

‘192’

Issue 2

December 2020

Contents:

- 'Harpy' - Georgia Hilton
'Driving over the Snake Pass under a Shed with a Goldfish on my Lap' - Ruth Taaffe
'St Brigid's Day' - Trelawney
'We Few Deified We Few' - Sue Finch
'Cardboard Castles' - Claire Hughes
'Red Kite Reel' - Laurence Morris
'Serrano and Manchego' - Philip Miller
'How the Land became my Father' - Abigail Flint
'Your Girl Friday' - Alice Foo
'talking philosophy' - Michelle Penn
'Sea Strange' - Elizabeth Rimmer
'Out of Africa' - Annick Yerem
'Portal' - Sarah Wallis
'Autobiography' - Ben Morgan
'The Goldfinch' - Kitty Donnelly
'Disjointed Memories' - Hazel Urquhart
'Border' - Arun Jeetoo
'For Frederick C. Pratt and the Horses' - Mark Grainger
'The Nightwatchman' - Lynn Valentine
'Mrs Harper, three paces behind the yew tree' - Abi Loughmane
'Do Féinmharú' - Attracta Fahy
'A Painting' - Conor Kelly
'Maginot Line' - Gillian Craig
'The Boys of Summer' - Zoe Mitchell
'Grandmother's Winter' - Niall Oliver
'Lime Kiln Close' Harriett Truscott
Contributors

Harpy
Georgia Hilton

Her body might be
in a provincial town,
yet some part of her even now
is in the North Atlantic,
where she likes to imagine
the spirits of her ancestors
inhabit the sea foam.

The stone-coloured water
ripping through her cells,
reshapes them until she is
no longer a human woman
with a pouch on her belly
where her babies grew,

but instead a herring gull -
quizzical, fearsome, raucous -
plunging into the riptide
like a furious earthbound comet -
turning the cold black penny
of her eye upon the world
as if to say - 'what of it?'

Driving over the Snake Pass under a Shed with a Goldfish on my Lap Ruth Taaffe

These were the final items to repatriate
taken over the hills to my first home
-the cats had gone ahead two weeks before.
Young enough to still depend on parents
we knew the baggage that we did not take
could be left at their door and kept for us.
Tied to the roof rack like a tortoise shell
the shed, unconstructed, was just boards of wood.
I peered skyward as you drove, for any shift
in light foreshadowing some avalanche
of splinters. We kept the radio off,
tuned in to creaking and the steady slosh
of fish water that I was powerless to stop.
We had no idea how our life would be
rebuilt a thousand miles away or why fish,
when moved into some larger water, grow.

St Brigid's Day Trelawney

Bride, Bride, Come in; thy bed is ready
With a rush and a pushchair, *Brídeóg*
born forth by wrenboys, strawboys, bunting and
belief. They pray for health, walk sunwise round
the well; to deity or demagogue - split
milk for Imbolc. A day for divination.
You have found home, bridged the long division
where the heart-nut cracked, where the hearth-fire burns,
the warmth returns with this libation.

Get you to your arrival, my long lost
days begin. Too soon to spring, to sweep webs
and leave our union. This bed of snow-
drops, of maid's blood, hides the root-rot beneath borders.
For Bride's bloom may yet meet Beira's frost.
The darkest night's not over.

We Few Deified We Few Sue Finch

Wanting us to feast differently
I filled a basket with fiddlehead ferns
right to the brim for you:
ostrich fern, lady fern, bracken.
Tossing their bitterness
with garlic and rock salt.

*Look, I tell you, I have foraged
this taste for you.*

I let lemon zest fall on
those curled caterpillars
amongst the charred green-brown leaves.

We do not mention
that vague muddiness on our tongues.
We do not mention,
amongst the charred green-brown leaves,
those curled caterpillars.

I let lemon zest fall on
this taste for you.

Look, I tell you, I have foraged.

With garlic and rock salt
tossing their bitterness;
ostrich fern, lady fern, bracken.

Right to the brim for you
I filled a basket with fiddlehead ferns;
wanting us to feast differently.

Cardboard Castles

Claire Hughes

We build a castle from cardboard
and adorn it with cotton wool clouds,
plastic jewels and a tissue paper
rainbow. The drawbridge refuses
to lower and it sinks on one side, but it's yours,
your kingdom. Built with our fair hands,
it protects knights of the realm, houses
heroes and monsters and travels through
space and time. But one day the jewels
will fall, the rainbow will fade and I will see
your head emerge above the turrets and witness
the world they want you to see.

Red Kite Reel

Laurence Morris

What cresting the radiant final skyline
of a high and snowbound mountain
and the dancing of midwinter candlelight
hold in common is their dilation of time,
the woodsmoke and blue ridge moments
which proffer glimpses of eternity
while holding no true significance
for even the next footstep, let alone
the eventual denouement of the tale
for if time does fly

 on mountain ledge or table-top
then its passage is like that of a red kite,
all reeling twists against a pure blue sky
the dihedral wings and carrion eyes
of a grace which should know better

 although, in truth
the elegance is not in those wings at all
 but in the motion,
in the sail across the heavens
and the flow of action without thought
for it is only in such movement
that we might be freed from sin

Serrano and Manchego
Philip Miller

Your favourite café has closed down, I saw today,
passing by on the bus, the flashing windows white
with paint, the sale sign up, and inside the spray
of dust on tables where we sat and ate that time

when you said, smiling, there was little more
that could be done. Strange drugs, a new diet,
surgery maybe. It was the good of goodbye,
cast back always in ever forward time.

Taking my hand you said don't be sorry, be happy,
and your veins were blue and rich in that sunshine.
Every time something happens,
it happens for the last time.

How the Land became my father Abigail Flint

That midsummer I moulded myself
a father of mud and grass
and swallowed him clod by clod.

Down and down I swallowed him
pure peristalsis, instinctive and larval
he creep-crawled into my bones.

From footing to dream
he spread like a hot frost
till my voice became earth.

I asked trees how to slow
be bark-clad, root-bound, show me
the secret of imperceptible growth.

That longest day,
so much sun and light
I let settle in every cell

that when night finally fell
I blazed like a stubble fire.

Your Girl Friday

Alice Foo

You made sure your compliments were esoteric and they always smelt of peppermint. You resolved to crack me like a puzzle, taught me useful words like *hagiography*. You thought intimacy ‘morbid’, disliked ‘fetishised emotion’, didn’t own a television. You said, ‘Osculation is the act of kissing’, but

that’s less than half the story, just a graze, a sideswipe; you forgot to mention all the swilling, chewing over, spitting out. Everyone you ever introduced me to was unambiguously awful. You were often bored: once, at a voguish private view, you drained a glass of warm Champagne and, sweeping back my hair,

discreetly snapped my necklace with your little finger. Then, as fat faux pearls met polished floor in mortifying slo-mo, you – again discreetly – exited and climbed into a cab, alone. I retrieved your hat and jacket from the cloakroom and returned them to you early the next morning. You once spent a whole weekend

in my bed, fast asleep and fully dressed (except for unhitched braces), your arms crossed above your head as if I’d tied you up. You were jet lagged or reacting badly to some borrowed medication. As you slept I took your photograph – the only one of you I kept. When your sister had her baby

you declined to visit her in hospital, citing a phobia of nurses. ‘It’s the way they glide around without their feet touching the floor,’ you said. ‘I’m pretty sure that’s nuns,’ I said, but you just shuddered and went back to reading *The Spectator*. Why did I keep finding sand in all your trouser pockets, when we never once

held hands beside the ocean? To be absolutely clear, it was not my life’s ambition to be your amanuensis. For a start, I couldn’t write your thoughts down fast enough; furthermore, I’d no desire to see your inner workings. As they say, once you’ve been shown around backstage, it’s so much harder to enjoy the show.

talking philosophy
Michelle Penn

we were meant to discuss eternal return
but the fires were blazing again & the riots
& it all felt —
the sunshine a bit too bright & the last time
we said this has to be the last time
we're all in the same storm but not
in the same boat, not in the same ghost
things have to change, we say
& take to the streets yet again but
I've heard how sometimes
firefighters join the flames, how they
become so entranced, they burn

Sea Strange

Elizabeth Rimmer

between the salt water and the sea strand
the ground under your feet quivers wetly
and there are curls of wet sand sliding
into the dip of the ribbed shore.

Your heels and instep leave shallow indents
that smooth themselves level. You pick up
cockles full of wet sand, mussels scoured
to shining sharps of nacre, and the long
scribbled wrecks of razors, broken and empty.

The sky seems far away and empty.

The sea ripples, and says nothing.

Out of Africa

Annick Yerem

God knows I threw everything at you,
letters, feelings, my self-esteem,
the less you wanted me, the more
I was invested

My excuse is that I was 16
and had really bad role models,
so I thought this was what love
was supposed to be,
unreciprocated,
unbalanced,
unreal

Robert Redford washing
Meryl Streep's hair pushed me
over the edge,
so when after the film, we sat
on a cold, dirty bench in a
cold, dirty station and you
kissed me, I thought, this is it,
it's a done deal, off we go,
in and out of Africa, washing
each other's hair, surrounded
by lions and sunsets and tasteful
picnic tables

You broke up with me or so it felt,
after this one, groundbreaking date,
but when I see this movie, I still think
of you, how you called me years later,
telling me you kept all my letters, thanking
me for being brave and crazy

I was over it by then, living with a boy
who had two different- coloured eyes
like David Bowie, I was over your
outlandish lack of love for me,
but it was nice, nonetheless
and for a second there, I felt
your hand in my hair (still a thing)
and that long-anticipated, lingering
kiss

Portal
Sarah Wallis

Spinning joyful in bad weather
seven kids on a bright red and yellow
roundabout are drawing delirious

circles in the playground, they don't see
me march past, I've got to walk the eldritch
world yet, the black forest

sprawling the fat, field mushroom
flesh, all a jostle, all of a rustle, creeping
for cover, the dark forest floor, canopies open

where they umbrella themselves,
so fruitful, so many, so safety
in numbers, so, oh we're fine and plenty.

Drawn to the dance to watch the fly agarics
flounce a full toxic petticoat, like skaters, floating
double axels through air, while the ceps are sheer

delicacy, a pale bonnet cry on a young maid's
head, they describe a slow circle, form a fairy ring,
everyone holds their breath, waits to begin...

Autobiography Ben Morgan

I was quick-eyed, practical Lazarus,
wall-mender, roof-weaver,
rough-handed, delicate Lazarus,
friend to the order of things.

I kept my eyes to the earth,
the white stone - the moon-stone - of Bethany.
Not even the sea saw me passing,
soft-featured man of the morning,
up before anyone, like a good fisherman.

Once, there was Rachel with her hair in blossom,
the warm wet night of Simon's wedding,
when Bethany danced in the rain.
On her head, a crest of white roses,
a bow of stars that kept that dark wave from falling.

Light in the eyes, speechless prayers,
a temple to desecrate in secret.
We left the banquet to creep through the meadow,
scarring the flax and the daisies
with our feet like the rumour of war.

The Goldfinch

Kitty Donnelly

It died quietly on my palm,
externally unruffled -
its body just beyond
a living warmth. I fought the dual
tragedy & privilege of holding it,
unsure at first which bird it was
on the turn of becoming:
a jag of lemon lightening
across each wing, red-masked -
I recalled the Fabritius painting:
wall-fixed perch, chain clasped
like an iron rosary to a claw-foot
sore from the wings'
insistent rising, the expression
marked by an uptilt of the chin
like a child suppressing, with pride,
their furious griefs.

Disjointed Memories

Hazel Urquhart

I can still remember the wallpaper
from the bathroom in our old house
back when I was eight or nine.
It was decorated with tropical fish,
angels, I think. Pretty to look at but annoying
because whoever hung the wallpaper
did not take care; the edges didn't match up
leaving severed bodies and floating fish-heads.
It's strange what you remember.

I can't recall what my face looked like.
There are no family photographs to remind me,
no catalogue of years leading up to puberty
only those disjointed fishes remain.
So much potential to be beautiful
only to be let down by careless hands
who couldn't be bothered to take their time
and do things right.

Border

Arun Jeetoo

Tiptoeing on the grey area the shallow end is my mother's
silken embrace d'Or aroma, Fusion jazz, kissing inches, sun-smiling chlorine waves
smack my face. Turning back means leaving the stones unturned and all its treasures. You
beckon to me from across the deep south chlorine waves kiss your neck, the deep end is
like swimming through the sky to fall or fly in each lane the clouds either
front stroke or back stroke your body is a strong rip current my feet off the
ground hauling me to you. Brain and heart play crossword. *1 Across (8) A
line which marks the limits of an area. 9 Down (12) Anxiety or fear of what is to come based
on your actions.* There is no going back in this new reality we created.

For Frederick C. Pratt and the horses
Mark Grainger

A portrait hangs in my mother's hall.
No bigger than a postcard.
It shows a young man in uniform
sitting straight-backed on a horse.

That's your great granddad, mum says,
he died before you were born.
He never talked about the war, mum says,
except to praise the horses.

How he let the reins drop,
how he let the horse take charge
to pick a path across the mud
to the front on narrow boards.

A feat no man could muster,
the boards too small, too wet.
How one misstep into the mud
would leave you stuck, and dead.

How the only way to stay alive
was to give your horse his head.
To trust him under shellfire.
To bet on his sure feet.

Great granddad lived, got married,
had children after the war,
and it's strange to think of now,
how we all owe our lives to the horse.

The Nightwatchman

Lynn Valentine

I worked night-shift as a child,
guided my sister back to bed.
I slept lightly, always on the job,
scared to sleep in case I missed her toy owl's
floor thump, the soft sigh of springs
as Diane raised herself like Lazarus,
rolled forward into the night, feet
feathering the floor. I watched her
blank stare fix upon the midnight window.
My whisper sliced the air,
Diane come back to me.

Some nights she'd head for the stairs,
nightdress trailing like angel's wings.
I'd guide her from her flight, lead her
past the sharp contours of the cabinet
that perched in the hall, corners
primed to catch a too-fast child
or those that did not care if cut.
Diane come back to your bed.

As an adult I slept soundly,
work over, sister in another town.
Too far away when others saved her
with a blue light's flash in the black.
There will be future nights
when she turns to the dark,
when sleep-walking will seem
like a good idea. I will my thoughts
southwards, tack my heart to her door.
Night-shift begins again,
sister I'm here.

Mrs Harper, three paces behind the yew tree
Abi Loughnane

Gloves smacked on / foam mat down / shins rested
Ah, yes, I remember Mrs Harper from last year's clean, Halloween I think
Soapy water / no peroxide / boar bristle brush
The kiddies were playing hide and seek by the Forbennets in the back-left corner
Clean water from the tap / re-position knees / rinse thoroughly
Mrs Forbennet is irritated by careless footsteps - I put a border up for her and her husband
next door too
Microfiber cloth / clockwise only / reduces streaks
Mrs Harper lies three paces behind the yew tree to watch the hawfinches eat the seeds
Cotton buds for excavation / reading glasses placed / S's are my favourite
Mr Harper dawdled to meet her, he called yews the Trees of Death
Gloves peeled off / palm over granite / scrape unseen debris
They've no kiddies, not by circumstance but by choice, plus it gets me out the armchair
Dry white cloth / nagging back / buff buff buff
I hope someone will do the same for my gravestone someday,
Not yet though,
Please not yet.

Do Féinmharú

Attracta Fahy

We could see your heart wasn't here
Watched your spirit fade, afraid for you
Knew it was only a matter of time

She knew its imminence
Spéirglan, harbinger, predicting future
Bán Fíonn Sí of sky

After we heard the news
I understood

Five days before your death
When a picture fell from the wall
I was afraid of what it foretold

I was afraid of what it foretold
When a picture fell from the wall
Five days before your death.

I understood
After we heard the news

Bán Fíonn Sí of sky,
Spéirglan, harbinger, foretelling future
She knew its imminence

Knew it was only a matter of time
Watched your spirit fade, afraid for you
We could see your heart wasn't here

*Do Féinmharú - Your suicide
Spéirglan - Sky light
Bán Fíonn Sí - Banshee

A Painting Conor Kelly

Caspar David Friedrich never painted
“The Bench of Desolation”. If he did
would I appear before the surging tide,
waves splashing past the low retaining wall
and sweeping up the concrete esplanade
to where my patent leather shoes, a daub
of brown with heels a smudge of black,
are seen below black trousers and a wooden bench,
a darker shade of weather-beaten brown,
and all beneath the horizontal line.

A horizontal canvas takes on paint.
The figure on the bench is one third up.
The rest is landscape, a panoramic view
of sea, of rocks, of clouds, of distant hills
and all obscured by early morning fog,
a scumbling of light blues and lighter greys.
A palette of dark blues depicts the sea
and in the upper clouds a hint of pink.
Although original, it’s painted like
“The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog.”

The tragedy of landscape dissipates
and I am sitting on a bench, alone,
facing the sea, the sky, the looming fog.
A ruckänfigur (your view is my back)
I’m facing what I face without a face.
A few light brushstrokes show my thinning hair.
A dark green smudge, bisected by the bench,
depicts the heavy morning coat I wear
while you and I are staring far beyond
the pleasant limits of the picturesque.

Caspar David Friedrich never painted
“The Bench of Desolation”. If he did...

Maginot Line
Gillian Craig

When insecurity makes me unsure
that I can make a stand as things unfold,
I build this wall to make me feel secure
Although I know it never seems to hold.
A Maginot line just to ease my mind
in times of conflict when the flags are raised.
It always seems I'm fighting from behind
entrenched objections to our warring ways.
A battle of attrition's how we fight:
determined not to lose an inch of ground.
But I know when I give you line of sight
that you don't hesitate to take me down.
Yet I restore this ineffective line
whose weakness you uncover every time.

The Boys of Summer Zoe Mitchell

For Edward 'Ted' Tedman

They weren't boys to me, then, but men.
It's only looking back I see what they really were –
and yet I still remember that time

as a perpetual summer and those boys, drinking
in pub gardens, talking about bands I'd never
heard of, playing their guitars. Home town

rock stars, that's what they were – and I was in awe
of their confidence, the music inside them.
Standing in dark pubs with sticky floors, long nights

and exhausting mornings. Heartbreak, too, how quickly
the thin veneer tarnished under salt water.
When I moved on, I filed only the shining moments.

For example, I remember every word he said
against a backdrop of fireworks, the sea air cooling
my sunburnt skin, a band in the distance playing

one last song. Even though most days I know better,
there's a part of me that still wants to believe he meant it.
I know I believed it then, for a while at least.

Those rock stars became middle aged men
while I wasn't looking and it's a shock to see their hair
thinning, their own children not that far from the time

we had together. I thought that was the worst of it;
the heavy tread of the real world, diminished wonder.
It's sobering to discover that their fire

was nothing but a last burst of colour and light
before they settled into grey days and the cowardice
of mortgages and career plans, of toeing the line.

One of those boys died today. Him. His final age
is as much a shock as his absence from the earth.
I will keep him in the same place as all those boys,

before the quiet autumn of their suburban lives, as if
time never caught us and never could because I know
even lost souls could be found in such a summer.

Grandmother's Winter

Niall Oliver

As if searching for a key in the dark
she fumbles around in her mind
for my name, but like chimney smoke
it has slipped away again. Instead,
from a pocket of her winter coat
she pulls out two lumps of coal,

strays gathered on the stroll home
past the fuel yard. I say nothing
as she places them carefully among
the embers of the fire, and watch
as she blows black dust from her fingers
before hitching up her skirt hem,
just enough to warm the backs of her legs.

I see no point in reminding her again
that the old cast iron fireplace is now
an electric faux coal & flame effect,
but instead allow her the moment
to savour. And then like a door snib
that's just been released, she snaps,

“For Christ's sake Niall, don't just sit there,
go and fill the scuttle”.

Lime Kiln Close
Harriet Truscott

I live on the borderline of chalk
and clay, where chalk crumbles in the soil,
gives way beneath the spade.
The signs of chalk are this:
what's green becomes gold. A hot summer
holds no reservoir of rain. White roots
meet white chalk and fail.
It's seen in what doesn't grow;
in what, transplanted, fails;
in what plants, passed on by family,
die; what green gifts cannot be accepted.
At the very end of my road are cliffs
(occasionally I think I should head that way)
from the old chalk workings.
How can I be such a fool
as to ignore that bowl of flaking white
with all its sometime flowers?

Contributors:

Kitty Donnelly's first collection, *The Impact of Limited Time*, was published in 2020 by Indigo Dreams. She has had poetry published in journals including *Acumen*, *Mslexia*, *Quadrant* and the *New Welsh Review*. She won a Creative Future Award in 2019. She has recent been published as part of the 'Write Where We Are Now' pandemic poetry project for Manchester Writing School. She lives in Yorkshire where she's writing her second collection.

Attracta Fahy's background is Nursing/Social Care. She lives in Co.Galway, works as a Psychotherapist, and mother to three children. She completed her MA in Writing NUIG '17. She was October winner in *Irish Times*; *New Irish Writing* 2019, *Pushcart*, and *Best of Web* nominee, included in *Anthologies*, shortlisted for 2018 *Over The Edge* *New Writer of the year*, and longlisted in 2019. Shortlisted for *Allingham Poetry* competition both 2019&2020. She was a featured reader at the January OTE Open Reading in Galway City Library. *Fly on the Wall Poetry* published her debut chapbook collection *Dinner in the Fields*, in March'20.

Sue Finch lives with her wife in North Wales. Her first published poem appeared in *A New Manchester Alphabet* in 2015 whilst studying for her MA with Manchester Metropolitan University. Her work has also appeared in *The Interpreter's House*, *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Poetry Bus Magazine* and *One Hand Clapping*. Her debut collection, *'Magnifying Glass'*, was published in October 2020 with *Black Eyes Publishing UK* and she has been described as having a "fiercely original vision of the world". Twitter link: @soopoftheday

Abigail Flint is an archaeological researcher from Yorkshire. Her poems have appeared in *Popshot Quarterly*, *Consilience*, *About Larkin*, and *Route 57*. In 2019, her poem 'Coasting' was placed second in the *East Riding Festival of Words Poetry Competition*.

Alice Foo is a full time parent and lives on the outskirts of York. She has degrees in Theology & Religious Studies and Computer Science, neither of which have ever come in useful. She is good at cooking and bad at driving. With regards to poetry she sticks to one golden rule: always read more than you write. Her work has been commended in the *Poetry London Competition 2017* and the *York Literature Festival Competition 2019*.

Mark Grainger is from the south of England but now lives in Germany, where he writes, translates, and walks the dog with his fiancée. He recently won the *Austrian Cultural Forum London's translation prize* and was commended in the *Stephen Spender Prize 2020* for poetry in translation. His own poems have appeared in *Green Ink Poetry*, *The Minison Project*, *Daily Drunk Mag*, *Dream Journal*, and *Acid Bath Publishing's WAGE SLAVES* anthology. During the pandemic, he started sharing 'lockdown poetry' on Twitter @marktgrainger.

Georgia Hilton is a poet and fiction writer, originally from Ireland, now living in Winchester, England. She has a pamphlet 'I went up the lane quite cheerful', and a collection, 'Swing', both published by *Dempsey and Windle*. Her short fiction has appeared in *Lunate Fiction*, *Fictive Dream*, and the *Didcot Writers Anthology*. Georgia lives with her husband, three children, and various four-legged friends. She tweets sometimes at @GGeorgiahilton.

Claire Hughes is a Birmingham born writer now living in Staffordshire. She achieved her MA in Creative Writing from Lancaster University and has published in online magazines One Hand Clapping and Rainbow Poems as well as the anthologies Poetic Vision (Dream Well Publishing) and 'My teeth don't chew on shrapnel' (Oxford Brookes University).

Arun Jeetoo is a poet and educator from Enfield, North London. He is a wanderer and a compassionate soul, known for his dirty realism style, provocative imagery, and dark humour. His work appears in The London Reader and LUMIN Journal amongst numerous print and online magazines across the world. His poetry received second place in the John Hopkins Prize (2016) and was shortlisted for the Erbacce Prize (2020). His debut pamphlet I Want to Be the One You Think About at Night published from Waterloo Press is on sale right now. He tweets @G2poetry and Instagrams @g2poetry.

Conor Kelly is an Irish writer living in a rural area of West Clare in Ireland. He has had poems printed in Irish, British, American and Mexican magazines. He runs the twitter account @poemtoday which prints short poems, classic and contemporary, on a daily basis.

Abi Loughnane was born and raised in the New Forest and now resides in South London. She is currently studying writing with the London School of Journalism and is collating her first collection. She was first published at 11 years old in the book Hidden Treasures, an anthology of poetry to encourage young voices. She is influenced by the beat poets and her poem, I think I'm in love with Allen, has been published in The Honest Ulsterman. She has three poems due to be published in early 2021.

Philip Miller is a writer who lives in Edinburgh. He has published two novels, The Blue Horse (2015) and All The Galaxies (2017) and his poems have been published online and in print. He received a Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship in 2019 and has recently completed another novel. @philipjemiller

Zoe Mitchell is a widely-published poet whose work has been featured in a number of magazines including The Rialto, The London Magazine and The Moth. She graduated from the University of Chichester with an MA in Creative Writing and was awarded a Distinction and the Kate Betts Memorial Prize. She is currently studying for a PhD in Creative Writing at the University of Chichester, examining witches in women's poetry. In 2018, she was joint winner of the IndigoFirst Collection Competition and her first collection, Hag, is published by Indigo Dreams Publishing.

Ben Morgan is a writer and academic based in Oxford, UK, where he teaches English. His first poetry pamphlet, Medea in Corinth: Poems, Prayers, Letters, and a Curse, was published by Poetry Salzburg in 2018. It retold the famous myth through poems, spells and songs. He has since published poems at The Sunday Tribune, The High Window and One Hand Clapping, and has work forthcoming in Alchemy Spoon.

Laurence Morris is an Academic Librarian and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He is a keen mountaineer, with his poetry exploring connections between people and place. When

not away in the hills, he lives and works in the north of England. Related images: shorturl.at/mtDX4. Sporadic twitter: @ld_morris"

Niall M Oliver is an Irish writer who lives in Co. Derry with his wife and three sons. He has just released a pamphlet called 'My Boss', published by Hedgehog Poetry Press, and his poems have previously featured in The Honest Ulsterman, 192 Magazine, Fly On The Wall Press, Ink Sweat & Tears, Black Bough Poetry and others. He occasionally tweets, but mostly only about poetry and can be found at @NMOliverPoetry.

Michelle Penn's pamphlet, Self-portrait as a diviner, failing, won the 2018 Paper Swans Prize. Her work has appeared in journals worldwide, including The Rialto, Poetry Birmingham, Nimrod, B O D Y and Popshot. Michelle co-hosts innovative performance evenings in London as part of the collective, Corrupted Poetry, which recently guest-edited Finished Creatures, issue 4: Stranger. Michelle grew up in the US and lived in Paris for many years before moving to London in 2005. She works as a freelance interpretation consultant for museums around the world. michellepennwriter.com

Elizabeth Rimmer (@haggardherbs) is a poet, poetry editor for Red Squirrel Press and occasional translator. She has published three collections of poetry with Red Squirrel Press, Wherever We Live Now, in 2011, The Territory of Rain, in September 2015, and, Haggards (2018) She has also published a translation of the Anglo-Saxon Charm of Nine Herbs and is currently on her next collection, dealing with questions about place, memory and community, which is due out sometime in 2021. Her website is www.burnedthumb.com

Ruth Taaffe is from Manchester, England. She has lived across the Pennines in Sheffield, in the South of England and ventured further afield to live in Thailand, Australia and Singapore. She writes about the experience of living overseas, the idea of home and how the natural environment finds its way into our identity. As an English teacher Ruth has taught in the UK and in international schools for over twenty years. She has a Masters degree in Creative Writing from Lancaster University and her poems have been published in online journals and in print in the UK and internationally.

Trelawney is a food campaigner, environmentalist and new poet living in London, drawing on a past spent as an archaeologist, musician and Cornishman. This is his first published poem.

Harriet Truscott is a poet and writer based in the flat expanse of East Anglia. Some of her recent work can be found in Magma Poetry, Butcher's Dog, époque é-zine, and Reliquiae, amongst others. She's part of the King's Place Illicit Poets group and the Romsey Arts Collective, where she's collaborating with ceramic artist Abi Wills on a project exploring breakage. Harriet can be found talking poetry and food on Twitter @HMTruscott.

Hazel Urquhart is a poet/writer based in the highlands of Scotland. Her writing reflects everyday life, the importance of compassion towards others and ourselves, and mental health: subjects she believes should be discussed in an open and honest way. Hazel is a mature student in third year studying BA (Hons) Creative Writing. She has been published in [Northwords Now](#) , [Scottish](#)

[Book Trust's](#) 2019 Anthology, *The Blether*, and online with [Poetry in Public](#). Online link: [Twitter](#)

Lynn Valentine writes between dog walks on the Black Isle. She is being mentored by Cinnamon Press in 2020 after winning a place on their Pencil Mentoring scheme. She was one of five 'North' poets to be commissioned by the Scottish Poetry Library in 2020 as part of their Champions Project. Her work is widely published and has featured in publications such as *Northwords Now*, *The Blue Nib Atrium*, *Black Bough*, *Ink*, *Sweat & Tears*. You can find her on Twitter [@dizzylynn](#)

Sarah Wallis is a poet and playwright based in Scotland, having moved from Yorkshire last year. Poetry this year has appeared [@LunateFiction](#), [@SelcouthStation](#) [@CPQuarterly](#) and [@trampset](#). A chapbook, *Medusa Retold* is published with [@fly_press](#) - a long form narrative poem told from Medusa's point of view. *A Stage of One's Own*, a monologue, was streamed by Slackline Cyberstories during lockdown, first performed at Leeds Lit Fest 2019. You can find her [@wordweave](#) on twitter and her website is sarahwallis.net

Annick Yerem is a German/Scottish poet who lives and works in Berlin. In her dreams, she can swim like a manatee. Annick tweets [@missyerem](#) and has, to her utmost delight, been published by *Pendemic*, *Detritus*, [@publicpoetry](#), *RiverMouthReview*, [#PoetRhy](#), *Anti-Heroin-Chic*, *Rejection Letters* and *Dreich*. <https://linktr.ee/annickyerem> Her website is <https://missyerem.wordpress.com>. She is an avid lover of dogs, highland coos and cake.

Editors:

Colin Bancroft currently lives in exile in the North Pennines where he is finishing off a PhD on the Ecopoetics of Robert Frost whilst working as a project manager for a charity. His pamphlet 'Impermanence' is out in October with Maytree Press and he was the winner of the 2016 Poets' and Players' Competition.

Mary Ford Neal is a writer and academic based in Glasgow, UK. Her poetry is recently published or forthcoming in *Ink Sweat & Tears*, *perhappened*, *Dust Poetry Magazine*, *Capsule Stories*, *Twist in Time*, *The Winnow*, *Marble*, *IceFloe Press*, *Dodging the Rain*, *One Hand Clapping*, and *Crow and Cross Keys*. Pushcart nominated, 2020. Her debut collection will be published by Indigo Dreams Press in 2021. She tweets about poetry and other things [@maryfordneal](#).