

SOUTHLIGHT 27



**poetry, prose, interview
and illustration**

Spring/Summer 2020

Editorial

At the time of writing the country is "in lockdown" in an effort to counter the devastating effects of the Coronavirus, Covid 19, the greatest national crisis since World War Two. The virus presents the biggest threat to human lives most of us have ever seen and as the government attempts to steer us through this desperate time, many people are gripped with feelings of anxiety, grief, and anger at the number of deaths announced daily, especially the deaths of doctors, nurses, and care-workers, forced to work without adequate protection against the virus. Each of us owes these people, as well as supermarket staff, bin men, and many others keeping the world going for us, a huge debt of gratitude.

It will take a long time for the economy to recover. It will take a longer time for those who have lost friends and family they love to recover as they try to understand the bleak emptiness and anger of grief. The effects will resonate through our world for a long time.

In the face of this, the arts can sometimes seem trivial or impotent, but it is noticeable that while theatres, cinemas, art galleries are closed, many writers and artists are producing blogs, vlogs, podcasts, and special live screenings to keep themselves busy and to offer hope and solace to all who can respond. On a very basic level, a few minutes or a couple of hours online engaging with an artistic performance is a few minutes or a couple of hours free of the debilitating effects of anxiety or anger. On a deeper level, it helps us to see that the arts have a central importance in our lives. Good art helps us to engage more fully with the world we live in, with the people around us.

In a small way, Southlight hopes that the writers and artists in this issue might inspire us to use "lockdown" time to rethink our ways of engaging with the world, might encourage us to be more imaginative and creative in our relationships and in our lives. In a time of threat and darkness these writers and artists might awaken us to what E.M.Forster called the "tiny astonishments" that make up our lives.

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Four Poems by Jenny Hockey

The Weight of Sound

A dark mass of land
waiting,
an open door through a hedge.

How heavy the branches
hovering over the lake,
how tidy the line between black and green.

Water admits nothing —
reflects back
giant white-veined leaves.

Willows bend on the margins
no further
than their own reflection.

Green water so black
it makes room
for every green.

Two girls dance
down twelve wooden steps —
a lightness of butterflies.

A spider rides the yarrow,
lets itself down according to plan —
no weight or sound.

Outliers

They could be stone
quarried and removed,
left unused

or a constellation of sheep
gone fossil
as I slept in my bath.

Rain drags at their coats,
turning the green of their feed
to mud. It's easing slate from a roof —

sheep hold ground, see out
their day. I can't leave
my window.

Family Resemblances

Like clints and
grykes, your flesh —
your skull put to the test

by a falling branch
that bloodied your ash-grey hair,
split bone,

a nut-strong skull like Grancha's,
him on the roof
with a hammer, keeling over

and down the grooves,
righting himself in the yard
with a rub,

you sent chasing down the lane,
doctor, doctor —

now after years in my bed,
our sometimes synchronised meals,

your folded rock



Staircase in sunshine : Derek Ross

When air becomes sky

The half-lit day
you exchanged a city's growl

for air filtered through silk,
spritzed with the scent of decay,
the worm-hole of earth,

the day you discovered
a mutter of bulbs
pushing for sky

and wondered
where the sky begins and ends

whether it hankers for substance,
wreathes quietly among the branches,
sweeping down hollows, seeking
yesterday's debris of leaves
piled on the valley floor.

Does sky swarm joyfully
into your lungs, inflate
your alveoli, summon blood?

Your millions of alveoli
hanging like grapes.



Rockcliffe Heron : Davie Burns

Essay by David Mark Williams

Keeping It Short

The main purpose of this article is to clarify and distinguish certain forms of stories which come under the umbrella of very short fiction. A secondary aim, a hope really, is that for those of you who have not tried to write in this genre before that you will be encouraged to do so.

Extremely short fiction gained a vogue in 1920s popular magazines, particularly in the USA, and was usually referred to as short-short fiction. It can reasonably be argued, however, that the form goes back much further than that, to Greek fables for instance, parables in the New Testament and the 13 century tales of the Sufi “wise fool” Mulla Nasruddin.

The term flash fiction came into use in the 1990s and was usually applied to stories between 300 and 1000 words. But as stories began to emerge with even shorter word counts, the term micro fiction was conceived. Micro fiction, therefore, is to be understood as a sub set of flash fiction. Micro fiction is sometimes referred to as nano-fiction but the former is more commonly used.

Next we need to consider the various forms of micro fiction. These are usually defined by specific word count – but not in every case. Some are not so restrictive and may vary with only an upper limit being imposed.

At the absolute extreme micro end is the one most guaranteed to elicit a response of bemusement and disbelief: the one word story. It's a rarely used form in fact and much reliant on typographical flourishes reminiscent of concrete poetry of the last century. A leading exponent is the American minimalist writer, Richard Kostelanetz, who asserts: “I've tried to suggest within a single word a narrative incorporating a beginning, a middle and an end.” I think this might be stretching the idea of a narrative a bit too far, or should I say, less. Where the form works best is in the interplay between title and content, as in this example from J R Solonche, a miniaturist maestro:

In the Terminal

Interminable

(from *Won't Be Long*, Deerbrook Editions, 2016).

Compared to this example, the six word story is positively prolix. The best known example is by Ernest Hemingway (although I should point out that this attribution has been challenged in recent years – nevertheless, it is still the one that gets cited most often):

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

On the face of it this is nothing more than an advert but the implied tragedy is easily filled in by the imagination of the reader. Another celebrated six word story pulls the same trick. This time however there is no controversy about who wrote it:

Longed for him. Got him. Shit. (Margaret Atwood)

Two characters are identified here, the protagonist from whose viewpoint we see the “action” and a secondary character, the love interest. The narrative arc contains enough material to fuel a much longer work.

Other forms with fixed word counts are: the 100 word story, known as the drabble, and the 50 word story or the dribble. The latter is sometimes also known as a mini saga, a designation that

goes back to the early 1980s prior to the flash fiction era. Appropriately too for the digital age there is “twitterature” which is usually restricted to 280 characters.

Because of the sort of technical challenges inherent to these restricted forms it might be assumed that poets already possess the transferrable skills to write micro fiction. A word of caution here: micro fiction, as with all flash fiction, needs to be distinguished from prose poetry (which as the name suggests are poems written as prose and not in lines). The elements of character and plot, unlike prose poetry, are as essential to micro fiction as with fiction generally. For this reason too it is not enough to simply keep within a designated word count. Judges of micro fiction competitions frequently complain of entries that seem more like passages cut from longer works, and these obviously are unacceptable.

For those of you who have not tried writing micro or flash fiction before, there are a few techniques to bear in mind, which I paraphrase here from a short essay by a leading figure in the field, who specialises in stories around the 150 word mark, David Gaffney.

First of all make maximum use of the title. It can define the meaning or theme of your story and can also hint at hidden depths within. It also has the practical advantage of not being included in your word count.

You should also limit the number of characters in the story. You will though need at least two, even though the second character’s presence may only be implied, because this guarantees some form of interaction or conflict necessary for a narrative arc.

A third point is to begin in the middle of the story as you won’t have time for any build up, scene setting or character description. Take this opening sentence from David Gaffney’s collection, *Sawn-Off Tales*: “Jake invented a prescription glass windscreen for his car so that he could drive without wearing his corrective lenses.” (*All Mod Cons*) This nicely encapsulates the basic premise of the story, introduces the protagonist and tells you quite a bit about his personality.

Finally, try to avoid a denouement that requires a punch line or twist in the tail. If you’re not careful you’ll end up writing jokes or stories that hinge upon a clunky contrivance. The way to avoid this is to give your ending before the story ends. In David Gaffney’s *All Mod Cons*, the story ends with Jake’s girlfriend, Jennifer, getting annoyed with Jake when she suffers considerable discomfort from his prescription windscreen and Jake’s decision that he would not be ringing her again but these are not the last words in the story, which ends with a coda when the reader discovers Jake has not been badly affected by the outcome of the intended breakup.

However, the most beneficial approach, which is true for all genres, is to read as many types of flash fiction that you can find by successful and well-respected practitioners to learn by example and to find out what is possible within the genre.

To begin this quest, try the two leading print journals: *Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine*, based at the University of Chester; and *Vestal Review*, in Ohio, which proclaims itself “the longest running flash magazine in the world”.

There are also numerous publication outlets available, predominantly on line, as well as competitions. By far the best general website in the UK is nationalflashfictionday.co.uk which as the name suggests organises an annual event to mark flash fiction writing (this year scheduled for 6 June). They also publish an annual anthology featuring stories with an upper limit of 500 words and there is a micro fiction competition restricted to an upper limit of 100 words. What beginner flash fiction writers will find of particular value is an extensive archive collection of exemplar stories and guidelines from successful practitioners. Another excellent generalist website is flashfiction.net; here you’ll find numerous examples from one word to 1000 word stories which you can view for free.

The following websites publish stories with specific word counts: sixwordstories.net (there are some great examples of the genre on the home page alone); fiftywordstories.com (this is located in Canada. The editor, Tim Sevenhuysen, has a penchant for twist endings or heavily themed stories but there are more subtle examples to be found. A ten dollar prize is given each month for best story); 100 wordstory.org (this one is based in the USA and charges a two dollar submission fee).

Flash fiction has now become established as not only a recognised literary form but a well-respected one too. Therefore it should not be seen as merely a stepping post or stop gap to more ambitious work but as a genre with its own requirements of creativity and expertise. As Angela Readman, a prize winning flash fiction writer, boldly claims: "Flash is its own art form and it's amazing." There is certainly much to be gained both as a reader and a writer in engaging with this type of fiction in all its many forms.



Never stop dreaming : Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz

Six Poems by Robin Leiper

Obit

i. *In at the Death*

In 1967, things really started
to go wrong.

We hit peak fitba'.

Recall it fondly,

Scotland's zenith year:

The European Cup.

Euro-Cup-Winners Final.

Beating the World Champs,

aka The Auld Enemy.

Proud? We were the People.

The people who didn't notice

Third Lanark's sad demise.

But maybe The Warriors got out
when the going was good.

People didn't notice this
was the beginning of the end
of football - real football.

They began to call it soccer.

From now, they put 'Glasgow'
in front of the Old Firm's names,
like we didn't know.

A change of 'We'.

We got Globalised,

Incorporated,

And abolished.

ii. *Us*

We-the-people were up for it,
deluded in believing winning
- when that meant money -
would be everything.

So it was half a century
upon a downhill slide
to the Spectacular
where Sky TV's the limit.

We were the lucky Thirds.

Even the murder
was a local crime, domestic.

The Hi Hi going out upon a high
(if not for them...)

You don't agree?

You're welcome.

May as well

stop reading:

Here.

iii. *Cathkin*

Look out from the weed strewn terracing,
leaning as-of-old upon the dodgy crush-rail,
team-red paint flaking in your hand.

The green sward of the pitch stretched out,
needing a cut but the centre spot's still visible.

A stage is set, framed by a curtain of sycamores.

Proscenium? A window on the past? No - a screen:

From one side, chasing out to the spot, appears
a Black Labrador. The ball - retrieved - returned.

Repeat...

Like a video animation on an endless loop.

Some application pausing, waiting to reboot.

No chance. Game over.

You might as well be leaning here for ever.

iv. **Omen**

The inevitable seagulls wheel
and scream abuse above the pitch;
a murder of crows strut their daft stuff:
always these urban scavengers
picking over the remains.
And on the terrace, a single magpie:
"Hello, Captain! How's the family?"
Spit. Salute. The prescribed ritual
to ward off fate, albeit rather late.
That's one for sorrow. Until more
appear, dancing on the field,
rhyming themselves up like prophecies.
Is that seven: a secret never told?
or eight: a wish?

v. **Phantom**

Walk out on to the turf - maybe not hallowed
but said once to be the best in Scotland.
Stand in the centre circle, be about
to toss a coin, take the kick-off.
Look around: the terracing's empty gaze
returns to you from in between the trees.
Peer through the thickening drizzle,
or is it the mist now in your eyes?
Imagine the gloaming's crowd of ghosts,
its roar - no, not even a low growl.
Not a single scarf or flickering scarlet banner,
not one grim-faced, spectral spectator.
Turn to the stand. There's nothing there,
no shelter. (Not that there ever was much!)
Even the revenants have left. Abandoned
to the schoolgirls gossiping and
the dog walkers. They seldom venture
out onto the old pitch: it might be haunted.
But it's not.

vi. **Dreamtime**

drift back
into the everwhen
they're there
and still alive
the heroes
you recall
on the cigarette cards
you collected
big manly heads
square jawed
on small balletic bodies
or on the front page
of *the tiger*
each lofted pass
landing at the feet
each swivelling shot
finding the top corner
followed by swoosh lines
the wee red book
your bible
you saved the cards
but there was
no salvation

vii. *Thirds*

The HiHi levitated
clear of Glasgow's
dreary binaries.
We - not them and us.
Beyond win and lose.
Transcend the oppositions.
This was their secret
and their wish. But
the way to get there,
find salvation,
might have been
to just get out.
Now they are only
what remains.
Like love.



Door and Window : Derek Ross

Four Poems by John Horn

Voyage

Bass rock bold on its own
so still from distance
foam white in mid summer
robed in snowflake gulls

It defines a seascape
level calm from afar
a smooth sky blue horizon
the beginning of endless imagining.

From this beach of solid shore
the ocean appears pacific
with no hint of rollers
or crashed foam on rock.

Seabirds soar over wild tides
but without wings
we must defeat waves
angry at the wind.

Ours is a voyage
far enough to gaze back
from a heaving deck to a rock
so still from distance.

Loch Fyne

Across the loch are ghost hills
smirred by autumn rain
their ominous ridges
concealing dank histories
of forgotten dead
bequeathing their abandoned slopes
to glimmering lights
distant on ribbon roads.

Then early evening
bleeds twilight crimson
into a recovering horizon
stage lighting the loch
uniting both quick and dead
in a script of present harmony.

Enigma

All the world is the dust of distant stars
and we all particles of light.

We glisten among dark matter
our spirits shimmer amid dark energy
our perception bestows reality
on an unimagining universe.

Consciousness crafts truth from mystery
and weaves a cosmic background
into galactic tapestries
depicting a timeless odyssey.

Our journeys seem uncharted
the itineraries of yearning souls
reaching out endlessly
to comprehend infinite purpose.

Silences

Quietly we stopped
At the high lochan;
I wondered who had hauled
A rowing boat so high.

You knew all the pathways
And guided the small journey
From tree line
To the small summit
Cradling the tarn.

There were hot water jug
Bath mornings
After inebriated evenings
Enlivened by alcohol-fuelled
Board and card games.

After friendship
The best thing
Was clambering up
A tipsy ladder to snuggle
Into a warm attic
Full of ancient
Distant silences
That dreamed me away.

Four Poems by John Manson

The door trembles

(for Karyn)

The door trembles.
Who is it?
Visitors?
Staff?
Nurses?
Or is it no one?

Then the door skims open
and I make out your face
with its shadowed eyes
it's you – and you're early

You slide in
along the wall
canary top
black jeans

I'm immobile here
can only expect
watch
wait
until you open the door

You fell asleep

You fell asleep.
But you did not know the code
for falling asleep.

You woke up
But you did not know the slivers of consciousness
for waking up.

You are alive!
The mirror is still on the wall.
Your feet are still cold.

But someone may not wake up some night soon.

Nothing in common

*D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où
allons-nous?*
Paul Gauguin, 1897.

Nothing in common?
But you were my nearest relative.
You brought me into the world
And you brought me up, as they say.

'Have you nothing to say to your mother?'
You inquired.
'Why don't you come to the table?'
I asked.
Nothing in common.

You were a widow

You were a widow at forty
With a little boy of eight.
We had four cows and a pair of horse
No insurance.

You were a member of the United Free Church
Continuing after 1929.
The congregation had to build their own church.
You did not take Communion on account of the wine.
My father did not go to church.

'God's word can never be broken,' you shouted.
You were sure you were right.
The essence of life was predetermined.
There was no existence.*

But I loved what we were doing.
We opened the sluice of the dam
Which stored the water for the mill in the barn.
We fed the rips through the rollers of the mill
And carried the windlings of straw back to the byre.

We singled the green turnip blades
On the tops of their drills.
I was second in the file, soon first.

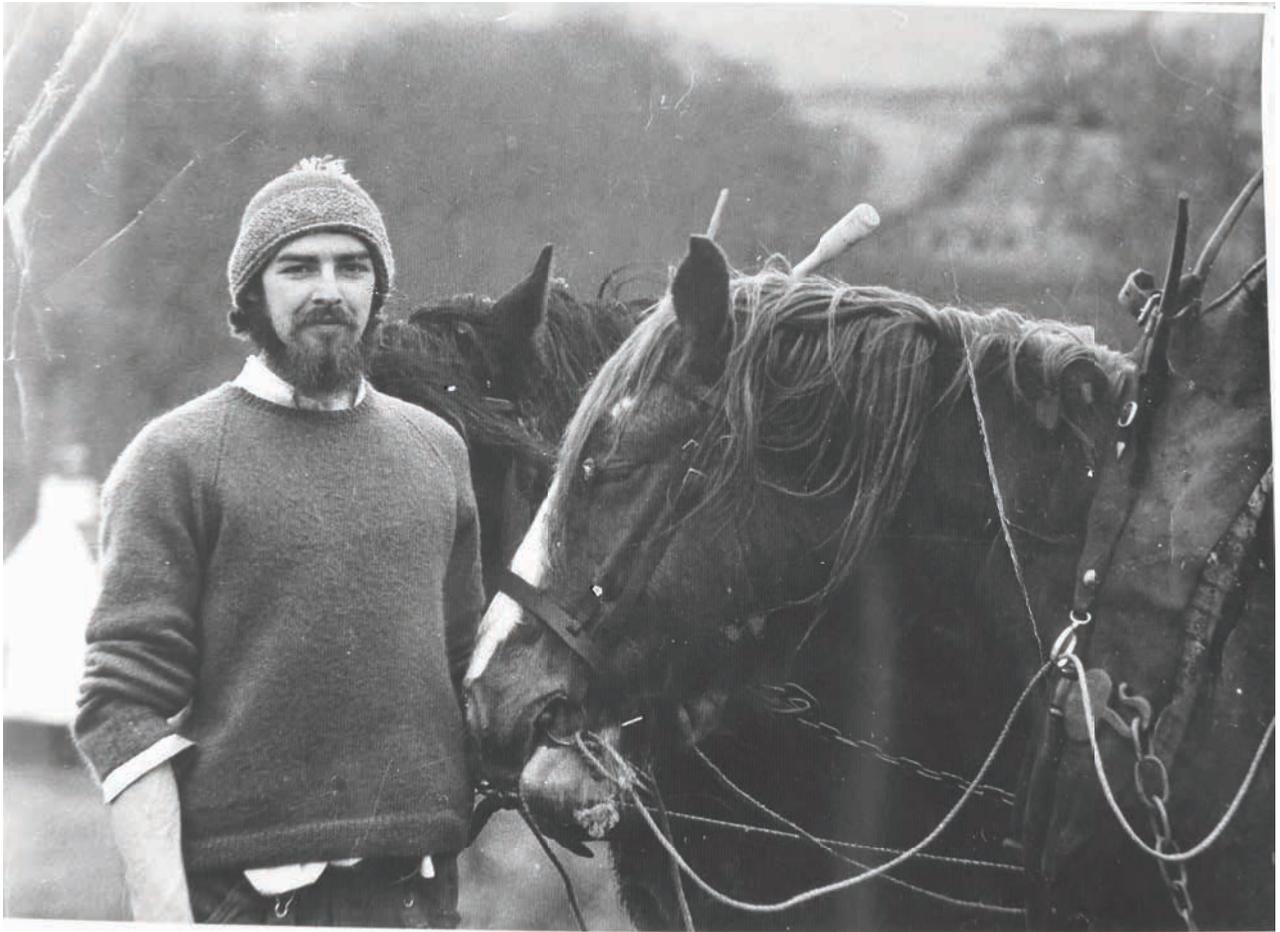
We watched the ewes at their lambing.

I loved what we did in our day-long night-long work ethic
And did not have to do it.
All the time my blood was rising
But no one ever told me about that.

*'Existence precedes essence.'
From : Sartre, J.P. : L'Existentialisme est un humanisme.
Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1996.

Essay by Jo Miller

'In Galloway the nicht': the writings of Logan Paterson of the Glenkens'



photograph courtesy of David Paterson

In September 2019, family, friends and others came together at the Ken Bridge Hotel, New Galloway, to share the poems and songs of Logan Paterson (1951-2013). The evening was organised by the local writing project *Ken Words* as a way of exploring Logan's writings in a ceilidh setting, through performance, photographs and conversation with those who knew him. Logan's work is inspired by his own community, and the language is a spectrum of Scots through to English. His verses contribute to a valuable historical record of rural Galloway, but also represent an individual expressive urge; he was unpublished, but not unknown.

How does this fit into a wider Galloway and Scottish scene? There is a long tradition of self-taught poets and song-makers working within their own localities, which in Galloway goes back to the Borge poet William Nicholson (1782-1849) and beyond. The success of Robert Burns (1759-96) and James Hogg (1770-1835) gave others confidence to make poetry about daily life, often drawing on oral tradition. The subsequent explosion of regional poetry during the 19th century was also due to the new print press and newspapers, in which local poets were often

published. However, Scottish poetry has sometimes been seen as entering a period of decline in the nineteenth century, with writing in Scots criticised for its use of parochial dialect and the sentimentalism of the kailyard, but this has been reassessed more recently. Valentina Bold considers the self-taught tradition, which reached its peak with Hogg, as the most important strand in the poetry of the period and one with a lasting impact on Scottish literature. Kirstie Blair also comments that a focus on individual poets has neglected the 'distinctive Scottish verse culture' of Victorian times, both urban and rural. Poets in the countryside established a connection with the land and its people, celebrating the value of rural life and agricultural work, often in local dialect; 'everything they wrote, whether or not it passed muster as art, is potentially of value to ethnologists and historians'.¹ Such writing is useful to poets' own communities within and beyond their own lifetimes, and so it is with Logan Paterson.

But he is not an isolated example in the Glenkens. For instance, a book of poems by shepherd Thomas Murray of Moorbrock (Carsphairn) published in 1897 ran to three editions, with one of the poems persisting as a song in SW Scotland up to the present day. I myself have copies of the notebooks of other local collectors and makers of verses in the 20th century. Women have been poets too, if not always publicly, as seen in a little book of the life and writing of Bunty Templeton (1924-2014), also of Moorbrock. One of her poems laments the decline of the Scots language:

What pride has taen ower?
Oor Scots words near gaen
Only a remnant o Lallans remains...

It could be argued that Logan was writing at the tail end of this tradition, but there is a role in every community for people who chronicle what's going on around them, capturing and communicating things for the rest of us. The following song (written c.1990), for example, documents one of the last hand sheep clippings in the district, which he himself attended. In his own creative voice, Logan locates the event in the landscape of the Forrest Glen and captures the sociability of the occasion. He recites the names of those present, the tasks involved, and the all-important food and drink required:

It was the last neebourin² in the Glenkens. I wis in at the tail end o that in the early '70s. Folk helped each other out. There wad be a gang o' clippers - shepherds an others. I've seen fifteen people in the buchts³ o Knockreoch, and it wis a sorta privilege tae be there.

Well, there wis Jamie McWhan, he worked at Blawquhairn. There wis Davie Bertram, he wis the herd at Faskie [Stroanfasket]; he pulled the sheep, I wis the catcher. Willie

¹ Cowan, E.J. 2019. 'Identity' in *Dumfries and Galloway: People and place, c1700-1914*, eds. E.J. Cowan and K. Veitch, Edinburgh: John Donald, pp.31-69.

² *neebourin* - a gathering to mutually assist on a farm

³ *bucht* - sheepfold

Bertram, he was clippin. An' Arnold Sharp, he wis clippin. Alan McFegan, he wis the herd at Knockreoch, [and] Dick Cross, they a' clipped on a stool wi shears, it wis hand clippin. I wis the youngest, aye. We used tae go up tae the hoose about half past six an' get yer breakfast - bacon, eggs, a fried tattie scone, fried breid, sausage; plenty. Ye were needin it, for this wis tae take ye through tae denner time. The herd's wife wad make a can full o' tea, scones, about three o'clock, an' then [at] half past five, six o'clock ye'd get yer tea. It wis very special, workin up there. Cos they did it for nothing - no-one got paid. It's the Rhinns o' the Kells. Beautiful sheep, an' jist workin mornin till late, an' the sun settin behind them like heaven!

The Buchts o Knockreoch

Well up on the moor where the laverock⁴ does sing
And the pee wee⁵ does cry and sooch⁶ wi its wing
Whaur the whaup⁷ it does hing frae the threids o the win
Is whaur ye'll fin the buchts o Knockreoch

CHORUS:

O the buchts o Knockreoch, the buchts o Knockreoch
Close by tae the Rhinns o the Kells
Bring memories tae me o yon fine Glenkens men
Whae wrocht in the buchts o Knockreoch

The hirsle⁸ was gathered in the early morn
And all of the ewes were to be hand shorn
It was a privilege to work at Knockreoch yon day
And be part of that time honoured neighbourly way

Davy fae Fasket he bolted tae me
And I laid a ewe by each stool clippers knee
And Jimmy McWhan rolled fleeces sae neat
And tramped them in the bag at Knockreoch

We wrocht fae sunrise tae nicht time at nine
And 40 score ewes o their fleeces were done
And weary were a' that slipped doon the brae
That wrocht yon day long at Knockreoch

Yin day I'll return tae yon buchts yinst again

⁴ *laverock* - lark

⁵ *pee wee* - lapwing

⁶ *sooch* (also locally 'shuch') - a whistling or rushing sound of something moving at speed (e.g. bird's wings, running water)

⁷ *whaup* - curlew

⁸ *hirsle* - flock of sheep

Whaur noo aw the shearin is din by machine
Nae mair jolly neighbours gien a helpin hand
It's a gey lonely day at Knockreoch

Logan grew up in New Galloway, and always had an interest in local characters and traditional farming practices, especially working horses and their relationship with their handlers. This extract conveys his powers of observation and description:

'Hup!' and 'yine!' - music to my ears - the traditional commands from the Galloway horseman for 'move right' and 'move left' evoke memories from the 1970s when the art of competition horse ploughing had all but died out, and memories of the few men who kept it going with their expert audience of old champion ploughmen, medals glinting on silver watch chains adorning dark waistcoats. Thumbs tucked in trouser pockets, arms spreading, jacket displaying the source of their pride.

A pair of white horses glinting like spectres, muntin bells⁹ tinkling in the frosty morning mist. The horses' breath like dragon smoke, the steam rising from their backs and the chink of chains. And then the smell – warm horse mixed with the musk of newly sculpted soil and the gentle sound of plough cutting through the recently hoof-shaken sod. God speed the plough.

In this final short lyric, apparently intended as a song, Logan identifies himself, and his life's journey, with Galloway.

I was born in Gallowa

CHORUS:

I was born in Gallowa, I was reared in Gallowa
Weel I wrocht for Gallowa, an it is there I'll dee-o

But in atween the twa
Mony a gloamin, mony a daw
Mony a drink and mony a freen
Have pairtnered me in Gallowa

Mony a steg¹⁰ ower mony a mile
Mony a crack, mony a smile
Mony's the change I hae seen
In ma time o in atween

⁹ 'mounting' bells on the horse's harness

¹⁰ *steg* - striding out

Thanks to the following for their assistance: Dave Paterson and other family members, Jane McBeth and Andrew Mellor of Ken Words.

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Moorbrock Memories: the poetry and prose of Bunty Scott. 2018. Carsphairn Heritage Group.

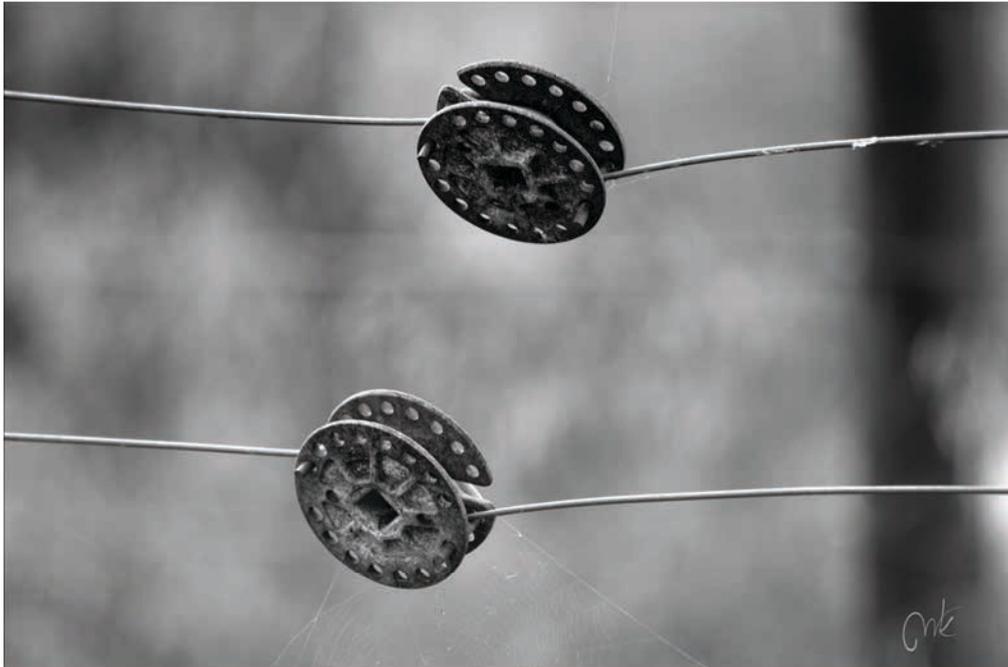
Murray, T. 1897. *Frae the Heather*. Brechin: D.H. Edwards.

Two Micro Fictions by Ian C Smith

Vitruvian Man

In Luna Park, the Giggle Palace, a large roofed area enclosed between the Big Dipper and Scenic Railway, tamer rides, stalls, outside, featured numerous attractions: snaky steep slides to toss you about at speed, full-length mirrors distorting reflections, and other gimcrack novelties. When I was a skinny seventeen, revolving cylinders lured me. A couple of metres in diameter, open-ended, their slow-paced revolutions tumbled fun seekers drunkenly. A uniformed sailor spread-eagled himself inside one, limbs rigid as he slowly turned upside down before the comparative relief of rotating upright once more. He stopped for a while then stepped up again so I positioned myself at the other end facing him. This was an undisguised stand-off. We were the same height, he older. I think we reached sixteen revolutions eyeing each other silently before he quit. By then a crowd had gathered as if watching sport, a sideshow within a sideshow. I completed an extra turn, one for each of my years, then quit also, entire body trembling, spent, elated as I picked up my loose change.

Stepping into the past sheepishly, grey-haired, but not bad for my age, I try it again, telling my sons about this long-ago feat which fails to impress them. After one revolution I quit before embarrassment, blood pounding my temples, muscles, arms, legs, shrieking in lactic distress after almost collapsing, fingers engorged, alarmed by time's downslide, amazed by my youthful self as if he were someone else, which he was, now so far beyond reach, my boys' interest already moved on.



Balance for Balance : Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz

Uniforms Interview

(With thanks to SM Chianti)

The old-timer said, the Salvation Army band played here on Friday evenings opposite the Palace Hotel, known in earlier days as The Bloodhouse for its brawling patrons after the six o'clock swill when they lined up full glasses before last drinks were served at six p.m. by law. Those Salvos, a small group in uniform, the lasses wearing bonnets with chinstraps, brass, tambourines, sweet voices brave in belief, sang hymns of redemption in the face of drunken obscenity while I sought pleasure with the publican's daughter in an upstairs room overlooking this same Burke Road tramline. Our lustful antics, and believing we are happy, are things that haven't changed. Other familiar uniforms suggesting stories were seen in public then: nuns, nurses wearing capes, scouts, policemen on foot, soldiers in slouch hats, sailors, including merchant seamen, the blue-grey of air force personnel. Now, everybody's dress, though gaudy, seems anonymous, the mysterious niqab, which resembles nuns' garb, one of few exceptions although xenophobes' reactions to these back then would have been more widespread, even uglier than today's.

At night we sometimes climbed a narrow stair like a priest hole to the roof where we heard the paperboy cry, *Late Extra*, looked down on all the glittering lights, green trams whirring and rattling to Camberwell Junction, Silver Top taxis whisking people into their futures, that great pulse of what was to happen. We saw a satellite. People talked about these then. *Up on the Roof* became our song. Keenly argued sport filled the following afternoon, football, horse racing – yet more uniforms – after some of us worked overtime Saturday mornings. All sport on the same afternoon, except boxing at the House of Stoush on Friday nights which was also card night for older people. Can you imagine that? Everything is so much more diversified now but here is where the magical whispering of my heart returns to, these echoes of memory spread out like those dealt cards, a ruin of nostalgia. Have you written this down? It'll soon be history.

Two Poems by Maria McCarthy

Mr Thomas is cutting his hedge

Shears in hand,
he edges his land.

Up and down,
he wobbles around,
on his three-legged stool,

shifting the curtain
collecting the clippings.

Eighty-five years
he's lived in this place,

took the car for a spin every day,
and drove to church on Sunday.

Now he walks to the Co-op with a wicker basket,
waits by the gate for a lift to St Mary's.

A gutter-high holly
threatens the windows.
The garage is gripped by a shock of ivy.

The man from Treeworld comes with ladders,
electric trimmers, zips through the laurel,
shapes the holly into a lollipop tree,
burns the branches, and is gone by three.

The ivy's still got hold of the garage roof.
Mr Thomas will be doing that himself.

Living next door to Angie

Angie practised counselling behind the pumps
of the Horseshoe, before she drank the profits
dry. Now she touts her skills as barmaid/punter/
listener in other drinking dens; at home outside
of licensing – advice with wine thrown in.

She's out, no doubt dispensing
wisdom at a lock-in, and so a woman
with no shoes rings my bell at midnight.

Is Angie in?

She has no bag or phone or keys –
a stand-up row with her boyfriend
who left her barefoot in the Bull's Head.

And though she's at the wrong house, I offer
tea, tissues, and a phone to call her lover,
who forgives her, and will meet her
on the corner with her shoes.

Poem by Gillian Shearer

My Father's Shaving Brush

It bristles, left on the shelf long after you are gone.
Here is your face held in the mirror's frame –
your skin as light and fresh as a boy's.
I never knew you unshaven.
Three years since and yet she keeps it – still,
like some exhibit in a museum for lost articles;
it forces my memory apart.
The green and white tiles now scoured with age,
grout blackening the interstices of time;
your shaving brush hangs from its gold-plated chalice
like a totem warding off time, off grief –
as if my grief could be distilled to this one single moment.

I reach out,
feel my skin bristle,
the hairs on my flesh mingling with your own
as if some aspect of you still remains.



Just Flowers : Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz

Essay by Michael Ansell

The Gaelic Hunting Tradition in Galloway

Galloway has a rich linguistic and cultural history with many discrete and overlapping languages having been spoken at different times. These have included (in rough time order), Brittonic, Old English, Gaelic, Norse, Scots and English. In the historic period however, it was Gaelic that left its deepest imprint on the Galloway landscape, best demonstrated by the thousands of anglicised Gaelic place-names formed approximately between 900 and 1700AD. No Galloway Gaelic writing has survived to the present day (if we except the rather questionable song *Òran Bagraidh*) and therefore it is necessary to use the evidence of names – place and personal – that survive mainly on maps and in old charters to piece together, so far as is possible, a picture of what life was like in the South West Gàidhealtachd. Taken together with certain historical and archaeological evidence, it is surprising how vivid a picture emerges about specific aspects of Gaelic society in Galloway. One such aspect I wish to discuss here is the Gaelic Hunting Tradition.

Please put out of your mind the familiar image of chivalric Anglo-Norman hunting parks, enclosures within which deer were corralled for convenient hunting often in close proximity to a local seat of power. The Gaelic hunting tradition was completely different, being conducted on a landscape scale within large open forest hunting grounds. This hunting method involved large numbers of people co-operating to drive deer and other wild animals towards a trap: this could be man-made such as a funnel shaped dyke or fence or more often a natural dead-end ravine, valley or other defile. Once the unfortunate animals were within the confines of the trap the local aristocracy would assail them with bow and arrow, broadsword and dirk. The animals were driven to their fate by an encircling line of what we would nowadays call ‘beaters’ but which were referred to in Scots as *The Tainchell*, derived from Gaelic *timcheall*, a circuit, compass, circumference. This term survives in three place-names in Galloway: Knocktinkle, near Dalarran which looks up the Glenkens to the hunting grounds of the Forest of Buchan and the long ridge of the Rhinns of Kells; Knocktinkle on the farm of Bagbie, near Creetown; and Knocktinkle (now a viewpoint) on the road north out of Gatehouse and which looks over the former hunting grounds of Cairnsmore of Fleet. These three places (*Cnoc Timchill* or Beater Hill) were probably mustering hills, where a large body of men would have been instructed to gather to get their orders and orientate themselves in view of prominent hunting landmarks.

The narrow defile that the *Tainchell* would have been told to drive the wild animals towards was known in Gaelic as *eileirig*, a term attested in Old Irish meaning ‘ambush’ and featuring in the earliest surviving Scottish Gaelic text, the Gaelic notes in the Book of Deer, a religious foundation in Buchan. There are around 100 place-names in Scotland incorporating this element, with the greatest concentration in Atholl and Galloway. Galloway has about 25% of the national total and they are often anglicised as Elrig or Eldrig. Loch Neldricken (*Loch nEileirigan*, loch of the small deer trap), in the wild heart of the Forest of Buchan is a good example.

One feature of the Gaelic style of hunting was that the local aristocracy (including the lady-folk) often assumed prime ring-side seats from where they could watch the bloody action at close quarters. These sites were often small knolls or crags in the vicinity and there is a good example at Loch Neldricken where we have Craig Neldricken (*Creag nEileirigan*, rock of the deer trap), strategically positioned overlooking the head of the dead-end glen. Incidentally, near this location, on the Blaeu atlas is a place called Lag Maddy Chriach, probably for *Lag Madaidh Creachadh*, the hollow of plundering canines – most likely wolves – and it could be that wolves formed part of the regular quarry in the *Daingeann Bùchainn*, The Dungeon of Buchan. Close by is the Wolf’s Slock, probably a part translation of *Sloc nam madadh-allaidh*.

This area of the Forest of Buchan is replete with Gaelic hunting-related place-names. One of the most impressive mountain peaks is known today as Mullwharchar, possibly *Maol Adhairce*¹¹, the bald hill of the huntsman's horn (*Aimnean-aite na h-Alba* plumps for *Maol Fhearchar*, Farquhar's bald hill). Close by is The Rig of Munshalloch, where *Mòine Seilge*, the hunt moor, stretches between Mullwharchar and the Loch Twachtan. Again, close by is the dominant bulk of Shalloch on Minnoch, incorporating the word for hunt, *sealg*. On the north-west flank of this hill is Eldrick Hill, from *eileirig*, an interesting one in that there is no obvious defile here: perhaps fences or pits were used on this open moor. Then there is Hunt Ha' where the ruins of a hunting lodge can still be seen, in starkly magnificent scenery close to Mullwharchar.

Speaking of hunting lodges, still in the Forest of Buchan but on the east side of the Rhinns of Kells, we find Castlemaddy, *Caisteal nam Madadh*, fortress of the dogs (probably hunting dogs, not wolves in this case). This was a hunting lodge which according to tradition had meal supplied for the hounds from the mill at Polmaddy. The ford through which the meal sacks were probably carried from Polmaddy up the glen is still known as the Ballensack Ford from *Beul-atha nan Sac* (ford-mouth of the sacks).

Castlemaddy lies within the Forest of Buchan itself, if we accept that the Deil's Dyke is actually the eastern boundary marker of the hunting ground. Another potential hunting lodge location, this time just to the east of the dyke might have been at Garroch Estate, west of Dalry. The old name of this place was Ballingear, for *Baile nan gadhar*, settlement of the lurcher, mastiff or hunting dogs so analagous to the Castlemaddie place-name. Interestingly, the alternative place-name, Garroch, may well derive from *Gadharach*, place of hunting dogs (thanks to Alan James for this suggestion). The term *gadhar*, along with a description of the drive to the *eileirig* makes an appearance in one of the most renowned Gaelic poems relating to the hunting landscape, *Òran na Comhachaig, le Domhnall MacFhionnlaigh nan Dan*:

*A chreag mun iathadh an fhagaidh
Leam-sa bu mhiann bhith ga thadhail
An uair bu bhinn guth galain gadhair
A' cur greigh gu gabhail chumhaing.*

The rock around which wheeled the hunt
Myself I loved to frequent it.
When sweet was the baying of hounds
Driving a herd to a narrow defile

Another interesting Gaelic place-name indicator of hunting territory is *Longphort*. This word is formed by combining Gaelic *long*, a ship and *port*, a harbour, both terms originally borrowed into Gaelic from Latin. The meaning has stretched to encompass the sense of a stronghold, fortified residence or an encampment. In this latter sense it came to mean a hunting camp and we find one example on the edge of what was probably the northern part of the Forest of Buchan, anglicised as Lamford (Lhunfard or Lomphard in the Blaeu Atlas). Some two miles south-east is the place-name Eldrick, on the slopes of Craigencolon, from *eileirig* as discussed above. It could be that this is where hunting parties habitually camped and it is intriguing that Lamford Moat is marked on the map here. The Historic Environment Scotland site record (Canmore ID 63850) states that although the site is a natural mound 'a few artificially laid stones are revealed by a broken section on the summit'. Could this be the site of another hunting lodge or camp? Interestingly this Gaelic term was borrowed into Scots as *lonquhard* and similar, meaning a temporary shelter or hut or a small temporary hunting lodge (see Dictionary of the

Scots Language). By further semantic extension we get the Scots term *lunkie-hole* for a hole in a dyke for sheep to pass through. This term has travelled a long distance from 'ship harbour'!

It is interesting to speculate where the power centres were that exploited the hunting resources of the Forest of Buchan in the Gaelic era. One potential local chief's residence may have been at Dalry for *Dail Righ*, King's Meadow. Here we have what looks like a potential 'royal' inauguration assemblage. We have the place-name, the motte, the ancient-looking church-yard with its 'bullaun' or font stone and most importantly an inauguration seat (St John's Chair- maybe the actual site for the chair/seat was on the small knoll known as Knockensee (Cnocan Suidhe, wee seat hill)). This collection looks quite like what one would expect to find in an Irish Gaelic royal inauguration site. Was this the place from where the orders were issued to assemble the tainchell on Knocktinkle?



Nostalgia : Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz

Paintings and Haiku by Liz Lofthouse

looking up at the sky
through beech leaves
I say your name



dawn
birdsong on black branches
reflection in a puddle





clouds part
a half moon
and then silence

light rain falling
moving softly
listening



Two Poems by Roddy Williams

Dear me

I'm vexed with me today I am
I stand outside my head
give myself what for
a piece of my tongue
then rage back in to hear it all
before it fades into the bed
while I'm waiting

I am beside myself again
wearing the *I'm with stupid* t-shirt
but I'm looking the other way
reasoning that those who
wear these shirts are the stupid ones
I can't claim irony
I'd be mocked

I'm mad with myself
and so am writing to me
to tell me so
here in this bedside table notebook
Dear me, I'm writing
you know that I'm mad
but you don't seem to know why

Yours sincerely

Sleepovers

We never discuss what this arrangement is
whereby I just turn up like a bus
go from nought to sixty
in an insistent
dropped bus ticket instant

We've evolved strategies
for getting shoes off without letting go
while the hall wall rolls
its eyes
sighs
at its shameful treatment
the slams
the abrasion

Words have fled upstairs
We do not find them until later
We also evolved strategies
for hunting them without letting go

Then
Hello by the way!
you say
catch the phrase as it
threads the sweat of
the small of my back
your crescent of teeth
gleaming over the terminus bed like
a setting moon

Three Poems by Kelly Davis

Mermaid aerobics

In the lukewarm chlorinated pool,
we bask and chat, waiting to begin.

I'm at the back and the beat starts.
We're jogging gently in a watery trance.

The music speeds up: rows of shoulders heaving,
arms pumping, to 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun'.

We're ponies prancing, knees up high.
We're Jackie Chans punching underwater villains.

Finally we float and stretch, cradled in fluorescent serpents,
legs tensed, pointing toes – into invisible tails.

Later, in the changing room, we're grabbing quick showers,
trying not to slip on cold, wet floors.

We're tugging combs through stubborn hair, wriggling into jeans,
calling over our shoulders 'See ya, lass! See ya next week!'

Out in the car park,
breath furling into night air,
we head home
to landlocked husbands.



Glencaple Greys : Vivien Jones

Umbrellas

Similar black umbrellas
are swapped every day.
In cloakrooms, bars and shops
we pick them up and walk away.

Impossible to tell apart,
it can indeed be said
they stand in for each other,
shelter any human head.

The ones with broken spokes
hang down with a tragic sag,
while the small, tightly rolled ones
fit neatly in a bag.

Transport for London's office has
35,000 lost brollies.
They lie there waiting patiently
on endless shelves and trollies.

When they suddenly go missing,
on a train, a plane or bus,
is it we who have lost them –
or they who have lost us?

Interviewing Grandpa

In a sunny conservatory
behind a Bedfordshire manor house
half a world from your birthplace,
you held audience on a wicker throne.
It was 1979 or thereabouts.
A white stick in place of a sceptre,
eyes sightless but mind still questing,
you searched your distant past for memories
to feed into my Philips cassette recorder.

Like a TV journalist,
I held the microphone close to your mouth
to drink in tales of life
in the Lithuanian town of Srednik.
Your family owned the post office
and traded goods, sailing the River Neman
to the town of Kaunas.
You sat up straighter, remembering your position –
son of Srednik's foremost Jewish family.

In the 1930s they sent you to Africa,
their emissary
to a hoped-for future.
In Durban, you got married,
built a business, had a child.
Soon you would have enough to pay their passage.
But history clanked onward.
In 1941 a letter came –
via the Red Cross.

Decades later, you are gone
but fragments float
in my imagination:
the feel of a small, sticky hand,
the crack of a gunshot,
the thud of a body falling,
babies' banshee screams,
the smell of blood and lime –
and terror.

In a family album,
brought from Durban to London,
there's a photo of your favourite nephew,
a solemn dark-eyed boy on his bicycle.
On the back,
written in his childish hand:
'Have you forgotten us?'

Two Poems by Finola Scott

Moving

along stepping down grinning wide
career in the past
now just-for-me sun days fun ways

Moving back to city whirl
to late night creep and high heel strut
to cafes and gigs crammed diaries

Moving up
to granny wise mother
tickling toes and tucking in
faking wisdom bluffing advice rocking
cradles, climbing trees, peering at bees
fundays, just for them days
arms full again days

The best day ever

In freckled summer I take their hands, step on
the dog-worn path. We paddle
tiddler-deep, chase butterflies, lark-listen,
daisy-chain. She teaches her sister
to count the skimming stones.

Quiet. You can hear the swans ruffle.

Poem By Hamish Scott

The Screenagers

Hou muckle life haes chynged, whit new warld scenes,
that nou we leeve wi monie, sinnrie screens
The screen age is the age we hae the day,
an ilka bodie nou screenagers sae.

The picter-hoose is whar it aa begoud:
thare fowk forgaithert in a muckle crood
tae watch the fillums on a big screen shawn,
the maist o thaim that gaed thare ouklie gaun.

Than in wir hames the televeision cam
wi wee-er screens but aa kynd o program
At een the faimlie gaithert roun the thing
an watcht it for a time white'er it bring

Syne kythed computers gies fowk thair ain screen
we leuk an uise wir lane wi tentie een;
that monie things we dae nou duin that wey,
wir life an warld is chynged throu-oot for aye

At first we got lane dasktaps kept ae place,
nou laptaps, taiblets, mobile phones embrace;
thair screens aye uise aagaits we gang an get,
wi aamaist aa conneckit tae the net

An still forby we tae the picter-hoose,
the televeision watch an dasktap uise;
we've got that monie screens, that uised bi aa,
a screen age an us screenagers can caa



Powfoot Greys : Vivien Jones

Consensus : Stephen Shellard

The consensus amongst poets: "We're stuffed!"

In a recent speech in Bristol, Greta Thunberg did not stray far from her usual stark summation of matters:

"Still this emergency is being completely ignored by politicians, the media and those in power... Basically, nothing is being done to halt this crisis despite all the beautiful words and promises from the elected officials." [1]

Right wing commentator Kate Andrews, was quick to respond on BBC 2's Politics Live, challenging the veracity of Greta's statement. I might even have thought she had a point when I see the number of windmills in the Galloway Hills, with more in the pipeline, and that's despite much local opposition to their visual impact.



Dalswinton windfarm seen from Carruchan Beeches

Something *is* being done.

But George Monbiot, also a panellist, helpfully filled in the gaps in Greta's rhetoric: *"Nothing commensurate with the scale of the problem is being done."*

Extinction Rebellion have a tendency to reach for hyperbole in relation to their vision of what awaits us if we fail to take appropriate action: however, I stumbled across a radio programme this week, *Only Artists* [3], in which the playwright Simon Stephens was in conversation with the Poet Laureate Simon Armitage. In the midst of a thoroughly interesting exchange, Simon Armitage said, with reference to the environment, that he'd felt

"...for a number of years: we're stuffed."

Ah! This is the kind of thing I like to hear from my Poet Laureate.

Armitage's poetry has a similar quality of the demotic and in this case there is no mistaking his meaning. I'm thinking: perhaps we've been listening too closely to the *scientific* consensus. I'm willing to bet that there is a consensus — perhaps even a unanimity — amongst poets, in

relation to what is happening to the environment, though few would sum up the matter quite as bluntly as Armitage.

He does go on, by the way, to explain why he thinks “*we’re stuffed*”:

“I can’t really see a way out of this, there are too many interested parties who have no appetite or incentive for taking their foot off the gas.”

“But then he says something a little more hopeful, that his despondency in relation to the environment has “slightly been toned down recently by the amazing radiance that’s coming out of young people and how for them environmentalism is not a marginal activity, it actually exists in the middle of their thinking.”

This was a great programme by the way, if you have any interest in poetry or theatre or indeed contemporary music: before he became a playwright, Simon Stephens was a member of Scottish art punk band The Country Teasers. I’d have to admit I’ve never heard of them. Armitage too is a musician and a founder member of his band, the Scaremongers, so there is a fair amount of chat on this theme, particularly on their shared interest in the music of Mark E Smith and the Fall.

Give their conversation a listen and find out, amongst other things, why the word “playwright” was originally an insult.

And let’s hope that “amazing radiance” is not just a poet’s fancy.

1. <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/greta-thunberg-speech-in-full-3897406>
2. Only Artists, 26Feb2020 available on BBC Sounds until February 2020 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000fq7g>



I need mentholypus : Davie Burns

Three Poems by Gillian Mellor

The Adams' Prize was a biennial competition offered by St John's College, Cambridge. The Saturn Problem had been set in 1855 and entries had to be in by December 1857. The examiners asked under what conditions (if any) the rings would be stable if they were (1) solid, (2) fluid or (3) composed of many separate pieces of matter. They expected maths to back this up. James Clerk Maxwell showed solid and fluid rings were not stable and demonstrated that some arrangements of concentric rings were stable, but that they would move inwards over long periods and eventually Saturn would likely lose her rings. James submitted the only entry and was awarded the prize of £130. Then he spent two years tidying up his work before publication in 1859. The Voyager and Cassini space probes of the 20th and 21st century confirmed James's predictions.

James Clerk Maxwell Considers The Question of Saturn's Rings

They have been under observation
for 200 years. Still no one understands
their make up. Solid or fluid circlets?
Dusty layers of broken satellites?

Distant witness to a night sky
filled with algebra he translates
to the page how brickbats and aerolites
might orbit in concentric rings.

His calculations play with density and velocity,
use deviations, approximations,
linearise differential equations,
manipulate constants upto loss of stability.

Finally the maths is satisfactory
within his 12 ounce prize winning essay -
a singular entry which illustrates the difficulty.
No one else had even come close.

After The Essay

For the edification of the sensible image worshippers
James devises a mechanical model to illustrate
the operation of waves on a system of satellites.
By adjusting the position of each sphere

the ring may be thrown into waves of any length -
the abstracts of Maxwellian mathematics
beautifully tangible in ivory and wood
by Master Model Maker John Rammage of Aberdeen.

Transience

*(from the conclusion of
James Clerk Maxwell's Adam Prize winning
essay)*

if observations in the cold void
of the heavens are confirmed
using the same instruments

with the inner edge of the second ring
now appearing broader and nearer
to the body of the planet than formerly

then investigation of celestial immutability
may prove the old order giving way
before our own eyes

Poem by Paul Connelly

Invasion

They'd come at night,
the green files,

in a crotch-sweating
night of spring

blitzkrieg, their
silent Barbarossa

horrifying, with its sudden
shock of the certain,

as they flank the path and
bank the culvert

floodplains,
preposterously tall they're

wind-jostling
the surly cow parsley,

in his way, victorious
seeming to close

him in, already
with alert Vichy

in mute attendance,
the green alkanets

badged with blue
insignia. Trouble

bakes quietl
mortars are readied

for detonation and soon
their incendiary blooms

of sooty white
will spray high

above the earth,
while they ensnare

and tangle the land
across. Hands,

arms and shoulders
tight, he sidles

into the annexed path
awaiting demands

almost, for papers
perhaps, and considers

resistance, but decides
to sit tight,

mind his own business
let others

act, and see
it out, although he

won't collaborate,
head down, he'll wait.



*The story of extinction :
Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz*

Three Poems by Kate Shenton-Ross

The Boat

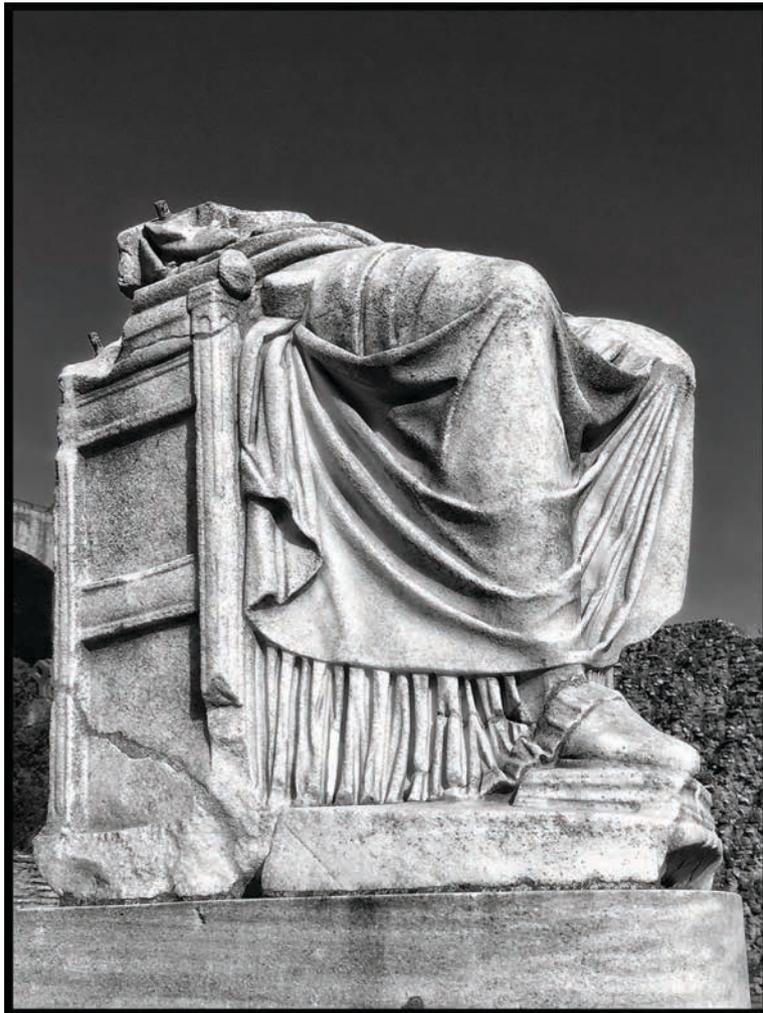
Low islands, slumped
on a Northwest horizon,
but here, in the stinging wind
we watch and wait
quietly.

The Accident in Class 3

Plimsolls, no socks.
nondescript lost property jogging bottoms,
The invasive waft of antibacterial spray,
a small damp plastic chair.
an invisible boundary, as if it might be contagious.

Sparsely Populated Island

Misty darkness,
steadily comes up like
a well-formed idea
dulling the imposing
nature.
Right on the water
a cupped hand of salt kissed lodges
and sea hardened homes
an unnamed tourist,
in a kilt with no name
takes a picture on his tablet
recording the rebellious weather.
What would Braveheart think about that?



Statue : Derek Ross

Short Story by Jessie W. Page

MAXWELL

I was surprisingly cold the night it happened. Our little beach town dozed peacefully beneath a round white August moon and the denizens of the haphazardly communal household up the hill from Highway 101 slept their private sleeps. Until the knocking came.

A tentative knocking, as though the knocker wished no one would answer. But Joan, ever alert to calamities in the night, heard it and climbed out of bed. She pulled on a pair of unlaced hiking boots and, wrapping a blanket around her broad shoulders, walked down the hall to the front door and opened it.

There was Mona, balanced on the front porch steps like a broken swallow yearning for flight; a harbinger of doom cloaked by a chenille bathrobe three sizes too large. Mona's hands fluttered in the air, unable to hold their message. She whispered,

"Maxwell's been hit. Could one of you come down to the restaurant and get him?"

She backed up a few steps, tripped over her tiny feet, and then vanished into the shadows.

"We'll all come," Joan announced to Mona's retreating form.

Joan pivoted and summoned the sleepers by pounding on doors. Charley burst from his room wide awake, clad in cotton flannel PJs and fuzzy green slippers and ready for adventure. "Something's up," he volunteered.

Ray appeared with a yawn wearing only faded boxer shorts. He leaned against his door jamb and scratched a bicep.

Joan had to pound twice on Ruth's door. Ruth finally emerged with a protesting moan. She stood shivering in a flimsy negligee and tattered ballet slippers.

"We have a disaster," Joan proclaimed to the group. "Follow me."

The haphazardly communal household trooped, en masse, and in their nightclothes, down to Maxwell's Bar & Grille—Mona Phlatz, Prop.—and identified the bloody remains of a large, thickly coated cat as belonging to Maxwell. They had to do it by the looks of the tail, because the head and upper body of the cat had been badly smashed. They all, after Ruth swooned, Ray averted his eyes, Charley gasped, and Joan swallowed hard several times, agreed. Yep. That's Maxwell's proud bushy tail.

Maxwell was a square-faced male cat who hung out at the nearby bookstore run by the denizens of the haphazardly communal household. He would spend his days amongst books for serious readers; sprawled out across the store's meager floor space, or perched on the comfortable bench seat waiting for a customer to sit and read. Then he would reach out a paw and help turn the pages. When he wasn't charming customers at the bookstore, Maxwell would be across Highway 101 begging scraps at Maxwell's Bar & Grill...no one was clear which was named for whom. He'd become adept at dodging traffic between his two favorite haunts; his timing must have been off this fateful night.

Mona gave them a box to put Maxwell in. And then they all went back up the hill to the h.c. household and glumly discussed what to do next. Joan handed round the wine

bottle and soon they were all remembering Maxwell with great fondness and loose laughter.

"Good old Maxwell. Let's have a wake," Charley volunteered.

"I'm not awake enough to have a wake, Ruth dramatized. "So let's burn him and scatter his ashes in the ocean."

"Let's have him stuffed and mount him on the mantelpiece," boomed Ray.

"Let's call the animal shelter," was Joan's practical solution.

"We should bury him," said Mona with a sigh. "But not at the restaurant. It isn't seemly."

It was finally, unanimously, agreed that Charley, being everyone's big brother, would bury Maxwell in the little yard behind the bookstore, and the rest of them would go along to make up a proper burial party.

So Charley went, a bit unsteadily, down the hill with the box under one arm and a shovel tucked under the other to the berry-vined patch of ground in back of the bookstore. The others solemnly followed at a discrete distance. Joan hummed "Amazing Grace."

The waning moon, for it was now three o'clock in the morning, cast an eerie light in the little yard as Joan, Ray, Ruth and Mona pulled away the berry vines and Charley began digging a hole. Ray got a thorn stuck in his thumb and manfully denied that it hurt. Ruth shivered and moaned in her silk, Joan told Charley to dig the hole somewhere else, and Mona wept whispers for Maxwell.

The hole was finally dug, and it was a grand hole. Just the right size for a grand cat such as Maxwell. Charley placed the box containing Maxwell's grizzly left-overs in the hole and covered it with dirt. The others stood in a circle and stared down at the mounded earth until Joan said,

"It's cold. Let's go home."

Everyone, especially Ruth, but except Charley, agreed and, tucking their heads down and curling their arms around their bodies, hurried back to their warm beds. Joan strode ahead, Ray's teeth chattered, Ruth's slippers kept falling off, and Mona scurried back to Maxwell's Bar & Grille.

Charley stayed to mark the occasion with some words. He knelt down next to the small grave and said,

"Hey, Maxwell. Remember all those nights I used to sneak you in my room? I bet Joan would've croaked if she'd known. Ha. And listen. I know you used to bring field mice into the store. I found skeletons under the water heater."

Charley sat back on his heels and chewed the inside of his cheek.

"I'm gonna miss you, buddy."

The moon vanished behind a wandering cloud and a chill wind rustled the berry vines. Charley shivered in his pajamas. He reached out to pat the grave of Maxwell one last time before going home to his warm bed.

Just then something animal and furry brushed against his thigh. Charley jumped and landed on his feet a yard away from Maxwell's grave. There, sitting calmly, his proud

bushy tail neatly wrapped around his large paws, sat Maxwell with a bemused expression on his square cat face.

It's not written up in the Chamber of Commerce literature, nor was there an article about it in the local newspaper. But in that spare yard behind the small bookstore in our little beach town is a cat-sized grave. The denizens of the haphazardly communal household keep the berry vines clipped in a circular shape around it. No new weeds grow there.

At the foot of the grave is an empty can of Friskies cat food with a tiny mouse skeleton in it. At the head is a square grey stone with two words carefully printed in black ink. "Not Maxwell."



Bench : Davie Burns

Three Poems by Anna Govier

The Moon Makes Mad Dogs of Us All

At night we wake in
the silent dark and
brush aside our
sheltering covers -
cotton, wool, silk -
and pad, past mirror
and bed-post
to our front doors.
If we are lucky
we stop to slip
on some
casual shoes,
but more and more
just walk barefoot,
silky feet slapping
on steps, slate,
concrete, cobbles,
and to our gardens,
lush and green like velvet,
green as a green field,
washed yellow with streetlights.
Some have no streetlight
to illumine their tender faces,
only the blanket
of stars and the hushed,
calling moon.

We wet our feet as we walk,
the rains being over,
we trail webs in our
sleep-tangled nests of hair,
catch spiders in our
mouths and the
wisteria - if it flowers -
colours our cheeks
with bloom.
We walk until we
can walk no further
and stand as if stood
in church, ardent
and full of prayers.

We cast our
glances upwards,
blue eyes to the
blue moon,
that holy friend to
the lost and the
lonesome, and we
mouth out our desires.
Some pray, confess,
some simply stand,
feet parted, wringing hands
and biting lips; utterly silent.

Then, the howling
begins, as it must -
as it always must
after all this time -
and the sounds
are those of animals.
Sometimes snarling
happens, sometimes
hair is pulled
from aching heads,
some people regard
the stars, and stand,
gaped, in wonder
as they howl.
In this moment,
we are one.
All life is here,
the nightly calling,
this nightly torment,
this ritual of madness

Hope

I.

And then there was
the notion of hope,
that it might be
my rabbit's foot,
little shrine that
I could place
my head on,
the flowers which
only flower in winter;
small eyes to see
through winter dark.
But only if I could
keep my hope on
hope, move through
rooms soft and cold,
hold down my hands
and rest them there,
let lie the stitches
and small loops
of memory;
let it all lie
and find some
other way of
keeping warm.

All Is Singing

In the garden,
all is singing,
the sky billows
out as a skirt,
shaken,
the blue unfolds.
I tread lightly,
feel the earth
tamp down under
my feet.
I wish to leave
no mark,
no stain,
only a light
leave-taking
of my very self.

II.

The deer arrive,
they wander
softly, chew
and butter their
lips with apple-
blossom, then
far off I
hear a call -
a bark -
and all is
quick, quick,
tails in motion.
The woods stir.

III.

I walk to where
the river meets
the fields,
where once I
sat on stones,
sun-doped
and lazed all
day, a ragged
girl.
The river's course
is set down fast,
and I am young
again and greedy
at its feet.

Two Poems by Kriss Nichol

Cape Cod Morning

Inspired by painting of the same name by Edward Hopper (1950)

her eyes scratch the horizon
desperate for signs of his return

caught between tremors of anxiety
and tendrils of grief she inhabits chaos

tortured by memories wonders why
around her the world still spins

the sky so blue it hurt to look up
isn't altered by his absence

everything remains as it was that morning
when he left a breeze ruffles leaves

the dog scratches at the gate
in the fields horses twitch away flies

a tractor churns earth bleached
grasses soak up sunshine but

in the space his car had occupied
a drop of oil glistens

Innocence

Inspired by Man Lying on a Wall by L.S.Lowry

Everyone says he's a crap painter
I've no idea but I quite like this one
the way he has the fag pointing upwards
like the chimneys behind him

Mam says if we were meant to smoke
God would've put chimneys on our heads
and our teacher says smoking
makes your chest bad I'm never
going to smoke

Johnny Morris says his granda knew Lowry
I bet he didn't Johnny Morris is a liar
he said he saw my dad
kissing Betty from the corner shop
so I know he's a liar
my dad doesn't kiss



avaranthine : Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz

Short Story by Paul Brownsey

Making Things Up

“May I speak, please, to Mr Derek Wroe?”

“Who’re you?”

“My name is Fraser Scobie. I’m the editor of the *Kirkden Courier*.”

“You’re going to put it in the paper, what I said?”

“Uh, it’s about that that I’m ringing. That is Mr Wroe, is it?”

“Yes. I’m the one that sent in about Bobbo Kingley.”

“I’m phoning you in advance of our April 8th edition tomorrow because—”

“I can give you a lot more detail.”

“Uh—Well, there is a problem about your e-mail, Mr Wroe. You see, I think your memory may be misleading you about Bobbo Kingley—”

“Ah, *your memory may be misleading you*. There we go. Not believed. Can’t besmirch the name of the much-loved Bobbo Kingley.”

“No, no, it’s not like that at all, Mr Wroe—”

“I can remember every detail. They’d given him this room as guest of honour, opening the fête. Piles of hymn books on the windowsill and, like, ministers’ gowns and things in a cupboard. He used one to wipe himself off. I was just ten, just collecting autographs and him a big star and he says to go with him into the room because he wanted to give me a badge so I’d be in Bobbo’s Gang, I loved the idea of that, being in the gang. I can see him now, the centre-parting in his hair and the bow-tie as he came towards me—”

“Mr Wroe, Bobbo Kingley never existed.”

“Ah, there we go. Pretending it never happened.”

“No, Mr Wroe, *he* never existed. Bobbo Kingley wasn’t a real person. He was a made-up person.”

“But it was all in the paper last week, all about him, Bobbo Kingley, much-loved star was local boy, 23 pantos at the Glasgow Pavilion, lunchtime TV variety show, Bobbo’s Gang club for the kids—”

“Please listen to me for a moment, Mr Wroe, and I’ll explain.”

“—working for charities and things. I mean, why put all that in if he was a made-up person, eh?”

“It was an April Fool joke. Last week’s edition of the *Courier* came out on April 1st so we had a bit of April Fool’s fun. We invented a star of Scottish showbusiness from here in Kirkden.”

“But you had photos of him, at school and receiving an award and outside a hospital with children.”

“Well, we took photos from the internet that no-one was likely to recognise, and we pretended they were of the man we made up, Bobbo Kingley.”

“But it was him, the man in the room at St Margaret’s when he opened the fête, the bow-tie and centre-parting ...”

“Mr Wroe, most of the photos we said were Bobbo Kingley were of a man called Fred Arnold, who was a country doctor in New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s. We took them from a local history website in New Zealand. The school picture was his class at school in Dunedin. The picture of him outside the hospital was from when he was involved in a programme to

vaccinate children against TB. The photo of the pantomime dame we said was Bobbo Kingley—that was G. S. Melvin, an actual Scottish dame from the last century. Under all the make-up you can't tell it's not the same person as the doctor."

"You said for people to send in their memories of him."

"Well, yes, that was part of the April Fool joke; inviting people to send in their memories, I mean. To see if anyone did."

"And I did. I want it out in the open at last, what he did to me. I want justice."

"Mr Wroe, we flagged it up in all sorts of ways that Bobbo Kingley wasn't a real person. The headline spoke of 'fond memories', but in the story we said we hadn't been able to trace a single person who remembered him—"The forgotten legend of Scottish showbusiness who might never have existed'. Also, a lot of the detail was imaginary. We said he went to Braid Street School and was in the Boys' Brigade at McKay Memorial Church, but there was never a Braid Street, let alone a school in it, and there's never been a McKay Memorial Church, in Kirkden or anywhere else in Scotland."

"So it was fake news. You were making things up. Fake news in the *Kirkden Courier*."

"Not fake news, Mr Wroe. Just an April Fool's joke."

"How many people sent in about him besides me?"

"Very few, actually."

"What did they say?"

"Well, one man said he thought he remembered him as a boy in his street who was always joking but that he must have changed his name for the stage because the boy he remembered was called Gordon King. A woman said she remembered him performing at an old folks' home where her mother was a resident, and how much the old folk enjoyed him singing all the old songs."

"Are you going to put in the paper what they said?"

"We are, Mr Wroe. There's a piece in tomorrow's edition in which we explain the joke and say that hardly anyone fell for it, so the joke was really on us. We just say that one or two people were caught out for a moment into thinking that they did remember him. The woman who wrote in about Bobbo Kingley singing songs in the home where her mother was—I gave her a call in advance of tomorrow's *Courier*, just like I'm phoning you. In fact, there was a Scottish showbiz star who did a lot of that, entertaining in care homes and orphanages and so on, supporting fund-raising appeals for them, Rob Royale, who was brought up in an orphanage. He only died four or five years ago. I suppose we partly based Bobbo Kingley on Rob Royale. The woman agreed the man she remembered singing the songs was probably Rob Royale; especially since the names are similar, in a way: *Rob* and *Bobbo* are both forms of *Robert* and almost rhyme; and the surnames have *king* in one, *royal* in the other. She was good-humoured about it and didn't mind being quoted. We're going to say that the man she thought was Bobbo Kingley was Rob Royale."

"And you're going to put in what I said, too?"

"Uh, no, Mr Wroe, we aren't."

"Why not?"

"Mr Wroe, an April Fool joke is a light-hearted thing. It's not the place, the context, for your memories, recollections of child abuse."

"Ah, yes, *light-hearted*. Kids get abused but mustn't spoil *light-hearted*."

“Mr Wroe, don’t you see how it would look—how it would look for *you*—if we printed what you sent us, your, uh, narrative of being abused by someone who in fact never existed?”

“Ah, right, got you. It’d look like I was a *troubled person* with mental health problems, making things up.”

“Well ... it certainly wouldn’t *help* you to, uh, get justice.”

“Okay, okay. But, see, that woman who remembered him singing in the old folks’ home: you was all comfy and cosy with her. She’s *people*, I’m not. Why didn’t you do with me what you did with her? Why didn’t you say to me, like you said to her, ‘Derek, Bobbo Kingley was a made-up person. But there was this other person, this Bob Royale, Rob Royale person, who was, like, similar. He was in show business and lots of charity things and so on, and could it be Bob, Rob Royale you was thinking of who did those things to you at the church fête? Like the lady, your memory was OK, you just got the name wrong for a moment, similar names.’ And she says, ‘Ah, yes, you’re right, it was Bob Royale,’ and you’re going to say it was Rob Royale she remembered. That’s how you treat her. But I don’t get that respect.”

“Well, yes, Mr Wroe, I’m sure it could be true that you, uh, temporarily mixed up names for a moment.”

“And I’ve got more excuse than her to mix up fucking names. Do you know what it does to you when you’ve been abused? You *try* to forget and block things out because you don’t want to remember.”

“I’m sure that happens, Mr Wroe.”

“Okay. So tell me this. Did this Bobbo Royale—”

“Rob.”

“That’s right, Rob Royale. Did he wear a bow-tie? And have straight hair with a centre-parting?”

“Well, offhand I can’t say for sure, but, as I said, we did sort of base Bobbo Kingley on Rob Royale. There were photos of him on the internet—I think there may have been a bow-tie. What I can tell you is that, yes, Rob Royale had a Joke Club for the kids; they could write in for joke books and things, and we took the idea of Bobbo’s Gang from that.”

“There you go, then. You can say your April Fool thing produced information that this other old-time showbusiness person, a real one, Bob Royale, was a child abuser like Jimmy Savile.”

“As I’ve said to you, Mr Wroe, it would not help you, that your recollections were prompted by a fictitious person.”

“Then don’t tie it in with what the other people said in the April Fool thing. Do it in a separate article later on. You can do an interview with me.”

“I think if you’ve got accusations to make, the best place to go is the police.”

“You’re a newspaper. Newspapers print accusations. All these things about Harvey Weinstein, and politicians groping women in lifts and things, and Kevin Spacey and guys, and producers telling actresses they only get the part if they sleep with them. Women’ve only to open their mouths and the newspapers take it all down and print it. And what have you got to worry about? Bob Royale’s dead. Like Edward Heath. He can’t sue. He’s not Cliff Richard. So come on, let the world know my story.”

“Mr Wroe, responsible journalism doesn’t do everything it can get away with.”

“*Responsible journalism doesn’t do everything it can get away with.* Oh, just listen to yourself, all holier-than-thou. I’m not allowed my voice about what happened to me, it gets

censored out. And I know why that is. You think I'm a *troubled person*, don't you? A fantasist who's making things up. A *troubled person*. Of course I'm fucking troubled. Look what was done to me. I can remember every detail, someone knocked on the door while he had my trousers down, and he'd locked it first, and he called, 'Just a minute, I'm changing, oh, and could you find my wife and bring her over here, my back's got a spasm and I need help with my shoes,' and after he heard the person go away he peeped out to see they'd gone and made me leave. I want justice, and that's putting it in the papers so that everyone knows what this *much-loved* Bob Royale made Derek Wroe do. But no, sticking your thing in a wee boy's mouth has no place in your smug fucking prim middle-class world with fond memories and charity bashes and April Fool joke crap."

"Mr Wroe, I telephoned you to give you advance warning of tomorrow's *Courier*. It was an act of kindness, because I thought that it might come as a shock, suddenly discovering that the man whom you remembered abusing you never existed. I wanted to talk you through it and that's what I've done. I'm afraid I have nothing more to say to you."

"Well, I've got something more to say to you. Do you want to hear it?"

"Uh—go ahead."

"Ready?"

"Yes, Mr Wroe."

"Well, then, here it is. April Fool yourself!"

"I see."

"No, you don't fucking see at all. And you won't ever see, 'cos now you can tell yourself you were pranked. Had. Like I was."

"Goodbye, Mr Wroe."



Moon: Davie Burns

Commentary : Stephen Shellard

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us ...

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us

To see oursels as ithers see us!

It wad frae mony a blunder free us,

An' foolish notion:

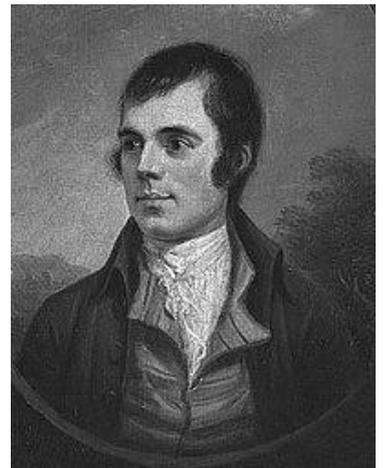
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,

An' ev'n devotion!

From: "To A Louse, On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church"



*Robert Burns, National Poet of
Scotland, born Alloway, 25
January 1759, died Dumfries 21
July 1796*



O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us ...

I am guessing that Burns might have enjoyed this particular joke, but perhaps have been pleased to note that when I returned to the scene of the crime shortly after taking the photo, the local authority had removed the offence.

In July 1793 Burns and his friend John Syme embarked on a tour of Galloway. Syme records this story in a letter "written soon after" their return.

"We left Kenmure, and went to Gatehouse. I took him the moor road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark. The hollow winds sighed; the lightning gleamed; the thunder rolled.

The poet enjoyed the awful scene: he spoke not a word, but seemed rapt in meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall. It poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements rumble their bellyful upon our defenceless heads. Oh, oh! 'twas foul. We got utterly wet; and, to avenge ourselves, Burns insisted, at Gatehouse, on our getting utterly drunk." [1]

I imagine that the events leading up to the latter day crowning of the poet, as depicted in the photograph above, bore some resemblance to that night in Gatehouse.

Drunk or sober I'd guess the escapade was not without hazard



The most photographed tree on the Solway : Davie Burns

Three Poems by David Callin

Blandings in Ayrshire

There must have been a Brigadoonish turn
somewhere along the road, one that we took
without noticing, so turning up here at last
to find ourselves the only guests, we seem

to have entered into a Plummy Wonderland.
And later, taking tea in the drawing room,
where Tatlers and Shooting Times evoke the very
best of Mayfair dentists' waiting rooms,

we wonder at the absence of aunts and gongs.
Still later, taking a turn around the grounds,
a maze of old-fashioned roses and ancient trees,
and me unaccountably not in spats,

around every fragrant corner we expect to find
Madeline Basset weeping in an arbour,
Gussie fretting about his precious newts
or that blighter Spode, fashioning dreams of power.

On looking, again, into Kelly's Dictionary of Manks (1805)

I comb this unsubstantial book of words -
the few that have been rescued from the fire -
in search of rarities, for beasts and birds
and common terms of farmhouse, barn and byre,
with little luck. How many lexicons
have vanished with these places and their stones.

A few peep out ...
"a field with many corners"
"a griskin" (no idea)
"standing corn"
"an incestuous marriage"
the famous "small imperfect swarm of bees"

Poor gleanings. Where is the word for the sweet bouquet
of a midden simmering on a summer's day,
the first rain after a period of drought
or the gap in a hedge where a vagrant sheep got out?
Gone is the term for a cottage of ill fame,
and even the names for the things one must not name.

Duende

I am teaching myself Spanish
by reading Lorca in Seville.
The beautiful unserviceable words.
Star. Poplar. Nightingale.
And I with evening on my shoulders -
yo con la tarde sobre mis hombros -
in restaurants I smile and point
and wonder about duende.

Is it in the attentive waiters,
these crisp table arrangements,
this exquisite tarta de limon
y merengue? Unlikely.
We might find it in the bullring,
but being Northern and squeamish
we do not visit the bullring.
We might find it in flamenco,
if flamenco were not just tourist flummery,
but we go anyway ...

Four red-backed chairs in a whitewashed cellar.
Admission includes one drink and one tapa.
From the walls, Old Egypt looks down long noses.
The stamping. The clapping.
The high deep keening of love
and death. *Duende.*
Oh oh.
Duende.
Oh, oh, oh, oh

Contributors

Michael Ansell : Brought up in the Glenkens, attended Dalry School and Kirkcudbright Academy, after Aberdeen University worked abroad in SE Asia, returned to Glenkens and developed an interest in local place-names and especially the hidden Gaelic culture of Galloway.

Paul Brownsey A former newspaper reporter and a former lecturer in philosophy at Glasgow University, Paul Brownsey has published over 80 short stories in the UK and North America. His first book, *His Steadfast Love and Other Stories*, published in September 2015 by *Lethe Press*, NJ, USA, received a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*.

David Callin lives in what he likes to call the Deep South of the Kingdom of the Isles, midway between pretty much everything. On a clear day he can see the Mull of Galloway, the Mountains of Mourne and the North Channel, through which he continues to expect the imminent return of Somerled.

Paul Connolly His poems have appeared in *Agenda*, *The Warwick Review*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *Scintilla*, *The Reader*, *Envoi*, *Sarasvati*, *The Dawntreader*, *Dream Catcher*, *Orbis*, *The Journal*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *Guttural*, *Nine Muses*, and *The Seventh Quarry*. Third in the *Magna Carta Competition*, he was shortlisted for the *Bridport* and *Charles Causley Prizes*.

Davie Burns grew up in rural Kirkcudbrightshire in the 1960s and was introduced to the wonders of the night sky by his grandfather. Retirement has enabled him to combine his passion for astronomy with his new passion for photography. www.instagram.com/davegram189

Kelly Davis was born in London and lives in West Cumbria, where she works as a freelance editor. Her poems have been published in *Msllexia* and *The Journal* and appear in several anthologies, including *Dusk* (Arachne Press), *Out of Context* (Grey Hen Press) and *This Place I Know* (Handstand Press).

Anna Govier has been featured in *Southlight*, *Doll Hospital Journal* and *Listen Softly's* anthology, *Luminous Defiant*. She published her first poetry book with *Listen Softly* at the end of 2018, entitled *Our Wildest Notion*. She was also the poetry editor for *Doll Hospital Journal*. She lives in South West Scotland.

Jenny Hockey is a Sheffield poet (jennyhockeypoetry.co.uk). In 2013 she received a New Poets Bursary Award from *New Writing North* and, after magazine and anthology publications from 1985 onwards, her debut collection, 'Going to Bed with the Moon', came out in 2019 (Oversteps Books).

John Horn I am a retired teacher living in Dumfries and Galloway who has had work published in various booklets and pamphlets, including "Southlight." and "The Fankle". I also have work in several craft publications printed by Hestan Isle Press, one of which was shortlisted for the Callum Macdonald Memorial award.

Nell Kokocinska-Pankiewicz : 'fine art and creative portrait' photographer whose work was published in *The Dumfries & Galloway Life* magazine. Since her UK debut in 2017 she's had several exhibitions at *Ocean Terminal Gallery*, *The North Edinburgh Art Gallery* and *The Nail Factory Gallery* in Dalbeattie. Her collection is shown at *Laurent de la Cabrerisse*, France since 2018.

Robin Leiper is a psychotherapist and poet living in Scotland and South Africa. He has been published here and there.

Liz Lofthouse : was a lecturer in Art History for twenty years at the University of Hull. Latterly she developed and ran a part-time degree for mature students in Arts and Humanities as well as introducing Creative Writing onto the full time undergraduate degree programmes in English and History. She now lives in South West Scotland, writes prose and poetry, and paints in various media.

John Manson has supported the Independent Scottish literary tradition and also the concept of world literature for over sixty years. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Association of Scottish Literary Studies and a pioneer of Hugh MacDiarmid studies.

Maria C. McCarthy was the winner of the Society of Authors' Tom-Gallon Trust Award 2015 for her story 'More Katharine than Audrey'. She writes poems, stories and memoir, and was a columnist for BBC Radio 4's *Home Truths*. She has published three of her own books, and edited many others. www.medwaymaria.co.uk

Gillian Mellor Her poems can be found in the co-authored pamphlet 'Compass Points' available at The Moffat Bookshop. She is an award winning poet, also widely published in magazines

Dr Jo Miller grew up in the Glenkens, Galloway, and has a long association with local music making as a performer and researcher. She has worked in a range of educational settings since the 1980s, including founding the innovative traditional music course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She is currently writing a book about learning music in community organisations, and leading a mentoring project for music tutors. In 2017 Jo received the Hamish Henderson award for services to traditional music.

Kriss Nichol has an MA in Creative Writing and since moving to Dumfries and Galloway has had numerous poems and short stories published in small press magazines and anthologies. She has self-published two novels and three poetry pamphlets of her published poems. She runs a writing group in Newton Stewart, Curleywee writers, and is a member of Dumfries' Crichton Writers

Jessie M Page : I am a curious wanderer, gathering up memories like bundles of down wood. I warm myself against the cold of uncertainty with recollections of sweet-hearted friends, distant lovers, wild places. Some of these find themselves pressed onto pages in stories, some find themselves treading the boards in plays; some spread out in a novel or two.

wordsandimages@mail.com

Derek Ross is currently enjoying minimalist photography and minimalist Japanese forms of writing (Haiku, Haibun, Haiga etc), probably because he can't see the big picture and is a man of few words!

Finola Scott ; Her work is published in magazines and anthologies. Her poems can be found on posters, postcards and tapestries. Interested in the world around, she writes about people, places and politics. Current Makar of the Federation of Writer, her pamphlet *Much left Unsaid* is published by Red Squirrel.

Hamish Scott writes poetry and prose in Scots and has published four poetry collections with The Laverock's Nest Press.

Stephen Shellard. I went to school in Newry, Co Down, then to University in Reading before moving to Dumfries. I became an FE lecturer, and in my spare time, an occasional songwriter and entry level performer in folk clubs and at open mic events. I write a blog. <https://carruchan.wordpress.com/>

Kate Shenton Ross is a part-time Primary School Teacher, postgraduate student and writer. She lives in Annandale with her husband and West Highland Terrier. Kate enjoys reading and is an avid hill walker. The scenery she visits inspire her poetry.

Ian C Smith : His work has appeared in, *Amsterdam Quarterly*, *Antipodes*, *cordite*, *Poetry New Zealand*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Southerly*, & *Two-Thirds North*. His seventh book is *Wonder Sadness Madness Joy*, Ginninderra (Port Adelaide). He writes in the Gippsland Lakes area of Victoria, and on Flinders Island, Tasmania.

David Mark Williams writes poetry and short fiction. He has been shortlisted for the Montreal Poetry Prize and won Second Prize in the New Zealand Poetry Society International Competition. Two collections of his poetry have been published: *The Odd Sock Exchange*, Cinnamon, 2015 and *Papaya Fantasia*, Hedgehog, 2018.

Roddy Williams Originally from North Wales, Roddy Williams lives and works in London. His poetry has appeared in 'Smiths Knoll', 'Magma', 'The North', 'The Frogmore Papers', 'The Rialto', 'Envoi' and other magazines. He is a keen surrealist photographer, printmaker and painter.

Southlight

welcomes submission of poetry, short stories and black and white artworks. Writers and artists are asked to submit :

- Single sided, double-spaced A4 paper in 12pt font
- Poems (max 6 x 40 lines)
- Prose (around 2500 words)
- Proposal for critical articles
- 50 word max biography - **please include your postal address**
- SAE for return of work
- Artists should send B&W work (max 6) as jpegs by e-mail or post

E-mail submissions (preferred) in MS Word or as jpegs to :

vivien@freeola.com

Please put your name in the file title

or by post to
Vivien Jones : SOUTHLIGHT
5, Lakeview, Powfoot, Annan
Dumfries & Galloway
DG12 5PG
Scotland

Southlight has a website and a Facebook page

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