there, red-gold current  
of autumn wind running under the ice-hearted stones.

Imagine walking there, the chill slipping itself  
into all your uncovered spaces. Imagine your coat,  
your scarf, your boots, all held above your skin  
by November's sleek and blandishing hands.

---

*Diane Tucker*

## Crossing Over

Even at eight, I walked alone.

Anywhere, for hours, but mostly across  
the blue breath of Lake Geneva,

where I paused at that kink in the bridge  
by l'île Rousseau to see the coots

bobbing like nuns and spreading out their toes.

I didn't know them by that name;  
this was before English, or French, when all words

other than my own were a smudge,  
a wrenching wrongness – though I coped

in the shops when I went in to buy  
plastic mice for the dolls' house,

or to choose pale pink lingerie  
for the time – remote, yet imminent –

when I'd be rich and married, crowned with lace.

---

*Annette Volging*

## Postscript

Although your furniture and clothes have gone,  
your words still hide throughout the house:

typewritten or in your fearless, spiky hand,  
lists of kings and queens, of planets and morse code –  
you were always astonished by what we didn't know –

and piles of half-full notebooks; we tear out the written pages  
but angled to the light, your ghost prints are still there.

In your office, the clean, sharp smell of ink and pencil shavings,  
and the typewriter in the corner, a toothy, open mouth,  
waits to swallow sentences and spit them on the page:

I sit, my fingers on the keys, wanting you to speak.

---

*Charlotte Eichler*

## Issue 10: Contributors

**Jim Burrows** lives in Cordell, Oklahoma. His poetry has appeared in *Measure*, *32 Poems*, *Angle*, *Passages North*, and other journals.

**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 *erbacce*, *The Journal*, *Iota*, *Other Poetry* and *Orbis*, and also online in *Snakeskin* and *Lucid Rhythms*.

**Sara Clancy** a Philadelphia transplant to the Desert Southwest. Her poems have appeared, or are forthcoming in *The Madison Review*, *The Smoking Poet*, *Verse Wisconsin*, *The Linnet's Wings*, *Burningword Literary Journal*, *Owen Wister Review*, *Pale Horse Review*, *VAYAVYA* and *Houseboat*, where she was a featured poet. She lives in Arizona with her husband, their dog and a 23 year old goldfish named Darryl.

**Seth Crook** taught philosophy at various universities before moving to the Hebrides. He does not like cod philosophy in poetry. But he likes cod, poetry and philosophy. His poems appear in recent editions of *The Rialto*, *Orbis*, *Magma*, *Gutter*, *The Journal*, *Poetry Bus*, *Streetcake*, *Far Off Places*, *Southlight*, *The SHOp*, *The Interpreters House* and elsewhere.

**Dill Darling** lives between London and the Cotswolds. Her poems have been widely published in various magazines and anthologies in the UK and North America, and one was nominated for the 2013 Forward Prize. She's currently working on a first pamphlet, and also paints and writes the odd song lyric.

**Charlotte Eichler** lives in West Yorkshire, edits books and works for the International Medieval Bibliography. She has an MA in Norse and Viking Studies from the University of Nottingham.

**Joe Evans** works in education, having previously been a stained glass artist, a company director, a gardener and a musician. His poetry has been published (or accepted for publication) by *The SHOp* (Ireland), *Lighthouse*, *Neon* and *Sarasvati* as well as various online collections. He is currently absorbed in writing a sequence of narrative poems set on a small island in 1278, a project which he now understands to be wildly over-ambitious. He is 44 and has two children.

**Charlotte Gann** is a freelance writer and editor based in Sussex, who also writes poetry. She's had work in *The Rialto*, *The North*, *Smiths Knoll* and *Magma*, among others, and her pamphlet, *The Long Woman* (Pighog Press) was shortlisted for the 2012 Michael Marks Award.

**Louisa Howerow's** latest poems appeared in *Arc Poetry Magazine* (Canada), *Antiphon* (UK), *Ayris* (USA) and *Rabbit Poetry* (Australia).

**Suzanne Jean Johanson** lives in a yellow house with a black roof, which if on fire, she'd grab her dappled porcelain pony, her green ceramic elephant and her white-rimmed, dye-cast 1951 Ford truck. She's been published in *Antiphon*.

**Sue Kindon's** poems have appeared in *The Interpreter's House*, *The North*, *The Journal*, *The French Literary Review*, *Popshot*, *Antiphon*, and *The Rialto*. She was awarded The Maryport Poetry Prize 2012 and Poets and Players Open Prize, Manchester 2013. She divides her time between The Pennines and The Pyrenees.

**Tricia Knoll** is a Portland, Oregon poet. Her poetry and haiku have appeared in many journals and a three anthologies. Her chapbook 'Urban Wild' is coming out from Finishing Line Press in May 2014.

**James Scannell McCormick** teaches college English in Rochester, Minnesota, a city that does a very convincing impression of the Coldest Place on the Continental United States.

**Beth McDonough** first trained in Silversmithing at Glasgow School of Art, and after many happy years teaching Art completed an M.litt in Writing Practice and Study at Dundee University. She finds poems in her family, and whilst foraging, and swimming in the North Sea.

**Gill McEvoy** Has two pamphlets from Happenstance Press: 2006, 2008 and two collections from Cinnamon Press "The Plucking Shed" (2010), and "Rise" (2013). She collaborates with singer Polly Bolton to produce 'sung and read' shows. A third pamphlet "Philomela" forthcoming from Happenstance Press, 2015. Gill is a Hawthornden Fellow.

**Ray Miller** is 60 years old. Can't swim, can't drive, won't fly.

**Tracey O'Rourke** lives and works in Mallorca with occasional forays to the north of England, Sheffield, her heart's home. Her work has been appeared in Ten Hallam Poets. She had a poem placed on the shortlist for the 2013 Montreal Poetry Prize, which will appear next year in the associated anthology.

**Catherine Rockwood** lives in Massachusetts, with her family.

**Jane Røken** lives in Denmark, on the interface between hedgerows and barley fields. She is fond of old tractors, garden sheds, scarecrows, and coloured lanterns. Her writings have appeared in several magazines, most recently *Snakeskin*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *International Times*, and *Star\*Line*.

**Lindsay Shen** is a China-based writer. In addition to her publications (mainly in the area of the arts) she is the author of the literary biography 'Knowledge is Pleasure: Florence Ayscough in Shanghai' (Hong Kong University Press, 2012) and has appeared at both the Hong Kong, and Shanghai International Literary Festivals. She was the editor of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society China, 2013 and 2010. Her fiction has recently appeared in *Eastlit* - a journal for Asia-based writers.

**Jayne Stanton** lives, works and writes in Leics, UK. Her poems have appeared or are



forthcoming in *Under the Radar*, *Staple*, *Hearing Voices*, *The Journal*, *Danse Macabre du Jour*, *Southword*, *Hinterland*, *Popshot* and others. Her debut pamphlet is forthcoming from Soundswrite Press in autumn 2014.

**Diane Tucker** Vancouver native Diane Tucker earned a B.F.A. from the University of B.C. in 1987. BC's Nightwood Editions published her first book of poems, *God on His Haunches*, in 1996. It was shortlisted for The League of Canadian Poets' 1997 Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. She has since published another book of poems, *Bright Scarves of Hours* (2007, Palimpsest Press) and a young adult novel, *His Sweet Favour* (Thistledown Press, 2009). Her poems have been published in Canada and abroad in more than sixty journals. Calgary's Fire Exit Theatre produced her first full-length play, *Here Breaks The Heart: the Loves of Christina Rossetti*, in 2013. *Bonsai Love*, her third book of poems, will appear from Harbour Publishing in April 2014. She lives in Burnaby, BC.

**Annette Volfing** is an academic teaching medieval German literature. Her poems have appeared in various magazines, including *The Interpreter's House*, *Magma*, *The North*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *Other Poetry*, *Smiths Knoll*, *Snakeskin*.