

Poetry *Express*

promoting poetry, prose, plays, art and music by survivors of mental distress

Winter 2012 #40

Survivors' Poetry is 21 years old and we will be celebrating with founders:

Joe Bidder, Peter Campbell, Frank Bangay, Hillary Porter and friends

Tuesday Greenidge Featured Artist

Thomas Ország-Land - *Revolutions and Survival*

Broadsheet - featuring recent poems from published and unpublished poets



Image by ©Tuesday Greenidge - Thin Figure

 **Survivors' Poetry**
*promoting poetry by survivors
of mental distress*

Poetry *Express* Survivors' Poetry's newsletter

Survivors' Poetry {SP} is a unique national charity which promotes the writing of survivors of mental distress. **Poetry *Express* (PE)** reflects the expression of interest, as well as poetry and prose, of the survivor community. PE features a mix of contributions.

A Survivor may be a person with a current or past experience of psychiatric hospitals, ECT, tranquillisers or other medication, a user of counselling services, a survivor of sexual abuse, child abuse and any other person who has empathy with the experiences of survivors.

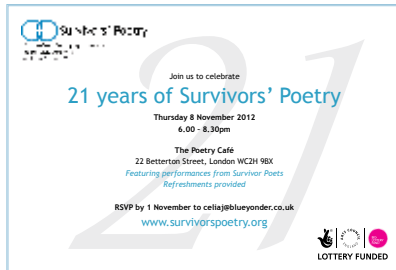


Please visit our website : www.survivorspoetry.org for more information or please write to us.

1 **E**ditorial - Dave Russell

2 **U**ppdate - Simon Jenner

3 **21**st birthday invite -



4 **R**evolution and Survival -

Thomas Ország-Land

7 **"Y**ou've been sold out the health system ..."

- Dave Russell

8 **T**he Reality King

- Simon Jenner

9

BROADSHEET

Selection of survivor poems -

20 **F**eatured Artist

- Tuesday Greenidge

23 **R**evues - Dave Russell

33 **G**raffiti Corner - from the forum

34 **N**otice for Musicians

- from the forum

35 **A**bout the authors

36 **B**ulletin -

37 **N**etwork

Back Cover - Events

Featured articles, art and poetry © of contributors.
Printed with kind permission.

Editor: Dave Russell

Art Editor, Coordinator and Typesetter:

Blanche Donnery

Editorial Team:

Blanche Donnery, Roy Birch & Simon Jenner

Cover Image: © Tuesday Greenidge

Poetry Express (PE) is only published in PDF format. Contact us to join our mailing list. We welcome Submissions: Poetry, articles, news items, and other matter which may be of interest to our readers. We cannot guarantee publication and reserve the right to edit contributions. The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of Survivors' Poetry. All Poems/Artwork printed herein are the copyright of the authors credited.

Patrons:

Mario Petrucci, Debjani Chatterjee MBE

Trustees:

Marius Jankowski, Philip Ruthen (Chair), Celia Potterton, Peter Street.

Staff:

Simon Jenner (Director), Roy Birch (National Outreach Coordinator and Mentoring Scheme Coordinator).

Freelance Staff/Contractors:

Dark Systems Ltd (IT), Hugh Ellacott (Videos), Luminal Ltd (Website Developer).

Volunteers:

Dave Russell (Reviews & Events), Xochitl Tuck & Razz (Poetry Café Events' Coordinators). Blanche Donnery (DTP/PE)

Office Address:

Studio 11, Bickerton House
25-27 Bickerton Road
London N19 5JT
Tel +44 {0}20 7281 4654
info@survivorspoetry.org.uk
www.survivorspoetry.org

An animated evening at the Poetry Café on May 10th, celebrating Xochitl's 66th birthday, and her 15-year stint as PC events coordinator – and preserved with some live film footage too. (NB: most of the sets performed this evening are on YouTube) Usual spirited opening from Razz, including his spirited take on Buddy Can You Spare A Dime?, I Don't Want to Learn from my Past Mistakes and Scrounger. Helmut Schultz did a solo spot, his wild instrumental virtuosity, punctuated by some poetry – which I would have liked to hear more clearly. Helmut and Catherine – now help to back Razz, this time with the addition of Pete, making up a gutty foursome. Later, Catherine, who generally plays with Helmut, did an inspiring solo spot. Later in the evening Pete did a raunchy blues set, featuring his slide version of Vigilante Man – of Ry Cooder calibre in my opinion. Phil Davies, ever struggling bravely against his ailments, did an a cappella version of Keeping Your Head Above Water. Some shrewd observations from Nick – Walking and Talking with Strangers. Chris Leeds did a tasty cover of Joanna Newsome's Clam, Crab, Cockle, Cowrie.

Dave Skull did a gritty, lugubrious performance of The Eagles in the Air and Perpetual. Six short poems from Ross: very perceptive comment in The Edge: "Don't try to stop the beginning of an ending". Interesting spot from Warren, especially the reflective Titanic Seaport.

Jessica Lawrence mentioned her recent bereavement with her mother, and the near-miraculous recovery of her cat from near-death by means of the administration of Morphine – then announced her refusal of chemotherapy. She then read Eternal Moment, Butterfly House, Sparrows in the Rain and Seagulls on the Lawn. Her set was followed by a poet whose name I did not note (can anyone shed light?), who read Green Anarchist and Guttled (in memory of Salvador Allende).

Son of Psycho Yogi did a splendid set, really rich in musical influences. Chains of Reality – Elusive Dream – 'sitting on a bus going nowhere . . . we are chasing shadows;' Vanity – Feeling Blue in Rhapsody – What the Prophet Said – Cursed and Blessed.

Jude Cowan played some extremely tasty keyboard (with drum machine) – glissandi and piccolo stop particularly effective. Some interesting lyrics, including saving a caterpillar's life on a beach in Mauritius. Alain English read two choice items included in his CD, which is also reviewed in this issue – Snakes Inside My Eyes and Snooker Law. The evening concluded with a relative newcomer, Sarah, who had discovered poetry via a Beginners' Class at the Mary Ward Centre two years ago.

Tottenham Chances on May 24th was a really invigorating experience – of total vitality and exceptional variety. From Spoken Word to the Free Form Jazz of Chin Angle – I tend to prefer such with strobe lights, film footage and a dancer or two; perhaps on a future occasion . . . Razz was without his excellent

backing group on this occasion, so concentrated on spoken words and karaoke. Terry contributed a wry, laconic comedy set, including a bitter satire of the so culpable Italian ship's captain. Sensitive poetry in English and Italian from Coriana. Some incredible Karaoke mime from Caro Sparks, identifying in real depth with Bette Midler and Kate Bush. As for It's Raining Men, I've heard the original and Geri Halliwell's cover; I declare Caro's version the winner – audience participation sign language and all. Similar vocal depth from Ay-Lex – heartfelt statement of apology about having caused heartache, followed by Under My Skin – statement of emotional conflict: "The tangled web is not about what the truth is". The other woman singer, after some trouble with her backing track, went straight a cappella, to great effect. Geesink Norba did folk'n'country material very tastily – and what fiddle-playing! I heard after the set that the fiddler had been going since he was 7 years old.

Shaman Tony Beckingham did the last main spot – what a meditation lesson. In the opener, the audience was prompted to drift into cosmic time – in terms of billions of years ("By instantaneous action time is created), in pursuit of a song 'wrapped in silence . . . no rhythm because no time. My Purpose and Morning Hymn seemed to refer to quests: a 'journey to fire'; a priest who 'blazes pure clean golden energy'. He was more overtly political in with his references to forthcoming elections in Afghanistan and Lebanon; he stressed the need for 'courage to kiss the soldier's gun'. Great audience participation conclusion with A Dream, where the audience eagerly latched on to the refrain: "Kiss the bloody frog!" while one was 'journeying down a gulch . . . waiting for a secret river'

And July 12th, an action-packed evening was embellished by a Skype supported reading of David Austell's Garuda.

September swung into action with sophisticated stand-up comedy from Tony Morrese, and imaginative, soul sung and spoken poetry from Lawrence Burnett. Among the floorspots was an extended piece by Jessica Lawrence, accompanied by simulated birdsong. I hope these events represent of a dynamic upswing in Survivors Poetry activity.

There will not be an Outreach update in this issue of *Poetry Express* due to the cut in hours available for Roy Birch (former Outreach Coordinator.) He is currently writing a book and only available for one day a week, during which he works on the Survivors' Poetry Mentoring Scheme. We hope to have an update in the next issue, as manuscripts have been completed and handed in by some mentees for and are currently in production.

Welcome to an autumn we're still writing in. It's thanks to Blanche Donnery, the designer, editor Dave Russell and the inspirations too of Phil Ruthen and Marius Jankowski that we're not only still here but crackle everywhere with a theme to outlast Guy Fawkes. This is the nature of Greece's so-called austerity, how the banking and financial systems have both failed and are profiting by the so-called basket case that could be ours. That word of course alerts us to what Greece is doing with what it terms its basket-cases, foreshadowing only by a few months what's happening to the mental health as well as arts and all other communities here. You can gauge how civilised a culture is by how it treats its women and minorities, of which mental health is a key strand. The following pages will outline that bleakly and with excoriating eloquence.

Survivors' Poetry {SP} turns 21

We celebrate as I write our 21st anniversary. It's a sober thought that we find ourselves in the midst of a climate we were actively quitting in 1991. That of cut to mental health services, so-called integration into the community, people thrust on the streets to die. Some of that culture – not much – was modified. In the intervening years as our Chair Marius Jankowski pointed out, asylum has begun to reclaim its original meaning, since asylum seekers enact what asylums were nominally envisaged as: places of refuge, safety, healing. Much has been done to highlight the alas permanent place mental health has in or environment, how pervasive it is, how universal its often terrible application. I'm reminded of the nature of cyclical nightmares and narratives, David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, a novel that ends where it began, and the end of its author in 2008.

So much has been effected by our refreshed Board, by Diane Lightfoot and Celia Potterton in our own celebration, and by others like Phil Ruthen to generate a wide discussion and place for Survivors (Phil is not technically on the Board, but seems spiritually never to have left it, dare I say?) that I want to soar into a celebratory moment or two. What we do want to affirm is the greater mobility, the more various identities and the sense of transformation of even SP as an organisation over the past few years and indeed months. The tribulations of the arts communities and the Arts Council measures against one kind of prosperity, and it affects the often heroic volunteer work that many unsung people manage: Edward Clark for instance who held me halve the office over the summer and might have to do the same again as we transform and downsize our physical environment. Can you downsize an environment? We'll certainly try to, and have raised glasses to our hosts as you read this, in the Poetry Café on November 8th.

The Power of Corridors

It's not often the DCMS Portfolio is regarded as crucial, but Maria Miller and her predecessor Jeremy Hunt have been thrust to a prominence they mightn't altogether

have welcomed. I'm addressing that more widely below. Otherwise everything from Murdoch to Savile underlines how power operates in discharging its pleasures, a prime operation of power itself. Abuse erupts in many forms, reaching everywhere where those who wield power can abuse those more vulnerable. It's no revelation that the latest of the abuse scandals touch No. 10., especially in its late 1980s Victorian Values phase (not to be confused with how those words were thrust into John Major's Back to Basics campaign, much to his bewilderment). It should be more widely bruited that the last Tory conference in Brighton under Margaret Thatcher demanded so many prostitutes the local Brighton girls of whom there are many (my own street was a byword) simply couldn't service the demand. Extra prostitutes had to be bussed in. One wonders how willing some were. We shouldn't forget the Olympics saw an alleged upsurge of the same demand in Greenwich and Blackheath (where I live midweek). It was predicted the whole entourage would require vast servicing. We've not yet heard the full denouement of this, but abuse continues alas even in the most celebratory of environments

Sometimes there seems more truth than poetry to write about; but our primary concern is to transmute that by acts of affirmation, healing, creativity and defiance. If any of the above seems a trifle raw, I should as they say come out. As I write elsewhere, I survived Savile's attentions. And that of a few others in the 1970s. I was lucky, and on occasions I write for those who continue not to be.

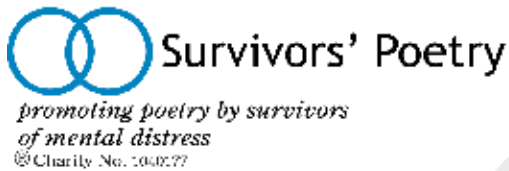
You are invited to join Survivors' Poetry
to celebrate our 21st birthday on
Thursday 8 November from 6.00-8.30pm
at
the Poetry Café, 22 Betterton Street, London

As well as looking back over the last 21 years, the event will set out a vision for the future of Survivors' Poetry - and will hear from both the original founders and from its current director, Dr Simon Jenner.

The evening will feature performances from Survivors' Poets and will be followed by Survivors' Poetry's regular monthly performance event. Refreshments will be provided.

An invite is attached with all the event details; it would be very helpful for our catering if you could RSVP by 1 November 2012 to celiaj@blueyonder.co.uk

We hope you can join us to help celebrate this landmark event!



Join us to celebrate

21 years of Survivors' Poetry

Thursday 8 November 2012

6.00 - 8.30pm

The Poetry Café

22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX

Featuring performances from Survivor Poets

Refreshments provided

RSVP by 1 November to celiaj@blueyonder.co.uk

www.survivorspoetry.org



LOTTERY FUNDED

Revolution and Survival by *Thomas Ország-Land*

Winter 2012 #40

A COUNTRY STILL STRANGLERED BY POLITICAL CORRUPTION

FROM REVOLUTION to revolution, I have watched Hungary evolve over the past half-century.

The more dramatic of the two revolutions took place in the autumn of 1956 – just 56 years ago this year – when a beaten, starved and humiliated subject people of fewer than 10 million souls managed to stare down the brutal might of the Soviet Union. The more triumphant revolution may be unfolding now that Hungary’s divided democratic opposition forces are learning to collaborate against the vicious remnants of political corruption inherited from the Communist system.

Would the people who marched on parliament all those years ago one heady late-October evening have been prepared to risk everything for the petty power manipulations now being pursued inside that building in their name? Certainly not. Was the revolution worth the sacrifice? Probably, for those among us who have survived unharmed.

Hungary in 1956 was very different from the picture that has been handed down to us in all but the very latest history books. The country had experienced all the horror of the delayed first industrial revolution of the region, concentrated into a few brief years by the merciless pace of Soviet economic planning. Traditionally the breadbasket of Europe, Hungary was starving as a result of the Communists’ ruthless policy of forced agricultural collectivisation.

Hungary between Democracy & Authoritarianism
by Paul Lendvai, Trans. Keith Chester
Hurst, London, 2012, 256pp., Hardback,
ISBN: 978-1849041966, £25

Then the death of Stalin in 1953 ended the myth of the unchallengeable monopoly of power, unleashing murderous jealousy, confusion and sheer ineptitude at the top. Abrupt and self-contradictory changes were imposed from above, some for the better. Police despotism was somewhat curbed. A lot of prison camps were opened. There was something like open debate, giving a voice to such powerful forces of dissent as Paul Lendvai, now the doyen of European foreign correspondents and the author of a brilliant new analysis on the abuse of power in his homeland.

Hungarian society was confused, behaving like a mismanaged pressure cooker.

The revolution began on a radiantly beautiful evening on October 23. There were several simultaneous but spontaneous demonstrations against an evil and corrupt regime, some of

them ending with blood on the streets. Perhaps the most important one took place at Kossuth Square in front of the Eclectic parliament building on the Danube embankment when a mass of patriots summoned Imre Nagy, the vacillating lifelong “reform” Communist leader.

“Comrades!” he addressed the crowd estimated at hundreds of thousands from a high balcony safely out of their reach. But his voice faltered amid their catcalls. “Fellow citizens!” he corrected himself, and Hungary’s independence was born for less than two glorious weeks.

I must have had a reporter’s compass that unfailingly navigated me into the centre of the action. I was with a group of students at Elte University in Budapest, but I was not one of them. I was a poet aged just 18, making a precarious living as a freelance journalist and occasional labourer. My purpose at the university was to court an older female student journalist, without the remotest chance of success.

Then three young men strode in wearing military fatigues and carrying short submachine guns with round magazines, slung across their chests. They resembled the ubiquitous heroic statues of the “fraternal” Soviet troops on their march across Europe during World War II.

The newcomers explained that they had been sent by the revolutionary chieftain József Dudás, who had just confiscated the presses of a state publishing company. But the warriors lacked the expertise to complete the first edition of their projected newspaper, *The Hungarian Independent*. Would some of us care to accompany them to help him out?

But the students whispered that Dudás had been a Nazi collaborator during the war. His emissaries looked like common criminals, they said. They did, and I had had my childhood experience of Nazi collaborators. Yet the opportunity was irresistible. I went. I was soon relieved when one of my new companions taught me on the way along the darkened palaces of Rákóczi Road how to handle his weapon and even allowed me to carry it for him.

The press centre occupied by Dudás and his army during the revolution has just been rebuilt into an elegant shopping complex. I was familiar with that building and its huge basement presses as I had done casual work there for several publications. It stood so close to the old National Theatre that journalists, actors and support staff often gazed at one another through the windows during idle moments.

I did get the first edition out – or rather it was done by “Uncle” Péter Sándor, the legendary compositor of the old days of hot-metal printing technology who had taught generations of journalists essential aspects of their business. He positioned me next to the layout bench (the “stone”) and allowed me to think that I was making all the decisions while he assembled the pages from the assorted editorial matter already set in lead.

And he explained what he did and why.

The next day, I recruited for Dudás a proper staff from a satirical journal that I knew well. They were professionals glad for an opportunity to express in print, some for the first time in their lives, the truth as they perceived it. I also contributed to the paper what became my most-translated poem still occasionally recited at celebrations commemorating the revolution. Here is the poem, in an English translation by Watson Kirkconnel:

INSTEAD OF A TOMBSTONE

He shyly closed the lids of darkened eyes,
a small red flower blossomed on his breast.
A smile still lingered on his mouth's surprise
as if at home he slept and loved his rest...

The little hero in the filth is laid
(around him fall his bread-loaves in the mud)
just as but now he paced the barricade –
in vain let fall his bomb, and shed his blood...

He shyly closed the lids of darkened eyes,
a small red flower blossomed on his breast.
Beside his corpse a steaming gutter lies.
The world sings victory, but signs a jest.

Work with my older colleagues in an atmosphere of editorial freedom and mutual encouragement was very close to my idea of being in heaven. Much closer than I thought.

Decades later, I met the surviving commander of a detachment of the hated and hunted Communist state security service AVH, which had been sent on a suicide mission to assault Dudás' headquarters. They surreptitiously occupied the empty theatre but could not find windows convenient for an attack on a part of our building devoted to a military purpose. So they watched us at work in the editorial office, trained their awesome heavy weaponry on us and opened the windows to escape injury from falling glass.

Their musty room filled with cigarette smoke and the nauseating stench of fear was suddenly invaded by the balmy autumn air of the evening. They wanted to live. Somebody giggled, "Come off it fellows, they too are Hungarians." And they commandeered the No. 6 tram for a free ride to the indoor swimming baths of St. Margaret's Island to cool their troubled heads.

Dudás was in his 40s, at the height of his power, a direct and dignified man with a strong stare and enormous charisma. We never discussed politics beyond the purpose of the newspaper at the service of the revolution.

I took to him instantly despite the rumours of his collaborator past. He must have liked me, for he rewarded my efforts by reluctantly giving me a handgun, probably taken from some traffic police officer, for self-defence. Later, I posed with it for hours in front of my mother's Venetian mirror.

There was serious fighting outside the editorial office, around the university and elsewhere. The national army took the side of the revolution. No looting took place and no racist outrages. But there were sporadic revenge attacks on the AVH. Nagy declared Hungary's independence from the Warsaw Pact, promised multiparty democracy and, to the world's surprised delight, negotiated an armistice with the Soviets.

There were tears of joy and more catcalls as the Soviet tanks rumbled out of the big population centres. But they regrouped to crush what was left of us in a savage and relentless operation launched in the miserable, foggy dawn of November 4.

Resistance was mounted by perhaps 10,000 untrained rebels, many of them teenagers, some younger. The Hungarian army watched the slaughter idly from its barracks. The official toll was 2,700 civilian lives and 19,000 wounded. The Soviet military presence was prolonged until the implosion of Communism nearly a quarter century ago, leaving János Kádár, Nagy's erstwhile comrade-in-arms, in nominal control.

Dudás was hanged by the Communists after the revolution, together with 228 others including Nagy. Some of the victims were even younger than me at the time. Árpád Göncz, the author and translator, shared the condemned cells with Dudás, but he was reprieved at the last minute eventually to serve as Hungary's first democratically elected president. He remembers Dudás as an uncomplicated Transylvanian patriot who hated Communism and Fascism with equal passion.

The death sentence was actually pronounced on 22,000 patriots. Several tens of thousands were also imprisoned and their innocent spouses and children subjected to decades of social, economic, and psychological hardships. Some 210,000 Hungarians fled the country, most of them young and educated, of whom only some 40,000 eventually returned.

Kádár was probably the most complex character of this story. He became the longest-serving leader of the communist world, leaving a persistent shadow that still darkens the political landscape of his country. He made his most memorable speech at the end of his life, after 32 years in power, when he acknowledged his nagging remorse over the judicial murders perpetrated at the start of his rule.

Always a compromiser, Kadar was an abandoned and ill-educated child of a poor single-parent family from an outlying province. His background is reminiscent of those of many politicians and entrepreneurs who have now grabbed power in Hungary's post-Communist government, commerce and industry.

Today, nominally democratic Hungary is a full member of the European Union (EU) as well as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. But the country's shamelessly success-oriented political and economic élite, mostly hand-picked in the dying days of the Soviet administration, still derives its power and money from connections forged within KISZ, the defunct Communist youth movement.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, aged 49 years, is an ultra-Conservative populist enjoying the tacit support of the Hungarian far-Right. He hails from a disadvantaged family of semi-skilled workers that prospered under the Communist regime and acquired spectacular wealth afterwards during his two stints at the helm of power. His second period of rule was secured by a landslide election victory in April 2010 following a sustained campaign of violent street demonstrators.

Orbán's Fidesz party triumphed at the polls without actually revealing its legislative programme. Its campaign exploited the frustration and insecurities fed by the world recession in an electorate totally unprepared for the boom/bust cycles of Western capitalism. This was the opportunity seized by Hungary's neo-Nazis to emerge from the fringes of politics as the nastiest and best organized of their ilk within the 27 EU member countries.

But Orbán's popularity is waning. His administration could face defeat in the 2014 elections if the fractured democratic opposition manages to form a single platform. Lendvai and many other observers sympathetic to Hungary fear that, in that event, the Fidesz administration may still hang on to power by forming a coalition with the far-Right. Lendvai's new book is essential reading for anyone concerned with the struggle of the post-Communist world to free itself of the persistent stranglehold of political corruption.

Lendvai has been based in neighbouring Vienna since the 1956 revolution. I worked with him for some years when he served as the Central Europe correspondent of The Financial Times newspaper of London where I sometimes prepared his copy for publication. Now aged 81 and the editor-in-chief of the Austrian journal *Europäische Rundschau*, Lendvai is often quoted and consulted by the English and German language press and academia.

He is loathed by Orbán, a man made astonishingly vulnerable by his own political success. Orbán has built an administrative establishment totally subject to his personal control. He has reduced the legislature to a rubber-stamp facility. Even the office of the state president is deployed in the interest of Orbán rather than the people.

In just over two years, his parliament has effectively disabled the essential checks and balances of democratic control. The centrepiece of the reform is a new constitution passed without cross-party accord and already modified six times. It shirks Hungary's enduring culpability for the Holocaust and trivializes its significance by equating that crime against all humanity with the subsequent Soviet occupation of this region.

The constitution also drops the word "Republic" from the official name of this country, leaving the door open for Orbán to crown himself king. Seriously.

A long series of new laws and decrees exposes the press to prohibitive fines potentially issued at will by a committee of political appointees, emasculates the judiciary by replacing many independent-minded judges by party hacks, and redraws the constituency boundaries to favour Fidesz. The administration has also challenged or undermined the

independence and effectiveness of such essential institutions as the central bank and the office of the parliamentary ombudsman.

Orbán's extra-parliamentary power extends through client networks embracing the mass communication media, big business, industry, agriculture, diaspora organizations, art and education funding, regional administration and of course the civil service. The roots of this informal maze of dependence reach back to the twilight world of the deeply corrupt Communist administration.

Its dominant participants were once among the brightest Communist cadres endowed with the funds, skills and connections to secure for themselves the choice pieces from the disintegrating state structure. Today, they are the Hungarian oligarchs.

To survive, any autocratic, populist regime must focus the hostility of its exploited electorate on real or imagined enemies abroad. Orbán has thus declared a national "freedom struggle," in the idealized spirit of the 1956 revolution, against such safe targets as the EU, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of course the foreign correspondents.

All this has frightened away the country's foreign investors. The three principal global credit rating agencies have responded by downgrading Hungary's public debt to junk status. The state is now exposed to the mercies of the short-term commercial money markets to service its relentlessly mounting debt burden from loans carrying wildly unsustainable interest rates in the region of 10%.

Cheaper money may or may not be forthcoming from the IMF, which does not want to see Hungary go bankrupt for fear of fresh riots possibly fanned by the volatile neo-Nazis. But the far-Right alone could never muster political control.

Lendvai despairs, but I do not. The tyrants of the modern world tend to survive for any significant length of time only when protected by mighty domestic industrial infrastructures or by foreign interests. Orbán enjoys no such support. He is in charge of a weak European economy surrounded by neighbours committed to fundamental integration with the mature Western democracies.

The Hungarian prime minister is a lonely, frail man driven and plagued by a fatal attraction to power. His command structure is based on the unquestioning obedience of professional managers prepared to serve any cause or master. When Orbán inevitably succumbs to the intolerable, dual pressure exerted by the democratic opposition and the paranoia generated by his own style of administration, his painfully constructed edifice of control must collapse with him.

THOMAS ORSZÁG-LAND is a poet and award-winning foreign correspondent. His next book will be *The Survivors: Holocaust Poetry for Our Time* (Smokestack/England, 2014).

“You’ve Sold out the Health System, now sell your Mothers” - Dave Russell

Winter 2012 #40

An entire population seems to be facing a mass nervous breakdown. The Greek economy is in a drastically precarious state. The Athens government predict a 25% fall in Gross Domestic Product by 2014, putting intense pressure on the EU to relax the terms on the country’s €130bn (£105bn) bailout package. The finance minister, Yannis Stournaras, said declining tax revenues and spiralling unemployment will deepen the country’s four-year recession to the proportions of America’s Great Depression in the 1930s.

Stournaras, who is struggling to negotiations a second bailout, fears that efforts to revive the Greek economy will be undermined by a draconian austerity programme, premature debt repayments and extortionate interest on its loans. Economists doubt whether Greece can survive without a period of Exemption from debt repayments and a reduced interest bill. Without a relaxation in the terms of the deal, Greece could run out of cash and be forced out of the Euro. In both September and October 2012, Greece has seen General Strikes in protest against austerity cuts.

The economic collapse has wrought havoc on the morale and mental health of the population generally, with the result that there is a massively increased demand on the Mental Health Services, combined with a brutal reduction of the resources with which the Services are supposed to meet that demand. One limp excuse for these cuts is to compensate for past excesses in spending.

The recession has pushed unemployment to more than 16 percent, which has led to a visible increase in homelessness, street prostitution, and drug use in run-down parts of central Athens. Petros Triandos, spokesperson for a state-assisted drug rehabilitation program, made the following chilling appraisal: “There has been a disturbing rise in the use of more dangerous drugs, in the last year or two. Crystal meth has begun appearing with greater frequently, and very low-quality heroin, that is more likely to cause fatalities.”

“Of course the need for our help will increase with the crisis. We’ve had a hiring freeze since 2006, and each staff member now copes with the responsibilities of two or three position. At the moment, we can barely cope. But soon we won’t be able to.”

The operators of a state-funded National Suicide Prevention helpline say they received 5,000 calls in the first eight months of 2011, compared with 2,500 calls for all of last year. One in four calls was related to the financial crisis, the operator said. Official data for suicides in 2010 has not yet been released.

There have of late been substantial protests by Greek Mental Health Service workers against staff and budget cuts, proposed by International Creditors, which cause them to be even more chronically overloaded in a situation already perilous because of Greece’s financial collapse. Although health care staff had been generally spared from previous rounds of staff cuts, tougher austerity measures will affect workers in mental health and drug rehab, currently staffed with 3,050 and some 1,200 employees respectively on the state payroll.

Menelaos Theodoroulakis, head of Greece’s Mental Health Professionals Association, announced that funding for Community-based Mental Health Programs had been halved since 2009. However, according to a BBC World Service broadcast by Chloe Hadjimatheou, some of the EU cut threats were due to appalling mismanagement of the Services on the part of the Greeks. “The European Commission has warned Greece that if it does not come up with a roadmap for psychiatric reform by next month, EU funding will be cut from social projects across the board.” This broadcast was made in 2009. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8124976.stm>

I hope there is positive evidence of reform and improvement between then and now.

Some up-to-date perspective has appeared in the latest report of World Mental Health Day. See http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/world_mental_health_day/en/index.html

“The reported association of the current economic crisis in Greece with suicide has been challenged by Fountoulakis et al (2012) on the basis of the relevant World Health Organisation and Greek statistics reports which do not indicate substantial changes during the economic crisis period. The authors recommend caution in the interpretation of the existing data.

“Data from Greece (Giotakos et al 2012) are in line with the above findings as it has been shown that suicide rates were reversely associated with the number of primary health care and mental health service providers as well as with the number of mental health infrastructures in Greece.”

Dave Russell

(This is a digest of facts presented by Yahoo News, The Daily Mail, The Guardian, and the BBC World Service.)

The appointment of Sir Peter Bazalgette as Chair of the Arts Council to succeed Dame Liz Forgan in January 2013 allows most of us to dust off – spray off – the old jokes about him and move on. First, before the good news, let's bury the joke.

I like to think I was the first back in 1999 to point out Bazalgette's great-great-grandfather Sir Joseph (1819–1891) had taken the sewage underground in 1858 and Sir Peter (as he was from 2012) brought it back again. This was of course Big Brother, a sanitised and treated raw Dutch import; the original was more sexually permissive and Netherlands-levelling, without the triumphalist class hatreds visited on chav and celeb by middle-class producers. It was just one of many programmes like *Ground Force*, *Changing Rooms* and *Ready Steady Cook* that Bazalgette energised TV with around the Millennium and shortly after. He managed this by being the creative force behind the originally Dutch - from 2000 Spanish and now troubled Italian - media company, Endemol. He was Chair 2005-07. He knows how to take bearings from Europe.

As Mark Brown of the Guardian pointed out on September 4th, Bazalgette 'had been widely tipped to take over. His credentials include being Chairman of English National Opera {since May 1st}, president of the Royal Television Society, {on} the advisory board of The Space, the joint Arts Council/BBC venture bringing free arts performances and films to the internet.'

Knowing Dame Liz Forgan was a challenging act to follow, especially on digital media, the government couldn't appear cavalier. The expertise is though differently slanted. Bazalgette's a Board member of digital media companies - Base 79, MirriAd, Nutopia and YouGov. Having invented TV formats he sat on Channel 4's Board too. He's also a Non-Exec Director of the DCMS. That directly impacts on his perception and experience of ACE. Bazalgette's also exercised by young volunteering and the question of young people turning off voting. You can see where this might head. It emanates from his earliest time on Esther Rantzen's *That's Life*. Bazalgette is someone keyed into audience and popular participation, and switching-on/switching-off.

It has darker ramifications. BBC2's *Newsnight* in November 2009 let Bazalgette once speculate whether the funding model of the BBC could be changed by reducing the license fee to pay specifically for its core news and information, with voluntary subscription for drama and entertainment. If left to some, that could lead to public hanging of liberals on TV. Certainly it's not such good news for the arts, already stigmatized prejudicially by media moguls and shunted terminally

to BBC4. It wasn't necessarily what people wanted, but they've been educated not to want it. Bazalgette, whose task is thus to reverse-flow much of the culture he so championed, was knighted in 2012 for services to broadcasting. Author of four books on food and media, he writes a food column for the *Financial Times*. You can see why it's *Ready Steady Cook* he's proudest of.

So it's long recognized that Bazalgette's climbed out of his pit - as Hampstead and Highgate dwellers might term it - to charm, even challenge nay-sayers. First he presented - his third cousin directed and produced - a fine 2003 programme of his great-grandfather, *The Sewer King*. He masterminded another documentary, *The Great Stink*. In August 2011 he also claimed with modesty - to Michael Berkeley in *Private Passions* (Radio 3's upmarket *Desert Island Discs*) - that Sir Joseph was a more distinguished man. These appearances humanised and weighted Bazalgette and - intentionally - showed more to him. His musical choices were predictably open-shirt but didn't vie with Sir Kenneth Baker's poetry anthology.

Reasons to be Cheerful

Alan Davey, ACE CEO, praising Bazalgette's appointment and record as Chairman of English National Opera, has clearly had much to do with him with his work on *The Space* - which put him firmly in the frame for this appointment.

Sir Peter has been appointed for several reasons. Dame Liz was seen as left, even Hampstead-leaning. Her grasp however of the new digital technology, her poise and dispatch in dealing with ACE's cuts, earned even more respect. She was thus in every way but politically, poised to continue as Chair for the normally automatic second four-year term. She actually got on with Jeremy Hunt. Hunt, often fallible to his right-wing critics - one of the less-touted reasons he cosied to Murdoch - was forced to axe Forgan.

Hunt incidentally, though no Chris Smith or James Purnell, readily grasped the arts argument and expressed downright anger over Osborne and the Treasury's bid to cap charitable donations which scuppered his philanthropic U.S. millionaire vision, riven as it was by facts: and he'd found himself unconsulted. Hunt got his way over this with much help from the Sector (we all wrote letters and he informed us he passed them on with pleasure to Osborne). His successor Maria Miller sends no such signals. We mightn't lament Hunt's departure but could yet have cause to regret it.

Continues on page 22.

BROADSHEET

Winter 2012 #40

Repeat Prescription

In they trot, breathless, exempt from answering machines
Edward Burra should be here, this cup of tea would leave him weak at the knees
A brazen barmaid coughing up lust from her dancing belly
Well-fed, jaunty exchange, a quip refuel a plenty
Iguana pop should be here, coughing up hollow sky into bowls of crystal clear light
Dust settles cutting corners by hand and by sight
Face values sidestep the Moscow banana skin lauded,
Helpless hope to bring
Hopeless draws are over on broken wings
Working out the hollow horse, and your empty gesture,
Hang him in the wardrobe, the cry from the umbrageous ensemble
Aviators signal the square-dance in sight,
Sinead O'Connor should be here bathed in dressing gown moonlight
Fearless driplets with iron lungs, clipped and congested
The illusion of credentials a showpiece still in transit
A piece of fluff that broke the camels back, industrious yet holy
Finger the fabric, never mind the boulders, here's the flex blisters
Johnny Rotten should be here, seeping into the nation's consciousness one at a time
That's how it works, the stopwatch has stopped ticking.
Gone dead train in earmuffs with safety elevated stomach
Making waves in the sunlight, utilise the oven to understand a dream,
The incident in the clinic-extensions blocking my view.
In every packet an answer announcing a run for your money.
Plastic letters engulf Industrial estates, exposing surname origins to folk police.
Age old wine we'll drink, clutching at straws that are skint
Amerika's tortured din, New York sublime scattering flint
Trying to suppress the sin that lurks within
Flint and sculpture canned at birth, what is all the landscape worth
Holding dreadful bargains drawn, nervous chattering holds the brawn
Cape horn lesser shown, what will Horatio bring to throw
Good intentions don't put an onion in the soup,
Elvis Presley should be here, rockahula baby, loop the spinning loop
Chinese gourmet visits fountain gate tabernacle holding nan's flowers from passion launderette
Plasticine burger fights cormorant on bread mix Monday
Tuesday's ceramic mosaic, a throwaway tourniquet

Anthony Moore

Metal Underwear

Tread the boards in metal underwear
take the stand and join the queue
taste the wine, blinded by the glare
temperatures rising, jackbox blows a fuse
Climb your mountain in a carbon sink
fry the planet in magnetic soap
Read me like a lamppost and steam the skins
its life in the slow lane for a black looks ghost
plant your side in a hard-boiled motorcade
twiddle your thumbs and kick your heels
Slide the carousel to a crackprobe universe
crying pass the parcel over bonded stee

Anthony Moore

Little Shadow Puppet

Dance, little shadow puppet
You can never dance too long
Never stop, little shadow puppet
You may disappear before the dawn
Take care, little mannequin
The shop curtain is coming down
Do not fear, shadow puppet
The drummer will beat on
You never know, ragged puppet
When your dance is done
Just a patchwork of frayed stitches
A broken, absurd bundle
Silence spreads the shadows thin.

Ben Gray

Foraging for Hope

Inside every emaciated woman.
Is an emancipation.
I know the call,
Of the primeval woman,
She hunts at dusk and dawn,
In larders and fridges.
She wants to be the hunter,
But she does not hoard her quarry.
Because she is hungry.
Hungry for acceptance, love. Perfection can
never be attained.
Some say the models are to blame. Women
deny life.
The desire to remain a child.
But the call is to control.
For me it was disgust and shame;
I hated myself.
Catholicism down my throat.
She wants to feel whole,
But never full.

Foraging for Hope II

Some people think you may as well join the
AA
And think you can never be cured.
I'M HERE TO SAY CURE YOURSELF.
One man, a member of the FBA, said,
Are you one of these Anorexics?
I should've said,
Are you a member of Fat Bastard's Anon?
The coil becomes the cause,
It's a fix, a drug.
But it's more than idealism.
It's more than addiction.
It's realising you already have the power to
control,
And turning it around into love.
It's one day on it's own.
Then another.
There's much more to life,
And things can get better.
Huddled in the hovel,
Foraging for hope.
Conquering the struggle,
In the grounded under growth.

Tracy Ann MacDonald

Unnamed Angel

We tried to make a gift of love,
But it slipped the fragile cord.
Our time was brief,
Our time was watched.
You lay quiet,
'Till you clocked off.
I saw the pulse; it was fleeting.
They said, it was a faint heart beating.
I think of what you could have been.
Of all the joy we should have seen.
You were a speck in my eyes;
Faint white pulse that didn't shine.
I wonder – do you watch us
still – Lolling on a cloud –
Do you think we have the will
To speak a name out loud?

Tracy Ann MacDonald

Untitled

I was empty, simple and blue,
Thoughts were purer.
A garden blossomed in May –

Finally I was saved.
At first, I couldn't tell,
Who was sick,
And who was well.
I thought I had died.
And Christ had risen.
I thought myself in Hell.
The place became cleansing, The air
gentler.
Voices drifted through the air.
They invaded my brain –
Then, suddenly – Spring rain.
Sometimes,
I wish I could return there?
To the pink walls
The white corridors.
And watching.
I'd like to be pure again;
A child of May.
I'd like to be pure.
The future fades to blue. Everyday is
just a day.
Toward the last word.

Tracy Ann MacDonald

Bullies

“Loafing with long-practised nonchalance,
Falsely trapping hair,
Falsely predatory smiles
And false sense of unruffled falseness.
Yellow gold which spins
As if never seen before
In such a setting
Instead of every time
A gang walks on.
Girls with their arms
Loosely set to tightly mesh
The inside from the out.

“Don't you know anything?”
Tired girl on the outside.
It doesn't matter
Which gold will flash In your future.
The testimony of pain
Will make you find
A way,
A place,
A time,
To be yourself.
A way,
A place,
A time,
To be the woman they never thought you'd be.”

Claire Argent

The Dark Man

“An icy voice of personal
Possession answers the call.

Malevolent form of gentle Concern,
where damage is done
In my soft and struggling Brain.

Dark Man, you watch me.
I hear you laugh
Like the bubbling of fatal
Blood, weeping from the wounds Of my
weary, staring eyes.

Watch and laugh.
Watch and laugh.
No matter where I go,
The Dark Man follows.”

Claire Argent

Schizophrenia

“ I hear the voices calling me,
I feel the other world challenging me.

But I am afraid,
I get lost in the mazes
Where I have wandered
For days and days without end.

I follow the voices through the corridors.
And the echo is splintering my head
Into portions of laughter.
The maze fills, until
It pulsates with laughter,
Living, pulsing parasite.

It floods into my body
Every part of me
In a hideous mockery of a mutiny.

Take me apart.
Shards of glass which
Hurt me,
Oh how they hurt me.

The flooding into my body
Completes the mocking take-over.
Mutiny has overthrown
My control.
I am weightless
But I am not yet free.”

Claire Argent

Dragon

“I have looked out at this sea
A thousand times
And in the distance
I have heard the flap
Of the grey and calling flags.
The wind seems to call me
And yet there is warmth
Coming from behind
Which disperses
The calling of my name.

I reach for the sea
For the waves
To carry me away.
And yet there is a scream
Coming from behind

Which sends the sense of loss
Deep into the calling of my heart.

I cannot move.
I cannot choose
The flags or
The desertion.
I have to reach behind me.
I have to stay
Because the screams
Would last in my ears
Every time I looked out from
The cold, grey shore,

And I would know myself he. alone.”
“Amber dragon with eyes of coalish black
gleams in the reflected glow
of the cavern’s golden vision.

Tentacles of flame
Lick the scaly teeth
And his breath is petrol-hued
Dark against the lurid flash
Of his armoured dangerous lips.

A traveller in search of God
May look into the cave
And see truth in a dragon’s eye,
But only the .courageous enter
Here as reflected in the midnight fleck

they see the rawness of their spirits.

The dragon has no need to touch them.
They are driven insane by the honesty and cruelty of
truth’s fiery touch.

Fleeing themselves
They run
And the dragon claims them all
One by one by one.”

Claire Argent

The Prescription

I took some fennel and mixed it with unripe deadly nightshade
Added air and red sea salt.
And the inactive ingredient concrete
They where grumpy and hostile.
They'd need a stronger dosage
So I added Kant's "I think" more efficacious than "I think therefore I am"
Don't you agree

Carefully I studied there case histories, the rusted edges of science
Wages above others life's for them.
I applied Kantian analytic thought
It took me two hours to suss out there system
I engulfed them in evangelical connected love (takes two hours practice)
I affective like a purple moon ocean tide.
Then I wrote them a prescription
Something about the quest for the perfect patient, to show them the way out
What would you prescribe?

Nick Monks

Tiberius-Israel

So peaceful these warm olive-scented climbs, citrus with lake salt
People ambling with a southern moon in there eyes, star laden
If the northern sky is broken, here the contours of the Golan heal
Me a northern urban refugee with pelicans, desert leopards,
Citrus wagtails in my steps
I am an emperor of poverty and yearning for the new miracles
The resplendent light of Lake Galilee glitters invitingly
But I say no to thousands of acts, like a snowy owl on hushed wings
Looking for the one act that will rewrite the play of love
The love song of James Dyer 8
James Dyer puts on his blue coat, carefully picks up the bunch of keys,
Like a bouquet of roses, turns off the winter fan, feeds the tropical fish
Turns off the water heater, as so many afterthoughts
He walks into the maze of love and otherness that is our towns
A beast unseen un imagined lurks beyond distances and skies
The footsteps turning corners into onwardness of love
Cul-de-sacs become dual carriage ways become high streets.
Memories of Lorraine in the hedgerows the fields.
The wheelie bins sheltering under marching street lamps, our sky
He stops at the supermarket cathedral, aloneness one of five thousand
Human conditions, with personalised colours.
Buys rice, crisps, cheese, lager, a pair of jeans as another afterthought.
Returns star laden
James Dyer folds the coat on an arm chair, forgetfully feeds the fish again
There is a hum in the air that could be Tinnitus or the motorway or truth
He touches the place where earth's atmosphere becomes infinite space

Turns from the politics of outside to a magnolia prison of freedom
The beast in the background, the eternal forest, the angels humming
Something incessant about the sea. So let love resplendent reign over madnesses

Nick Monks

Voices

Tunnel of voices Awake within me
The chants which were known
Long ago
In the pristine temple
Of my now decaying mind
When it was still new
Still whole.
I still thought there could be a life Inside the pain.

Tunnel of voices
Awake within me
The enmity and
The knowledge of those
Who stand against me.

O sweet Jesus,
Is it you calling me
Down this alleyway of possibilities?
Surely not Lord.
These parasites laugh in response
To the lack of redemption.
As I look into the future
I see the road to Hell.
I am afraid to know
That there is something worse
Coming after me.”

Claire Argent

A new patient on the ward

He told them he was nearly enlightened,
They shook their heads and started to frown - Any talk of
Religion gets them frightened So they prescribed some
drugs to bring him down.

“Perhaps he thinks that he is Jesus
Who walked the waves at Galilee?
The only cure for his disease is
Some anti-psychotics and ECT”

They say he wanted to strangle his sister
Because of some strange Masonic plot,
His father had left him some land and money,
She intended to trick him and swipe the lot!!

He has ideas above his station
And we can't just allow him to walk free,
It's probably due to excessive masturbation And an
Oedipus Complex at the age of three.

Lion of the North

I knew a lion once
Who used to be a cub
Now he roars to be heard
In the working men's club
'what use ah thah,
Who can't mend a tele'
He said to the man
With the big belly
'thah were born out of wedlock
Tharra a bastard,
I'm the best father in this village'

That was understood
In the loins of the earth
On a pit night shift
Machinery cut his right arm off
So he was humoured
And given respect
By the Men –

His rantings ignored
Then he'd try to dance
The lion's paw would slip
And lose balance
His dalliance over he'd go
If he made it out of the toilets . . .
. . . I knew a woman once
Who when she washed up
Looked at her hands
Remembering
She was young once
As she washed up
She sang a song
Though out of tune
It helped her get on
She looked out of the window
And sang with the birds
Drowning out
The lion's roar.

Wendy Young

This is the way we treat trouble-makers
And all the critics of Society,
We lock 'em up in the local nuthouse,
We lock 'em up and throw away the key!!

John Thorkild Ellison

A Cult of Suffering

Before you tell me about all your pain,
I think it's time for me to explain
That it isn't fun to be insane!!
In fact I find it quite obscene
You indulge yourself in your sick little scene
And then make out you've something to sell
By exaggerating your private hell.
Do you see what I mean?
I never thought much of Kurt Cobain
And his industry of teenage pain.
Been there, got the T-shirt,
"When I grow up I want to be a Victim, Daddy!"

John Thorkild

A Wonderful Little Green Pill

"I'm sorry to hear you're feeling ill –
Take my advice, there's a little green pill
That could make you feel better, even give you a thrill,
Go on, have another, but remember the bill!"
"Mmmn, that's nice, and I don't need an excuse
To indulge myself freely in substance abuse,
There are those who would say my morals are loose,
They won't listen to my reasons, so what's the use?"
"I'm glad to hear you're enjoying my cure,
The pain you have suffered is too much to endure,
These pills are the best, the ingredients are pure,
They'll do you no harm, of that I am sure!"
"Can you lend me a tenner? I'm needing my pill,
I need it so badly, I feel I could kill
To get the relief it's bringing me still,
Please, don't be a bastard, just give me my pill!"
"Take it easy, old man, there's no need to fret,
There are pleasures in life you can't always get,
You owe me a lot, you're already in debt,
Just pay me next week and don't you forget!"
He realised then that he'd been a real fool,
The guy was quite hard, not a pupil from school,
He'd better get the money and start acting cool –
why had he been such a gullible fool!!

John Thorkild

My Suicide Note

You ask me if I'm OK,
Well, what do you bloody well think!
It's the end of another awful day And I'm drowning myself in
drink.

You tell me I'm just weak,
How would you bloody well know? You've got a fucking
cheek –
Get out now, go on, go!!

This is an insidious death,
I'm committing gradual suicide,
You may as well save your breath, Even a drunkard has
pride.

John Thorkild

Bruxomania

*Forty white horses on a red hill
First they stamp then they champ then they stand still*

Nightly, I ride the same old merry-go-round
urging one white horse against another.
Each is rooted to a painted field
with enamelled hooves that cleave together

to etch a closer fit. How much can they bear?
They stamp and champ, rear and pound
until sleep wears thin and the horror
of their tireless galloping echoes round my mind.

When morning comes they stand, still at last,
loose in their sockets, wincing at the cold wind.
No amount of breaking tames these beasts
or can release them from the night's grind.

And now, even awake, they might be calm, then
something startles them, and they're off again.

Hilary Menos

Ward Life

A maelstrom of tedium obliterates all waking sense,
Illiterate nonsense amidst our vapid smoke
As obscurant staff grapple at the will:
Breathe heavily in your stultified prison.

Fury, hatred, heart-breaking frustration
Amidst the omnipresent passivity of no solace:
These rattle inside my pressured body.

Imminent words penetrate the heart-rocking sentences of
The manic and the disturbed although
All mock me!

my gullible patience with castrating
chemicals,
For to include myself in this die cast down
Is to be prolonged.

And yet one laughs and another silently dribbles,
Counting ourselves patient within
And one

R.T. Watts

Swing Low Sweet Iscariot

**The pendulum that's been swinging above us
Has neared the time of decision
And come to cut off our heads
It's sliced at our necks
It's scalped us slow
Swung us high
Swung us low
Jargon junta munchers
Degrees coming out of their suits
Business diplomas
More managers than doctors
Meeting after meeting
Discussions over coffee aromas
To play with our livelihoods
Decapitating our frontlines
Put us into a pyramid
A Power point chart
Neat and smart
We have no power
We're no point
Not even a one in 10
We are percentages
0.67 surplus to requirement in fact
I'm one of 6.66
In a sub paragraph
Of an acronym collective
If Remploy are employed no more
What the hell chance have I for
Survival of the death knell of the NHS
Swelled by greed and selfishness
20,000 soldiers aren't wanted – What hope have we?**

Wendy Young

Michael, Jaz's Dad

Here, let me introduce you to Jaz's dad . . .
Michael, Jaz's dad –
he's an entrepreneur, voting strict Conservative,
of the second generation Indian
variety, his father from Kenya, property, I think –
he owns the off-licence, convenience store,
down my road, Booze Booze Booze, cigs, samosas –
he's got a couple of wives, a mistress,
a daughter at Uni, BMW,
a taste for good brandy, Courvoisier, the water of life,
and I believe him, gullible-like –
his deals are cheaper than other outlets –
you walk in the door, a drunk town jester, bells tinkling,
hello sir, he says –
you act shocked and surprised, his familiarity, smiling
at you from behind the counter – well done, you say –
we've all been well done by him, Michael . . .

Michael, Jaz's dad –
we've all toasted our hands in the fire of life, falling over,
twisting our ankles and bruising our ribs – ice on the
pavements,
counting out our loose change, a packet of crisps...
He lent me £30 when the Halifax was closed, telling me to
return it back to him pronto, personally, not to any of his
satellites, second-cousins, nephews, Tony his handyman,
blessed with a violent temper – he runs care homes for the
elderly, cripples,
trouble makers, ex-prostitutes –
but not like me, a valued customer, remembering my name,
hello sir –
Michael, Jaz's dad.

Simon Robson

The Frozen Sky

Frost warped woods
Shattered and burning
Torn dark ice
Hollow black trees
Graves as empty
As trapped
Unfulfilled prayers
Filled only

Only with the bleak
Bleak cackle of ravens

Withered branches
Stretch empty prayers
Towards the heavens
As thin as time leeches fingers

Ben Gray

Tressy

We missed each other by a dinner hour
Me and my sister
When I found my Tressy doll
With a new hair style – was it a gift?
I found her on the sideboard
I felt an emptiness she left in the house
And I wished she was here
We missed each other by a dinner hour

Bereft I'd try to copy her style
In my own world
Humming and muttering like an old spinster
Weaving Tressy's hair
Waiting for the onslaught
Of another drunken drama

Easier to face with an older brother or sister
Wouldn't have to stiffen my limbs and pull my hair
We missed each other by a dinner hour
When she was caring –
A sister who held my hand and took us to
Saturday morning pictures
Who won a toffee lolly for singing in the interval
Who gave me comfort of knowing she was there

But then we missed each other by seven years
Because the age gap matured her and she did her own hair
And she let me have her posters
Of the Monkees and the Move at which to stare
Bereft again when she wasn't there
Not just for a dinner hour or a seven year age gap
But a couple of years

When the detective came asking me
Who are you then? Is your sister here?
Clutching the gate I just stared as he told me
she'd been in a fight at the Civic last week
But I daren't tell him she'd gone last night
After dad was waiting for her
Behind the door, and like a sister before,
Knead her groin and pulled her hair
Her right of passage in the passage
For daring to catch the last bus
Now we didn't know where she'd gone
She ended up somewhere in Ayr
We saw her face and slanted hair in a square photo
With other hopefuls
Hoping to be Miss Butlins 1970 in Titbits magazine
She was back at 17 couldn't hack it and back she came
Pretending to be my friend but by then I was an accessory
– Like a handbag she picked up and put down,
A doll to hold hands with, and let go
When someone else came along like my Tressy doll.

Now she says
“Who do you think you are? Who are you?”
And calls me a liar and never to call her
How she'll smash my face in and just FUCK OFF
Because I spoke about the past and confronted the truth
That she has buried under soft furnishings
And clean house where she has washed the pain away
And cut it off like I did with Tressy's hair
When I pulled it too hard and got frustrated
And called my father a good man.
Has she forgotten he pulled her hair,
Knead her groin in passage, at the bottom of the stairs –
Or is it just me who still sees him there?

Wendy Young

My Suicide Note

You ask me if I'm OK,
Well, what do you bloody well think!
It's the end of another awful day

And I'm drowning myself in drink.
You tell me I'm just weak,
How would you bloody well know?
You've got a fucking cheek –

Get out now, go on, go!!
This is an insidious death,
I'm committing gradual suicide,

You may as well save your breath,
Even a drunkard has pride.
I never dreamt it would end like this,
I hoped for so much more.

A tender touch and a lover's kiss
Instead of some sad, old whore.
Remember me when I'm dead,
I used to be just like you,
Whatever my enemies said.

John Thorkild

Drama at 172

A flicking disaster more like,
causing alarm and unnecessary consternation, conflict –
what with me sitting ugly, pretty,
in my green Umbro shorts after work,
happy, twiddling my toes –
I was picking hard skin at my kitchen table
a couple of unwanted growths,
not the best sight to behold,
sprouting verrucas that need burning out,
the smell of sulphur, a soldering iron –
there I was listening to 60's music, Nuggets,
dreaming of Grace Slick, naked, diaphanous, lovely,
'Don't you want somebody to love, you'd better find somebody
to love ...'

I was generally dreaming –
it was beautiful to begin with, my situation,
relaxing, a can of Holsten Pils in easy grasp, dreaming –
when an ex-boyfriend,
the obsessive, stalking, jealous-type,
not of sound judgement or mind, questionable,
needing to be sectioned, locked up, I'd say –
started flaring up, issuing out ultimatums,
threats and demands that no one wanted to hear,
preferring him to vacate quietly, go away,
Tesco's, where ever, go away –
how he got into the house, I don't know.
Anyway, he head butted Malcolm in a fracas outside –

The guy with Bi-polar upstairs,
more calming drugs on the NHS, a window cleaner,
his wife estranged from him,
an aimless pigeon, his teenage son.
blood dripping, a gash on his nose, blood –
me spilling red wine from the cork I'd popped –
the girl in tears, a penguin on her pink T-shirt, nice tits,
calling her mother –
the cops arriving, two of them,
both corroborating evidence in black notebooks,
walky-talkies ...

Now everyone has left me, thankfully – spagh bol in microwave,
glass of fresh, fruity red wine –
the cops taking statements, descriptions, movements, worried
mothers, partners, useless phone
conversations ...

See you later.

Blood like tomato sauce on the kitchen floor, Ribena.
With her bloated red rubber lips – she knows she's plain,
unsightly, plain, ordinary, mentally challenged –

she's diabetic, too fat for her height, too wrinkled for her age,
crows' feet.

Wendy can't cope –
all of her feelings are useless, elephant ankles, spewed up on
pills, anti-depressants, various
prescribed drugs from her doctor – all of her
children despise her, three ex-husbands.

Bubble baths, candle-light ...

She's paying them off
with crisp red £50 notes –
she says the poems she writes are better than
Shakespeare, Milton,
not that I've ever read any.

Wendy can't cope –
she's loaded down with money, surplus cash, rich, she says –

her hair is a mess, garlic, buttery, the future doesn't look
good, fine, dandy – she's been paid off, taking voluntary
redundancy, too nervous to drive on the motorway.

Her mind is like a hurtling juggernaut coming at her –
she's jumping off the nearest multi-storey, rising cliff.

Simon Robson

Beachy Head

Once life was enthralling, full of magical uncertainties,
but now she can't separate the fabulous from the mundane –
she can't relax, twitching all the time –
everything she used to eat was organic, healthy,
but not anymore, a fat female marshmallow –

Wendy can't cope, bless her.

Simon Robson

Suicide Me

I won't die by my hand
In a New York gutter
The razor slash . . . No!
This blood act summons,
Anonymity's Ghost.

The city has no solicitation,
I seek nature's reward . . . release!
Lost of its imagined greatness,
Black city streets, I find no peace.

I'll take me,
Suicide me,
Away and a ways . . .
On a northwest trek.
To the frontier,
The Falls -
The American Falls.

Dive down into
The icy azure chop.
The river runs,
Wicked run, river's run;
Can't you hear my
Long, slashing strokes?

The Niagara,
My Niagara
Falling splintered,
And white-capped
Always for me.

Phenomenal sheer drop,
She calls forth -
An aquatic narcotic,
To quiet and seal,
In the idyll of my moment...
The volatile fluctuations,
Of a seeping mind.

The Falls;
Huskily her words skim along the mist...
She is alone of the world, as am I.
Together we meet,
Still alone of ourselves.

Down and naked,
Over The Falls.
The world is resplendent,
In its mendacity to itself -
To them - I was an intruder.

So I leave it, it to its self
And in doing so, in my magic,
In my prose and verse,
I depart -
One final breath.

Last of this temporal sphere -
To tumble and crack against the boulders,
Fractured body in its beauty of self -
Unrepentant to all and all of myself.

Chris Roberts

Chris Roberts published "*When the Wolves Ran: A Fable*," in the Powhatan Review in 2003. The story was nominated for the Pushcart Prize and reprinted in Thought Magazine in 2004. A colloquial driven story appeared in The London Magazine, also in 2004. Reviews of his work appeared in *Storie: All Write*, where his use of native tongue and local mores were compared to William Faulkner.

In 2008 his essay on the New Yorker was published on the 3:AM Magazine website, non-fiction; his treatise on schizophrenia, "Madness and the Valuation of And" is currently published on the Hackwriters site, Opinion: Politics and Issues. His recent short story, "Hazy Shade of Winter," is published as a Kindle Single, amzn.to/yDcRrH and is available worldwide.

Chris writes short stories, poetry and essays. He resides in Brooklyn, New York.

Tuesday Greenidge

Winter 2012 #40

FEATURED ARTIST



Tuesday Greenidge

Tuesday is British/Caribbean; born in Margate, now residing in West London. She produces what she describes as slapdash scrawlings, scribbles. Then concentrates on colour feeling around and between spaces, left from these initial graphics. These drawings are in response to ideas, visions, feelings and beliefs Tuesday holds.

Continued...

Tuesday Greenidge

Tuesday uses pencil, charcoal, pastel, pen; sometimes acrylic. She draws human figures, portraits and buildings. Tuesday's starts by drawing doodles as scaffolds – foundations for complex structures.

Image from left to right:
Beings, Urban Landscape, Skyscrapers,
Thin Figure, Revenge, Cityscape.

On previous page: The Stranger and
Chinese Whispers



Tuesday: My style fuses the figurative, abstract, expressionist, contemporary, naive and formal. I capture transient postures or emotions, with added messages reflecting my religion. The Holy Cross symbol is central for me; figures with upraised arms suggest "Praise the Lord" – protest, joy, despair. My work, focuses on emotional/spiritual well-being. I explore the unconscious, and conscious mind; my faith; the incorporeal; intermediate spaces between places, people and times.

The sketches map my mind's wanderings as I contemplate ventures, loved ones – or just daydream, while my attention is focused elsewhere. Drawing idly helps me in my struggles, dispels pressure and tensions creatively. Latent preoccupations emerge as visual symbols. Drawing leads steers me through the world's distractions to my inner voice, my unconscious.

I am currently producing life drawings to exhibit at the 240 Community Project, Notting Hill.

The Reality King - *Simon Jenner*

Continued from page 8 ...

In this climate finding someone more sympathetic to purely entrepreneurial culture was a Tory mantra. Hunt needed to choose someone perhaps less inclined to smile on the 2007 McMasters Report mantra of 'risk and innovation', watchwords established by ACE.

Bazalgette was a perfect compromise. He wasn't the right-wing culture appointee some might have feared. Clearly high-profile enough to carry his own imprimatur, he was less identified with any direct affiliation, whatever the subtext: a Sir Richard Branson of the TV world, with that niggler over the reduction of the Licence Fee. His grasp of digital isn't shamed beside Forgan's - Forgan created the BBC Radio Five Live format and launched DAB. Bazalgette in a different way is a creator and enabler of such formats.

His grasp of cuts is less clear, and more to be feared: think the ex-BBC Director Mark Thompson - Bazalgette's from a similar mould. In contrast Forgan left the BBC over disagreements with Thompson's next-last predecessor John Birt in 1996 but was awarded an OBE two years later with a new government, and Damed in 2006. Bazalgette's immediate sympathies lie with immediate culture from TV to TV suppers; the depth of the portfolio ACE carries is something we don't know how he might engage with. The spoons are in what he championed at ENO.

Bazalgette more than gets the broad remit of culture as seen by Conservative opera-goers, and sees it too in a popularity-waiting-to-happen vein. In other words - I prophesy - the Bazalgette vision would be that ACE and the arts must further stretch their remit, reach and readership, in the deepest sense from audience to blogger as well as participant. So it's up to arts organisations to get out there in Boris fashion, make themselves floppy-fringe-desirable or a reincarnated olive (Boris's own estimate of his equivalent chances to succeed Cameron as Conservative leader and indeed PM).

Reasons to be Fearful

I'll digress slightly, but this is very much Bazalgette territory: disabled access and participation. The Paralympics have happily pushed that agenda back into visibility. I mention this a being present in the House of Commons Committee Room 8 in October 2010 when the then Louise Bagshawe MP (now neither Bagshawe or MP) taunted Alan Davey with still presiding over a questionnaire culture where ACE asked arts organisations to promote and encourage access to wheelchair-bound or disabled people as

audience percentages. This induced unpleasant titters from her colleagues, happy that kind of political-correctness-gone-mad was dead with liberalism and the rise of neo-liberalism, even Ayn Rand's neo-fascist self-propulsion (if you don't know her work, just blog Alan Curtis but don't read her).

In truth ACE was happily responding to New Labour's mandate; the push came via a more enlightened Westminster from 1997. The culture though had shifted and ACE hadn't quite realized the disabled didn't matter any more. I think we can at least bury that canard with Louise Mensch MP. Her like-minded colleagues won't raise their wavy heads in the same way. The Paralympics and protests have highlighted the fact that ATOS isn't fated to carry its work-will-make-you-disabled-scum-free message to the mainstream. Its sponsoring the Paralympics merely highlighted its - and the government's - breathtaking arrogance, cruelty and complacency.

Reasons to be Careful

Bazalgette has of course a preternatural awareness of such issues and how to finesse them - I trust with fresh ideas on how to engage disabled and other hard-to-reach audiences. He'll find ways to an inclusive envelope. Don't expect miracles in his depositions to Secretary of State Maria Miller though Ed Vaisey the Minister like Hunt does understand the same arguments. I suspect the dynamic will be charm on his side and less weaselled smiling on hers. It would be difficult to get rid of Bazalgette after one term, as if yet again the ACE Chair hadn't got the hostile take-over message. That would arise if Bazalgette proved a champion of the arts beyond the ENO.

2015 is cuspal: not only the spending review, but the next election. Whatever decisions are made might be overturned with a new government. Bazalgette will become perhaps unpopular from 2013 as he presides over cuts Forgan had already outlined. Forgan was however removed so she'd not be in dispute with the Tories as they went to the polls: with two years to run as ACE Chair (till 2017) she'd still have been very much in charge whoever won. That's one reason she was sacked. Bazalgette's true test will come when under pressure to resist or rubber-stamp ACE's final dismemberment into DCMS bits. If he does the former, he'd be remembered far more as the Chair who saved ACE for better times, even resigning over cuts and perhaps being reinstated by a grateful new government. The common time-frame of new cuts/new government is in weeks, around March and April 2015. If Bazalgette feels forced to choose the latter course of rubber-stamping, well the old jokes are still there, save that much of the Conservative party would join him. 2015 is a test that either makes him or undoes him quite.

Simon Jenner 2012

Anthony Anaxagorou - *Poems to Maya*

Blurb Inc. 2009

ISBN: 978-2436-92-5, £4.99

A highly personalized collection of love poems, dedicated seemingly both to a human individual and to a mythical entity. *Prelude* has a mythological base – a boy braves the hazards of the ocean. A goddess saves him from drowning, and transforms him in the process: “She lifted him/To become sky/She touched him/To become sun/She kissed him/To become the earth.” *Red Circle* reflects a young lover’s angst. The relationship seems to have something that went wrong as its foundation: “When you came in that day/To tell the news/A part of me died with you.” Destructive/absorptive power of love: “. . . I sunk so far inside you/I forgot what it was to stand . . . When life tried to break us,/Like a promise/We locked into one another/Suffocating life – honest”; bouncing a stone over the water evoked an image of an enduring couple. In *One Another*, making love can assume surreal dimensions: “We watched our shadows/Play fight/Until we laughed ourselves awake . . . Our home had no walls, but it indeed had soul”. There is a sense of menace in the beloved: “She bubbles like witches broth/Probed by demons of fire and tyranny”. *Her* expresses the struggle to verbalise his adoration of his ideal – “I prowled language/An entire dictionary/Hunting for a word”. Great linguistic perceptivity: “Perception?/I’m not sure . . . that would mean that/Within lies imperfection/So/That would be mistaken.” Full verbalization is an unattainable ideal: “So how would you describe her?/I would have to leave this world/As every world would always be mistaken.” Whoever Maya (or whoever) is, he has the power to distort the poet’s sense of reality, as in *When Your Away*: “The sun sets without its sky . . . I wrestle in sheets/Stitched by your colours,/Layered in your abrasions . . . You built the highway of longing/With no lights/With no signs;/I travel like a lost pilot/To the dead end of all time.” *Picture of Love* – his attempts to paint a portrait exceed initial expectations. *Frozen* – the beloved transcends time. *Second Hands* makes clever word play between manual appendage hands and the hands of a clock; reiteration of the ‘time stood still’ theme. This love is addictive: “Inject me with your torment/Bedeck me with your sin.” He begs to be squeezed and smothered; even a bit of death wish – “Inside a schizophrenic grave”. *Whispers from the Chasm* explores the dark labyrinths of despair. He seems to be castigating himself as well as/instead of his partner – “Overwrought pathetic ego . . . There is only redundant inertia here”. A portrait is painted again ‘Using all the wretchedness I could muster’ *Thursday* – a bizarre incident indeed; the poet is seemingly attending a funeral, in the course of which his lover brushes past him, with decisive impact “As if a molecule’s splinter/Had slid diligently inside me.” The reader’s imagination has ample scope for speculation about the significance of being naked at a funeral. A charming traditional ‘conceit’ with *Five Fingers. Testimony*, again, is very classical in style, describing the personification of the ideal of love – in beautiful hyperboles: “If you asked me to

describe its face,/I would point to heaven. He is ‘possessed by the torments of old poets’. When he finally gets his beautiful vision, he holds up a rose from the dead – fusion of love and death? *Fool* – in his imagination, the beloved gives him global, cosmic power: “At your command, I could cremate society . . . I tried to abbreviate love/With a mountain/Holding up heaven;/Only to cause an avalanche/Somewhere in the gorge/Of my arrogance.” “Deprived lovers never learn” indeed. “To love is/To feel without knowing;” *Luminary* explores lugubrious areas – angels sleeping in cemeteries. Some sado-masochism: “I disfigured your womb/Now the moon turns its back on me . . . seeing your thick hair drift away from me/ Taught me how to kill. Elemental metamorphosis in “You asked why my tears were on fire/Whilst I stood facing fully/A world held up,/By ivory flames.”

Anthony Anaxagorou - *Card Not Accepted*

Blurb Inc. 2009

ISBN: 978-2436-97-6, £7.99

This collection is described by the author as ‘the documenting of the internal exodus from societal incarceration’; his introduction concludes with the statement: “if one wishes to talk of freedom, one must first talk of slavery.” This is divided into *Poetry, Tales* and *Musings*. A highly perceptive foreword from *Akala* (a new name for me; I am definitely prompted to find out more about him): indeed, sensitive souls cannot find the answers, but they can enhance the depths of the questions: “. . . take music and say the unheard, take the brush and paint the unseen . . . compose words into illustrations of the unsaid.” He rightly acknowledges the universal sweep of Anthony’s expression: “. . . the frustrations, struggles and aspirations of a generation, captured in the full richness of colour, without neglecting for a second the barren, drab dampness of our discontent.

Poetry: Himself – the individual stands as contrary to his environment: when the world is noisy, he hears peace; when the world is still, he hears noise. *Sitting on the Moon* is a supreme piece of cosmic egotism: “Crushing the mirror of vanity,/Speeding streaks of light. But it involves a rejection of artifice: “Take a flame to architecture and watch build true shape . . . Unplug the machine to make peace with the dust.” There seems to be a concomitant transcendence of mortality: ‘Far inside space With the gentle absence of life and death’. Then there is a come-down to mundane reality: prophecies are sprayed like graffiti, and a partner comes to sit beside the poet. *Everything* – self-discovery through the rejection of conventional modes and categories: “And I sit here/With absolutely nothing/But from within nothing I found everything.” That rejection/affirmation is reiterated in *Love’s Intention*: “Let me divorce all these flogged traditions/ And love you plainly,/Take a pin to burst every hollow notion/ So to fill myself with a single purity . . . Love’s intention

bears not critique/Is all she wanted to say.” *Nike Shoebox* – he puts himself in the place of a child born in the depths of poverty: “Born within the tomb/of a crack infested womb . . .” delivered by someone with no sense of sanitation: ‘the baby that time forgot.’ On a Journey – transitory confrontation with crosscurrents of humanity on a train/tube journey; some tensions get highlighted/accentuated; a finite experience: “My stop//Suits and briefcases swarm to my spot”. *Wake* – a nice vignette; the multiple aspects of waking. *Alone* questions the meaning of life in a hypothetically ideal state: “Who will save the savior once all have been saved.” *For a Friend* – reflections on a past bond, with concomitant turmoil. *Dearest Tragedy*: could this be described as a ‘Bi-polar’ poem? It describes the anticipation of a meeting with a lover, against a background of jet-set high living, with disaster looming in the background: ‘Flashing lights and bloody carpets . . . Live faster than a weekend’. To some extent the park bench rendezvous involves an escape from society, but only a transitory one ‘Alas the curtain draws back/Suffering society now takes its position.’ *Forgive the Winds* is a splendid piece of lyricism: “they steer the greatest vessel in my heart . . . Like liberty I hold no direction’. He wants to find meaning in the vacua of life, to ‘leave my mind behind’ and attune to his subjective being. He resents being ‘Crushed beneath the rock of truth’. ‘Rolling in canyons of anxiety’ is a great expression. *Gig* – dedicated to a loud rock band: I can certainly identify with “The drummer beat his kit up bad/Like my fault lay across it. The group has a frenetic vocalist ‘Singing with my tattoo on her mind’ – and the songs were ‘all about’ the poet’s love. *One True Moment* – good statement of paradox: “It took a lifetime of loss to show him what he’d won;” *Waters Blue Rivers* concerns the passing away of a close friend. *Poor Little Rich Boy* cries out against crass materialism: “Forget your money,/Forget your jobs and forget your Rolls Royce/You are free.” *Still I Will Stay* reiterates this anti-materialism: “Money is an illusion spawned from the frippery of greed . . . Rid me of form for its burden grew too much/Till it crushed me and confided me/To a room with wires and plugs.” *Strength* is a proclamation of adversity: “I crash and tumble on the wrath of circumstance”. The strength gained from this concussion is transcendental: “I am neither of stone or flesh/Just a movement in time, strong and full of breath . . . Never will you see my spirit lying/In the coffin of defeat’s kiss” *I Wonder if When* attacks superficiality, accepting the ephemeral as profound: “I wonder if when,/Some people stop hearing,/Will they then start to listen?” *Leave Me Alone* – the struggle for the true self against ‘the consumer whore/Electric society’. In *Little Girl* the poet speaks through a girl’s persona. *Steps to Calm* – symbolist minimalism; I like “Rest,/ Like dying Water/On Careless Sand”.

Tales: *The Poet* makes incisive observations of the creative process, struggling ‘till I finally see the abyss, emphasising the writer’s isolation – ‘a private tongue for the lonely reader’. The primary gropings of the imagination defy objective analysis: “You asked me to describe but instead I refer. You asked me to capture but instead I release . . . I delivered these goods in one broken down truck, loaded from a bottomless space. Very atmospheric description of a writer’s pad: “Around is filled with waste and scum, the taste of rotten anxieties and loose hair plague this broken floor.” He relates his literary endeavours to the ‘music box’ He finds enlightenment in its overwhelming volume: “The sound of true virtue. Harmonies and vibrations creating a chemistry of words filled with meaning and intent. Art in its most magnificent and celebrated

form . . . Every second of silence has a sound. For him a song is a sort of literary apotheosis: “A community of tiny notes and vibrations, ideas and words, colours and celestial essences coming together to create the most universal synchronization.” Goof conclusion: “At the doors of insanity we are greeted by our genius.”

Victor is about a prisoner of society’s role modelling. Victor is an ‘alpha’ super-achiever in every conventional sense – “he truly was a man who had conquered life” – including a marriage to a charismatic partner. But his mind begins to probe beneath society’s facades: “If we were to take away all material objects that impose status would we as individuals still feel adequate and content within ourselves.” Predictable, such observations were ridiculed by his peer group.

Typically, to sustain his ‘success’, he was drawn into overwork, becoming ever more stressed and isolated. He is forced into deeper self-questioning by a traffic jam: “All he could do was sit in this metallic cabin where all his struggles and efforts lay etched in the fabric of its upholstery . . . All he had ever achieved was trapped in the very cloth he was sitting on. His fashionable clothes held prisoner all the strains he endured within their feeble stitching. This is where he poured his life.” Such reflection is very self-revelatory: in the jam he realizes he is one of an anonymous mass, and that his sense of individuality has in many ways been spurious.

His composure and self-satisfaction is restored when the traffic jam clears. But his drive home is interrupted by a young man who steps into his vehicle’s path and is nearly run over. The young man offers Vic a lunch date. He proves to be a voice of Victor’s conscience. This was a real personal confrontation, something long missing from Victor’s life: “He saw a spirit. He was life – a mass of real life. He was observing life in its most virtuous form. This ordinary youngster was the remarkable epitome of awareness and understanding. The young man knowingly asks Victor what was the last time he smiled, and retorts to Victor’s angry response by denouncing the tyranny of the ego. Victor has a ‘delayed action’ response and asks “How do you do it, you know, the whole life thing?” The young man momentarily looks sombre, then bursts into laughter. Instead of delivering a profound philosophical discourse, he points out that Victor’s fly is undone. This catalyses a fit of laughter on Victor’s part. The young man declares himself to be a freewheeler: “You know how I like to live my life Vic? Like a leaf falling from its branch at the turn of autumn, it never really knows exactly where it’s going to fall.” Victor realizes that he has briefly experienced true friendship; all too transitory – the young man ventures ‘back into the madness of the world’.

Freedom – a man briefly joins the rat race, then rejects it to go, globally, in search of personal freedom and identity. After many years, he seems satisfied with his quest. Then he meets a young boy, a sort of alter ego, on a parallel quest. He advises that boy that “. . . the answer all along was here with me.” He remains open to meeting the boy again and comparing notes.

The Story of Life – this piece is ingeniously based on personifications, of Life, Death, Fame, Money, Work and Wisdom. In the context of the story, they all have their perverse egos, and occupations. Death resembles a medical visitor – keeping life under constant surveillance, Money a bank manager – obsessed by self-portraiture. Work is

introduced as appearing ‘uninterested and indolent’. There is also Misery and Homelessness. *Part 2*: Life recounts his experience with money. He goes for a walk, where he meets the hefty Ignorance and his wife Hatred; they have two children – innocence and Confused. They go to a Café together, where they meet the waitress, Hope. The reader is then introduced to Life’s girlfriend, Emptiness. After the couple have spent a night together, Death appears briefly on the scene. He asks an enigmatic question: “By doing what you have just done what have you achieved?” then vanishes. *Part 3* – There is a switch to a medical emergency. Life is tended by a paramedic called Guilt, and then receives a visitation from a beautiful nurse called Happiness. For a while, she was his main company, as his friend and girlfriend do not visit him. Then Death pays him a visit. Life is apologetic to Death, who then reveals that his true name is Wisdom. His naming as Death was a presumption on Life’s part. The old lady from Life’s apartment block is brought into the same hospital. She reveals that she was always looking for Love, and reminds Life that he was always doing the same. Ironic twist introducing the last paragraph: “Life now understood, although he sometimes wishes he had not. Wisdom appears and reminds life that Time determines his destiny.

Musings: In a way, the author does himself down with this title; as throughout this section there is supreme clarity of thought. Its central gist is that one should be true to one’s own being, against society’s roles and pressures. *The Stoic* – good opening quote from Marcus Aurelius “. . . the should fear never beginning to live”. ‘Caught up in life’s colossal jam’ he has lost touch with the world, and is sinking into the canyons of his mind. He preaches individualism, but stresses that ‘each of us is equally important’. *The Time Now* – expresses some nostalgia for the great spiritual leaders of the past, but stresses that some aspects of that old infrastructure remain. He claims that science does not offer mentorship or inspiration, and points out the vacuity of much of the fascination with celebrity culture. He points out the fallacy of thinking that happiness can be acquired. It is internal: “We just need to look over the wall that impedes our perception.”

Understanding: real beauty is internal and personal, unlike glamorous images promoted by the media, pursuit of which can be enormously destructive. He then discusses career ambitions: “success and happiness are not synonymous . . . success can only really be gauged at the end of ones life”. He looks to ‘ultimate truth’, when we are free of the negative energy of others’. Perfectionism is an ‘idealistic illusion’ “Life is nothing but a series of faultless mistakes”. He proceeds to discuss the control and channeling of the emotions. He pleads for acceptance of the ups and downs of life.

Acceptance and everyone’s want to be wanted: people’s need for approval from others. He warns that the appearances of misfits might be deceptive. One should not give priority to impressing others: “Luxuries are purely a seat for the uncomfortable”. He sees hope in ‘the energy of divine Love’ without which ‘. . . we succumb to the various elements of fear’. “Better to create something whole and simple than to lounge in a fairy tale novelty.”

What I Have Learned – the primacy of the mind, which he contrasts with ‘society’s hyper reality’; one should concentrate on the present, rather than the past and future. Very astute

comment with “Justice and democracy are as sincere as a politician’s smile”. Great exhortation: “See the world through a wider perspective, beyond black and white, rich and poor”. “When you try to define yourself, you immediately limit your possibilities.” This involves being receptive to the thoughts of others, though one should “never rely on others for your personal salvation”. “Find happiness sitting on a park bench. There is nothing wrong in failure; the only failure is turning your back on yourself.” “Sensitivity is the highest form of intelligence . . . humour is the only emancipation”. A high degree of perceptivity: “We live within the greatest paradox; do not try to make sense of everything, as everything is not made to make sense.” This attains great depth in the concluding paragraph: “The only prison that exists is the internal one . . . Unplug yourself from the toxic drip. We are of the earth; we are energy forever morphing. Once you understand that life and death are synonymous, you can begin to live.”

To Love – we are all faced with the fundamental questions of life: “. . . It’s my belief that the answer to such questions remains indeed subjective, but that does not mean we should dismiss all common considerations surrounding such subjects . . . I have no definite answers; only a handful of suggestions.” The author recognizes the colossal, often anti-rational power of love. He proceeds to discuss the Idea of Love. Love must be flexible in order to withstand reality: “In order to love selflessly one must develop the ability to bend rather than break . . . If you hold a solid idea of love it will only shatter once it attempts to turn one of life’s ambiguous corners . . . love and hate are two images being reflected off the same mirror.” He appreciates it as a binding force: “To be in love is to merge into someone and touch another person’s self through mind, body and soul”

One-Handed Prayer – at first reading, this opens with a piece of incredibly conceited hyperbole, but then this is counterbalanced: “I recognize that all elements spawned from creation are equal to myself – that being half matter and half spirit . . . I connect with the universe through an ongoing matrix of vibrations, emotions, sensual aesthetics and metaphysical philosophy.” Organised religion is castigated as ‘a mere racket of harmony, mastery and double standards.’ Individuals are exhorted to see themselves ‘as part of a divinity where all elements are of equal status’. Yet paradoxically he retains some admiration for the orthodox; for them, belief systems may provide energy and enlightenment. Then a self-evaluation: “I like to believe that my contribution to the human race is one of inspiration through literature and philosophy, humour and sincerity.” He appeals to other people to share his enthusiasm, and to gain a state of equilibrium which does not involve oppressing others.

You Miserable Bunch – survey of London in 2008, and he really does capture the atmosphere: “The sky constantly looks like it needs a good wash, the air is a third rate amalgamation of stale diesel coughed out by wheezing buses and darting black cabs . . . the gluttonous chops of the subway tunnels.” Turbulent travel on the underground, lovers ‘rocking and jilting’ indeed! Panoramic view of heavy drinkers and health fanatics – the masses in quest of self-images. “Retail therapy” is an interesting way to describe compulsive consumerism. The sensitive, aware person is exhorted to ‘pull the issue out from the root’ instead of relying on stop-gap consumer comforts like package holidays. Competitive career strugglers

are astutely described as ‘a rat pack of mountaineers’ – some Sisyphean associations; great description of a forever dissatisfied diet freak. He questions societal goals of satisfaction and achievement; another exhortation to live vitally in the present. A good run-down of the evils of white sugar for those who may be unfamiliar with such. Similarly with the virtues of Vitamin D, and the awareness of happiness and low suicide rates in some Third World countries. They also seem to accept death as part of the organic cycle, and remain smiling – whereas “we chose to decapitate and cripple ourselves as we whinge and whine in a constant flux of ungratefulness.”

Las Vegas – succinct appraisal of a city which must be the apotheosis of shallow, materialistic society. *The Memoir of a Sitting Moment* – rejection of the idea of ‘received wisdom’ supported by an opening quote from Marcel Proust. A self-awareness pep-talk: “To abstain from your daily routine and place yourself in a moment of complete nothingness will test both your mental and physical endurance.” Reference to ‘intangible matter such as time’ . . . hmmm. Great portrayal of rush-hour tension, clinched with a brilliant metaphor: “You could describe life as a motorway, a bunch of people in different vehicles, all racing to get to their destination in time; but in time for what? . . . Maybe if you leave your mind for a short while, and act as a simple observer, you will begin to see not just the road ahead but also what surrounds the road.” He describes his ‘meditative’ break away . . . “with an aim to become as redundant as possible. This basically meant to do nothing but at the same time do everything.” The aim of this was, against a background of music, to rejuvenate his sensuality, to develop understanding and control of his emotions . . . a ‘centred level of thinking uninfluenced by external factors. Again, a real depth conclusion: “Life is an ambiguous series of uncertain and untraceable events occurring through a matrix of past circumstance, this generating a current wave of what we call our present reality. No moment in our life is everlasting, so it’s unwise to act upon anything with the idea that it is absolute. It is all a journey to be held, understood and furthered.” There follows the diary of his break in Cyprus. *Day 1: Dolorean – Beachcomber Blues*: the trip seems to have justified itself: “. . . the fact that I have nothing to do and nowhere to go allows me to tune in to parts of the world I didn’t know even existed.” But as well as being enlightened, he feels lost: “My dreams have dissolved into mere freckles, and all ambition has not stagnated into nothing but a rotting stench.” Perhaps he has a rose-tinted view of the lives of the local people. *Day 2: Red Hot Chili Peppers – Scar Tissue*: He reveals that he has been staying at his grandmother’s house; some sense of the cumulative past: “it felt as if the walls held hostage all the voices of those who walked within these breeze-blocked compounds.” He realizes that much of his past life has been as aimless and drifting as his holiday break. *3: Lemon Grass – Spaceship*: he meets the Moroccan boy Mohessin, who seems to be contented and well-adjusted; another exhortation to stop and think. He laments lost meaning and value in life. This leads him to a reassuring quote from *The Last King of Scotland*: “. . . if you’re scared of dying it must mean you have a life worth living.” – and from Nietzsche “He who has a strong enough why, can bear almost any how.” He is staying in the context of family, which is still some measure of a constraint upon him: “I’ll dig through the compounds of this mental prison and at the end I will bask in truth’s radiant light.” He is fully aware of the limitations of the holiday environment, which apply to life’s limitations in general: “We must learn to

let events run their natural course, and not think that we are going to be in this state forever”. He mentions his grandfather’s decease; he feels pathos for the old man’s memory, but will not weep as he did at the funeral: “The emotion has not receded in any way; it has simply changed its form. *Day 4* (last day of the break): he sees Mohessin again. Mohessin tells him of his initial struggles to settle in Cyprus, including having to sleep rough to escape from the threat of rape. Anthony recognizes that the two of them play ‘cameo roles’ in each other’s lives. He returns to the familiarity of the metropolis: “The only place I know where complex ambitions entwine with a life that demands an extraordinary price and in return gives you nothing but a receipt of anxious uncertainty.”

Anaxagorou recognized his life’s work as being a never-ending quest: “The day I truly know will be the day you never hear another word from me again.”

Akala mentioned ‘the birth of a true artist’; may we trace his growth and development!

Dave Russell

Aoife Mannix – Workshop Session

Poet in the City, Waterstone’s Notting Hill Gate, Thursday May 17th

This was supremely stimulating and dynamic, in tandem with the spirit of Survivors Poetry.

Her words of guidance for performance poets could not fail to reassure the most timid and reticent. She was utterly thorough in emphasizing the most basic facts; totally appropriate even though most of the participants are experienced.

1. Turn up early; always good to have a breathing space to find out when you’re on.
2. Tell the organizers/emcees what you want said about yourself.
3. Be oblivious of people talking to you before you go on stage
4. Accept your nervousness; it is wrong if you are not nervous; put your nerves to good use.
5. Keep your introduction brief, never longer than the poem itself.
6. Always ask the compere to adjust the microphone; always have a sound check.
7. Cultivate eye contact with the audience; try to pick out people smiling there.
8. Use hand gestures to hold the audience’s attention
9. It is hard to be too loud or too slow; give the audience time and space to latch on.
10. Think about your images when performing; this will help project them to the audience.
11. Do not be afraid to do more emotional material.
12. Being a performing poet is not being a stand-up comic.

Aoife’s approach certainly elicited some wild flights of the imagination. Her ‘pep talk’ included a long poem about dressing up for a reading – universally guaranteed to melt all inhibitions: ‘fingernails all the colours of the Sistine Chapel

. . . boa constrictor round my neck . . . stockings run ladders of newspaper headlines . . . fit me like a second skin'. She referred, perceptively, to 'wearing your words'. She feels there is a certain arrogance in putting things on paper. *At one of her readings, a person in the audience scowled at her, and then bought a copy of each of her books.

Her first exercise was to ask each member of the group to think of two animals: one to represent his/herself, the other to represent their localities. For persons, there emerged an armadillo (I could hide behind my shell); cat (I'd be pampered/friendly but independent); meercat (inquisitive, alert and jerky); fallow deer (discreet and private); tiger (strong and slinky). For localities, Dublin evoked the urban fox; London the (slow-moving) whale; Millbank the horse (because of the strong presence of mounted police there); Wandsworth the goose.

Her second brief was "Imagine yourself invited to a fancy dress ball on Venus." Participants were asked about their footwear, and then their other outfitting, then how they would travel and who they would take with them. In response, there were crocodile shoes encrusted with jewels showing all the colours of the rainbow, white shoes made from peacock's feathers and the wings of angels; shoes with the face of a unicorn, and compliments for soles; ones made of pointed pyramid stars; boots with built-in refrigeration; shoes with mini-rockets.

For outfits there we a long tunic made of distilled octopus ink, a gown of sunken snowdrops, 6' stilts and a basque corset, a cape of fiery red feathers, a dress the colour of the earth and a tiara of jasper, a magic wishing scarf; a lily-pod codpiece and a cap with slots for business cards; a coat made of barrage balloons; a belt made of embarrassment.

One mode of transportation was a submarine metamorphosed into a rocket ship.

Company included Paul Robeson, Amy Winehouse and Frida Kahlo. As a special effect, there was proposed a portable stage in the form of Shakespeare's forehead. Participants were asked about their sensations when they arrived at Venus. My response was as follows:

There is a mass of penetrating stares, suggesting that the Venusians know my innermost secrets; their looks make me feel ice-cold. Then there is a sensation of melting; the massed eyes now look warm and accommodating.

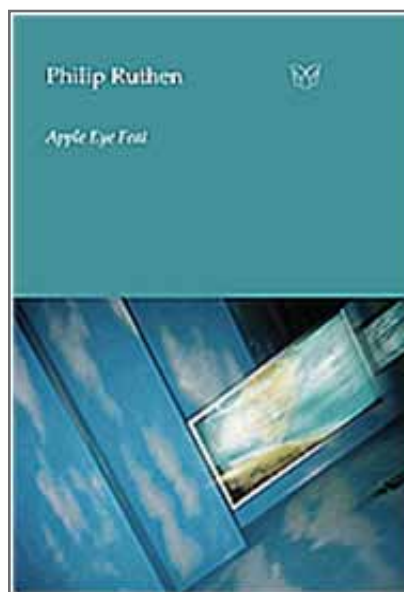
The event concluded with contributions from participants, combined with reviews of their performances. Another person read Aoife's poem *Outside the Baker's*: great images of 'clutches of flowers clinging to lamp-posts . . . smell of blood and Bakes Bread. **Suzanne** read her poem *A Dedicated Writer*, recently accepted for publication in *Loose Muse*: a comprehensive outline of self-discipline routines – written in less than half an hour. One very disturbing poem (sorry I didn't catch the poet's name) was *Dithers and Bellows* – depicting a voyage into a lugubrious labyrinth. It was remarked that the poet used a 'benign voice' and a 'malicious voice'; the latter could have been accentuated. **Jamie** read *Blackpool* – a cry for anarchy: 'why not fight with passers-by . . . leave inhibitions behind . . .' he was advised to accentuate his movements. **Sue** made some interesting points in *Not Minding*: don't mind 'if

salty water fills your boots . . . woodsmoke and earth tattoo your skin'; she was advised to work on her voice projection. **Kerim** read *Grey Gang* – in praise of old people – some exotic compliments too: "They shoot hydrogen bombs out of their fingers . . . fill the ovary to the brim . . . bald patches nothing but stars . . . platinum dinosaurs with golden hearts that squeezed diamonds." One unusual participant was writer/actor **Michael Law**, who performed part of his San Francisco stage show. Very disturbing: "I woke up with beads of sweat/I was strangling myself . . . life's become a single cell . . . nervous as a girl in labour finds herself." Sheer surrealism at the end: "Shall I give in to a platoon of china? . . . Yesterday's clock gave tomorrow's time . . . I shot the cuckoo on the midnight strike. Frances read *The Mad Hatter* – a darker slant on the original legend: "she loved madness/irregularity. One interesting poem about a footballer (again, regret I didn't catch the reader's name) about an 'invisible tackle' and a near-death experience. **Liz** ended the session with a speculative piece on what it would be like if animals had some human privileges, say if ducks could use the Internet.

I think Aoife could give a tremendous boost to Survivors' workshops, both in terms of ideas and of her presence.

Dave Russell

Apple Eye Feat – Phil Ruthen



Waterloo Press 978-190674214-0 £10

Indeed 'the disorienting runnels of sensory and semiotic dissociation en route to new poetic combinations . . . it is in his 'agglutination of verbal and cognitive antagonisms that Ruthen comes into his own, and throws a disinfectant light on the bleached bones of Symbolism . . . new vistas of psychical surf' (**Alan Morrison**)

Skin-run origins – laser wires – some hint of the thong of a snare. There then follows some extraordinary melting and fusion of biological and geological categories. I find some hint of a link between laser wires and the fish eagle via a fishing line – the laser

wire becomes solidified. Presumably the fish-eagle could seem elephantine to its prey. "If/elements of sea dust/are motives/ of sun whole sky holding": the sun generates sea dust by making soil crumble and drift into the sea; the sea dust is a final vindication of the sun's activity? He seems to want either the dust or the sun "to push solid open" – to break down solid walls, make space for light? The wish seems unattainable, and the only hope for an alternative answer lies in an ultimately fugitive and elusive creature, the antelope.

Translate seems to depict a struggle for meaning and lucidity. Palm suggests the palm of a hand; also a palm leaf. There is some sense of excavating an ancient inscription, and a sense of solving some mystery in the course of a holiday adventure.

The State gave . . . I take it that the minPencho is a Voucher affording free or heavily discounted travel for disabled children. I read it that the scenario takes place in Bulgaria; a newborn child was permanently disabled through the negligence of hospital staff. A request for concessionary travel is brutally pushed aside, and the relevant transport allocated to a (probably heavily subsidized) EU delegation. The mother has to join the breadline; fortunately there is a babysitter, but unfortunately there is no bread, and the child is abandoned. There is, to me, some suggestion of an application for asylum in the UK, and through bureaucratic inhumanity, the relevant papers are 'frozen' in Strasbourg. The author gives some excellent background in the postscript note, showing the lack of coordination in providing knowledge of anti-disability-discriminatory laws in EU and becoming EU member states. This note should have been placed under the poem, or the reader should have been advised to 'see note'; there is some danger of it being overlooked. There could be more notes.

Zone – someone is introduced to a helter-skelter. One can get a global or cosmic perspective on any activity if one thinks hard enough – here a sense of affinity with the earth's rotation. There is a further comparison with running along the sea shore. Next time the learner will need no introduction.

London's not a colour, if it was – seems to relate to the efflorescence of new architecture in the Thames Embankment area, affording spectacular son et lumiere at night-time. Perhaps it is over-sanitised, like the Globe Theatre: "the urchins wouldn't want it now" there is some desire to jump to Paris, and experience a bit of old-fashioned mess . . . 'newsprint blown . . . narrow rust rungs'. He would like to witness the disintegration of decaying antique buildings.

Goth soldier, woven – the first stanza appears to refer to retro fashion – Gothic punk and army surplus gear. Then a seeming age-shift to an elderly, wheelchair-bound person (I tend to associate that gear with youngsters). Then a mythical throwback to Adam and Eve, then nearer to the present day with an implicit reference to Jesus (learning to be a carpenter)?

Election Day – a 'dream treatise' on Democracy, Dictatorship and suicide bombing. Indeed, in the real world suicide bombers lurk in the background of safe, 'democratic', 'free' elections. Another instance of a concession to the general reader being appropriate. I know the basic details of Heidegger (chief philosopher supporting Nazism), Sartre, Gramsci and Freud. Good point about hiding a book in a repressive society. Quite appropriate to describe journalists and historians as PR consultants, and an acute observation on suicide bombing mentality: "As if God was now

and new bombs/Will always be better than times that were bad." The Reserva of European Red presumably alludes to 'selling out' to the EU, and colluding with its repressive aspects. Impassioned plea for education at the end.

Dante's Torment Rises from Below the Earth – the urban landscape can be incredibly eerie when it is transformed/renovated – a deserted one even more so, as crowds can be a comfort: "No strangers pass to put/Inside my box/To raise the tongue//To raise the moment's conversation" Great image to compare people to flocks of snowflakes.

The Visit – London to Derry – this is fascinatingly ambiguous; did Phil give the mad poet a hitchhiking lift, or did he meet him in the vicinity of the bookshop?

When your curves have run from straight – some highly ironic reflections on the onset of age. Great organic metaphor in 'an ash/ That grows in consummation'.

Re-vive – surreal blending of nature and artifice, ancient to modern architecture: 'stipplefrost panes' and 'pressface dent surfaces' were particularly striking. Some sense of desperation – 'sparks' possibly of ignition. There is a suggestion of a female medical practitioner who has a 'secret life' as a revolutionary/terrorist. It goes far beyond reverie, 'myth in psychology' to face the realities of physical injury.

Is there Berlin? This seems to refer to nightlife – 'vision bloc party/ technosex' – cosmopolitan feel – a Flemish prostitute operates in the Seine area.

The year of the big freeze – captures the sense of desperation and vacuity of job loss, being faced by an impenetrable wall, wanting to crash through that wall, make a fresh start. Does the 'products you can't return' refer to consumer luxuries which become liabilities (Re instalment payments etc)? The collage/pastiche suggests trying to patch things together, but there is no effective insurance under the conditions of the big freeze.

Prince Rupert's Lament – I find it difficult to make the connections here. Prince Rupert was the dashing cavalry commander of the Royalists during the English Civil War. Does the sub-heading refer to a Royal Visit somewhere in July 2011? I could probably nail down possibilities. Faberge eggs? Yes; these are choice items of antique jewellery; perhaps I should have known that already. 'A five-crane day'? As the crane flies. A suggestion of panic-stricken ants in a laboratory tank. Some cross-mythological references: 'no elephants to castle' – some chess pieces are in the form of elephants; there is also Hannibal's expedition to Italy and the district in London named after that. A similar impression is conveyed in 'Act Oedipus in New Testament Garb'. The theft of the free-range egg suggests to me the planting of a bomb. This poem certainly forces one to rack one's brains for sub-textual connections.

New to Leicester Square – it's decades since I attended a straight theatre production in the Leicester Square vicinity; so I get a sense of 'flashback novelty' from this poem. The intervening decades can certainly embrace the ageing process of the Blind Janitor. 'Olympic squads tired before torn' suggests the area's global popularity as a tourist attraction. The winter snow can link with winter snow in Japan.

Postcards on the wall – straight historicized nostalgia. ‘Nostalgia’s Gravelines’ seems to evoke the Spanish Armada. There are probably rich historical associations with Grand Forte-Philippe; I’d be very interested to know what they are. Coursing – an anomaly of country life, someone who can catch game but can’t cook it properly. – vowel – some delicate symbolist linguistics: even goes as far as breaking words down into their components – ‘captured in the a of hesitant . . . warm-toned *u* of music boxes’. Guard seems to be based in a sailing tour of the Greek islands. The perfect day touches on the relativity of time; “The perfect day/May . . . be a jarred moment/From an awkward time’s//Experience/Example/Language/Love”.

The title poem *Apple Eye Feat* is in 5 sections. The title poem *Apple Eye Feat* is in 5 sections. Part 1 refers to nostalgia with childhood, from a child now become a parent; memories of boarding school 20 years back. Part 2 gives some indication of the significance of the title; there is the obvious play on ‘the apple of one’s eye’, and the reference to a parent putting an apple in a child’s pocket. Does the child and/or the apple then go missing? Part 3 explores the concept of racking the memory: “where does it (the memory) go/to look for the priceless?” An apparent revisitation of a scene associated with the past: ‘retrace//re-order//what they were thinking of/childhoods’. Pleasant location – ‘never far an orchard’. Part 4 expands the theme of retracing steps – ‘past/not-always streets’. Flashback to the childhood picnic of part 2: ‘into the pockets an egg and an apple’. Mutability rears its head – ‘rust falls to the ground’. Suggestion of a fugitive child ‘brought back by teacher’. Then the poet comes out in the first person as the fugitive child. Part 5 suggests an ambiguous alter ego (female) ‘My taught-well/natural narrator/climb into later (the future, from which retrospective reflections can be made). ‘Apple eye feat’? Supreme achievement on the part of the apple in the eye?

The shoreline is quite a pleasant landscape poem; my favourite phrase here is ‘colloidal glints of flickered light’.

K.738 – Mozart catalogue number. The Sonata echoes, reflects the actions of the physical universe: ‘rebounding into itself/as waves merge to peak/then collapse . . . sound questions/turbulence concedes/reflection . . . the Sonata plays out/glistening truth//in the still light’. Very profound conclusion – the light is ‘never to be the sum of character’ – it is beyond humanity. All Quiet – Russia Poland evokes repressive, dictatorial societies: “I let you blast beneath my skin . . . watching over those comrades/dig their own graves.” This bleak terrain is the setting of a relationship, which has benign, restorative power: “For love wears away the stone/appeases/and can build once more/to cover every blemish like/a film of water on a marble floor.”

Cause célèbre – somebody desperately concerned with appearances, but with a sense of depth perspective ‘displayed in certainty that/the future is beyond/the absurd.’

Do angels rejoice at the shock treatments? – waiting rooms, particularly accident and emergency ones, can feel like limbo eternity. Square Mile Suspicion – I do know what it feels like to squeeze the last flame out of a cigarette lighter before having to refill it. ‘Potential’s held by butterfly clips’ – nice one. Test Match, Day, Room – watching cricket with Hendrix in the background, in the presence of a fragile, sensitive person. Battle suggests a market stall set up by left-wing activists; is the ‘long march’ intended to evoke Mao Tse Tung? Melleril – is an anti-psychotic drug. It seems to portray both old age and mental distress. There is some hope

that ‘the darkness/may reluctantly retreat’. Philip Dominic think about the space – the dilemmas of a freewheeling tourist in the Mediterranean: every idyllic location has its pros and cons. On this occasion, a partner falls pregnant. He proceeds from a name in praise of a Sardinian Accident and Emergency physician to the concept of naming in general. Very arresting conclusion: “While the gulf between words is wide, they float on paper however densely placed . . .” – a degree of autonomy.

Quiet, Transduoro, Oporto <-> Regua – a trip to Portugal, with much sea-voyaging and some highly expressive imagery: ‘concentric grooves . . . sea trouts’ sucking/wings’ ascension . . . we go after the flush of near too late. I admit to being a bit mystified here. Duoro, I discovered, is a province in Portugal, so Transduoro presumably refers to some border area. There is a reference to six bridges having recently been built in this area (iron ones presumably). Will they be kept in pristine condition when the Eiffel tower is left to rust? Iii. Appears to describe the building of dams in this area, which seems to have some drawbacks: “damned Duoro,/quiet as it can be, the coal is there/but now idle.” Iv. Negotiating of canal-type locks related to the dams; some parties suffer - topples the old men’s lock. Vi. The author has a vantage-point for observation ‘a half-remaining boatyard roof. Vii – I learn that the Carrapetelo dam is the highest in Europe. He journeys into some vine-growing country – excellent image of the Sandeman’s hat.

General Relativity – a highly sensitive statement of the appreciation and cultivation of enduring, in-depth relationships: verbally the most minimalist poem here, and highly successful for being so. 15 knots, away from the sentinel – OK: some people may say ‘is this poetry?’, but it contains depth of descriptive detail worthy of the finest fiction and travel writing (Forster is mentioned) – he embodies what he describes in his own words: “True, fiction appreciates, within limits of civil time, the undercurrent seep between words’ depth.”

Opera – from the Frozen Psychiatrist’s OutTray – I think this is a good idea which could be highly developed. Whenever people are in the waiting room (particularly if it is a 9-hour wait) and on the ward, of necessity their pieces of personal ‘root music’ reverberate through their heads. Beach sight is a nice Verlainesque vignette.

Tour de grace – Pelops: I discover he was King of Pisa in the Peloponnese, son of Tantalus, Grandson of Zeus. The setting is that of the Greek islands. Some intense personal relationship is involved: “your soul lent/to unweight Poseidon/the high seas’/summer possible”. I find some sense of a Creation Myth, related to an individual’s life cycle: “At birth/each child shall have a tree planted . . . one day you are moisture//become the eye of quartz/ingrained in the gaudy head-dress/of a lizard – ‘falling on another world’ – astral/cosmic perspective – ‘further than imagined by God’ and ‘storm drain force that topples undersea deities’ – indeed! I discover that the Meltemi is a dry North Wind prevalent in the Aegean area. Down to close-up, focusing on a quayside crane, then into broader reference: ‘the law of historical memory/on the floor of a crate/lifted to hang over the ship’s hold’, then back to ‘average reality’ with the mention of a tourist’s guide book.

On your bench, found – someone playing a diatonic harmonica. Many solitary people, reflecting on deceases or past historical events play the harmonica when visiting the relevant scenes – ‘mossed plaque’ – overgrown memorial site. Highly evocative conclusion: “bones of words/watch for the benchmarks of

everyplace.” People often meditate on benches. Interesting to think of words as living organisms which die and leave their skeletal remains.

In the Hands of the Butcher, Chiswick Hills, London 8.15am – highly anarchic: Place a cello/somewhere you’re fond of that others might not like, or might fear; quite revolutionary to associate American fiction with ‘the Richter scale of mild appliances’ (domestic ones?). Then a discussion of the American Long Poem, which “. . . College Professors/Use as a staple meal/To kid students. The final exploration of the cellist posits its dissociation from the shelter of the conservatoire – much of culture drops away as curios in a market stall’. I wonder when this poem was written. Now we have licensed busking pitches on the London Underground, where it is no indignity for Royal Academy students to practise and get an audience.

I feel I may only have scraped the surface of this remarkable collection.

Dave Russell

Artificial Melancholy by Alain English

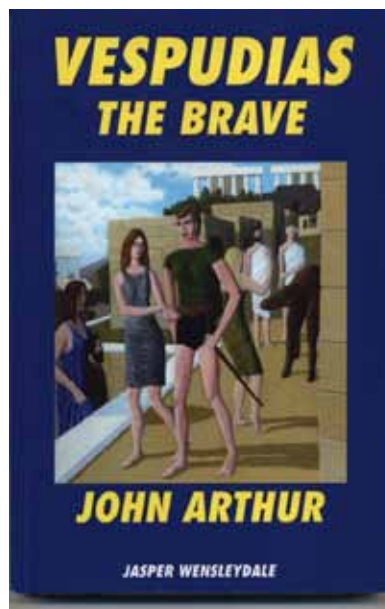
© rrrants 2012

A highly spirited collection, fast-paced – proclaiming Alain’s ability to relate his acting background to his mental health struggle.

Snakes Inside My Ears and Bursting Blisters on My Brain captures the essence of stress and breakdown. Mental pain is portrayed through the imagery of physical pain; the biting snakes’ fangs are really felt. There is a powerful sense of mental overload, with its positive side – generating ‘a matrix of creation and ideas’. Imagination rules his world; he needs to create to cut loose and let the demons out. Finding a Job highlights the elusiveness of today’s employment market, where ‘obsession and reality confound my efforts’. High on the Internet is a lament about ‘losing my life’ in virtual reality, engulfed by the ‘music of madness’. Depression is a Most Unwelcome Guest – he refers to ‘a nest, built on guilt and self-distrust’. I am a Sex and Love Addict – this form of virtual reality addiction threatens ‘to leave my soul a vacuum’. In The Greatest Game, Alain shows his acumen as a sports commentator, capturing the dynamic of an intense championship match. This ability is expressed again in The Ghosts, where the intensity of fanatic supporters is given full expression. Memories is a reflection on Soho, past and present – ‘a cacophony of colours, angels and markets . . . once a place of violent protest, now a world of dreamy angels. Palestine is an indictment of injustice in that country, a situation where “Christians and Zionists share a common story: the truth’s a deadly weapon. Here’s to the Losers – the downtrodden and the marginalized are the repositories of true history.

This was broadcast on My Word in February 2012

Dave Russell



Vespudias the Brave, by John Arthur

Jasper Wensleydale 2011
ISBN 978-0-9548375-25

In the spirit of his previous novel Jazzoo, John Arthur has created another fictional world, Aeiear with a feeling of ancient Greece and Rome, and Celtic Europe too. The location gives a strong impression of a frontier area of the Roman Empire – reminds me of childhood tours of the Roman Wall. The story is written through the persona of Hermet Mettameda, who chronicles the hero’s experiences.

Vespudias, the hero, is a soldier, involved in a conflict with the marauding Vulotians. To some extent he has been drawn to the military out of poverty – shades of Roman Republic citizen soldiers struggling against Hannibal. An officer, Ly Vors, brutally manhandles Vespudias’ brother Taris, throwing him down a slope causing him to be killed by one of the enemy. Vespudias, in rage, attacks the officer, and is duly arrested. He is fortunate enough to get cross-examined by the benevolent Barmas Vandu, who knows Ly Vors was lying in his report. Obviously through Vandu’s influence, Vespudias’ sentence is reduced from death or lifetime servitude in the mines to a year’s forced labour and a fine: it was decided at the court-martial that Vespudias’ judgement had been impaired by the extremity of the heat. A bond of trust and friendship remains between Vespudias and Barmas Vandu. Subsequently Vespudias is ‘framed’ on a pretext of threatening to attack one of his guards with his pick. He is put in solitary confinement; as he will no longer have his limited sentence, he is determined to escape. The cell warden, a secret ally, smuggles him in some keys. He sets out intrepidly on his journey through the pitiless wilderness.

He reaches the city of Eeyavia. After a respite with some comfort, he is apprehended by Ly Vors and re-imprisoned, then transferred to a slave ship. He eventually reaches the city of Larvar, and is transferred to the local prison there – to be sentenced to 10 years hard labour in the mines. He is able to overpower the guard and a cleaner, and

make his escape. Soon after he has freed himself, he sees a warder severely mistreating a female prisoner. In revulsion, Vespudias kills the warder. The woman, Selbara, then gives him a 'safe conduct' to her abode. He discovers that she is a prostitute, her home a brothel. A close bond develops between them, for they have saved each other's lives. Selbara emerges as a substantial and complex personality. Again he is recaptured, and his real identity suspected. Then his prison cell mate, Baiyaris, reveals that there is a revolutionary group called the Janitists who are set on overthrowing the corrupt, tyrannical royalist regime. Selbara acquires keys and procures Vespudias' and Baiyaris' release. They pursue their journey with difficulty.

Vespudias is accepted by the Janitist movement, and becomes one of their key operators. There is a concerted plan to take over several cities in the realm. Vespudias is involved in one successful surprise attack. He feels some misgivings about the ruthless measures involved in pursuing the revolution – the number of lives sacrificed. He makes a close friend of Cardaris. The Janitist army marches on Caradar, where the enemy launches a savage counterattack. This is repulsed, and the revolutionaries proceed to the palace and the prison, most of whose inmates they free. The people of the city then rally against the royalists, and Caradar stabilizes under the Janitist regime. Vespudias has a twinge of conscience when the poet Sileebius Paranda is executed in reprisal. There are some difficulties in imposing the new regime: "It seems to me that the people are unable to comprehend the principles that we have laid before them." There is a debate between Vespudias and Cardaris about the necessity of killing for the sake of the revolution.

Vespudias meets Selbara again. Their elemental need for mutual support manifests itself again. The Janitists proceed by boat to the village of Ille. Vespudias is recaptured by the royalist vanners (supporters of the viceroy), and then re-released by the Janitists, who are prevailing. Vespudias braves the dangers to go in search of Selbara.

Larvar proves more stubbornly resistant to the insurrectionaries, partly because of the proportion of rich people living there. Vespudias rejects Janitism when he hears that a little girl was killed by concussion in the course of the fighting: "Janitism has become a bloodbath." He gets wind of a proposal for a new revolutionary movement. On reaching Monnapul, the capital city of Aeiear, he meets Dolo, leader of the 'Counter-Movement', whose object is to reach a peaceful compromise, without eradicating any one regime: "We must encourage decency and non-violence in the people, persuade them to appraise both sides fairly, the intransigent revolutionaries and the corrupt old order." Vespudias provisionally agrees to return to Larvar as a spy, pretending he is still a Janitist. The situation in Monnapul is extremely unstable; Vespudias has a narrow escape from a melee, and returns to Larvar, partly by boat. His cover seems blown, and he is pursued by some Janitists. He finds shelter, and works on 'under cover' for the Counter-Movement, finally deciding to approach the neighbouring state of SIRRARI for support. To his consternation, en route, he sees Selbara as a prisoner of some Janitist soldiers: she must be rescued.

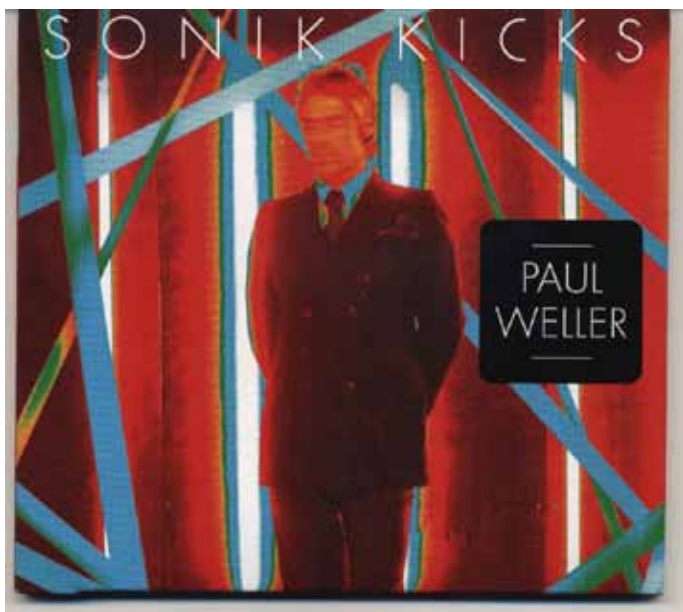
The Janitist stronghold is duly penetrated, the guards dealt with and Selbara freed. They make their conjoint flight, with an old man named Abal Lossarle Pydene. There is no immediate sign of pursuit. Partly by boat, they reach, with difficulty, the city of Molpul – where the Janitists capture them. Vespudias' discovers, to his horror that the dreaded Ly Vors is among his captors. Then there is a Counter-Movement incursion, and they are rescued. The work ends with a sense of unstated optimism about progress under the New Order.

This has a highly intricate plot, following which is facilitated by the map provided at the beginning, and the glossary at the end. A listing of all the cities, nations and tribes at the beginning. Admirable depth of detail is sustained in the descriptions of the buildings. The dialogue is lively, though some experimentation with communication problems resulting from different dialects might have been interesting. The figure of the ever-recurrent *bête noir* of Ly Vors sustains suspense. The dynamic pace is accentuated by hopping on and off boats. The device of capture, recapture and escape is perhaps over-reiterated. I felt there was a little note of anachronism in the reference to a restaurant. To me, it detracts a little from the feeling of authenticity in struggling with the elements, particularly well portrayed in Vespudias' first flight from captivity. One very appealing aspect of this work is the portrayal of Selbara as an incredibly expensive character – in terms of warmth and generosity, as well as her ability to penetrate the political structures which surround her. The warmth and depth of their relationship develops in successive stages, with many separations and re-meetings. Barmas Vandu is sensitively depicted as a poet and a philosopher, an unwilling captive of his military role. As part of the 'happy ending', Vespudias and Barmas Vandu meet again at the conclusion. The greatest psychological depth of the novel comes at the beginning, where Vespudias takes vengeance on Ly Vors for his ill-treatment of Taris.

I did find a certain echo of Orwell's *Animal Farm*, in terms of describing a corrupt old order, and a revolution which went wrong. To me there was a definite sub-text of the Russian Revolution and the cold war. Perhaps the novel ends on a naively optimistic note, and more misgivings about the possibility of the future should have been expressed – shades of VE Day euphoria?

Dave Russell

Sonik Kicks – Paul Weller –



Universal Island Records 2012

I have long held the opinion that one can often find as much verbal density and literary value in a CD sleeve as on the printed page. All the lyrics here vindicate this point; the album sleeve has its literary reinforcement with Michael Horovitz's supporting poem *Bankbusted Nuclear Detergent Blues*. The latter paints a powerful backcloth, presenting the environment of the album – high pressurized urban tensions, a volatile economy, militarism lurking in the background.

On the printed page, Weller's lyrics have a minimalist feel – making pointers, leaving much to the imagination. I wonder if Rimbaud and Verlaine feature among his influences. Green seems to refer to living 'in the fast lane' – the 'Go' sign at the traffic lights; there is a suggestion of taking off in an aircraft, and then of a panic-stricken flight, as distinct from 'Fire escape solutions'. It glorifies taking risks: 'Great things/With small techniques/maximize your life'. In *The Attic*, a lonely soul wanders around his apartment, and the lonely city, trying to pluck up the courage to ring his partner. He feels as wrecked as a derelict building: "I fall into the ashes/And crash back through the attic". In *Kling I Klang!* There is an echo of the swing era number *The Trolley Song* ("Clang Clang Clang Went the Trolley . . ."); now the environment is significantly more brutalized: "Bang bang bang shot the passer by". Then an appeal for recklessness: "I'll take my chances in the earth/in the grave". There is the suggestion of a riot in "It's hard to tell the fighters from the thieves. Lastly a surreal juxtaposition of decay and chaos (perhaps a tinge of tsunami): "And I don't care what the neighbours think/I've heard their dripping from the kitchen sink/The damp comes down and changes me wall/Fills my flat I find myself submerged".

After the high tension a significant shift of mood in the meditative *By the Waters*. More revving up with teenage speed-freaks in *That Dangerous Age*. Tender wistfulness again in *Study in Blue*, enhanced by vocal (from his wife Hannah?) Paul Weller is obviously a lover of painting. I particularly liked "the Grass is talking too". *Dragonfly* – a very ghostly entity described in negatives: 'a dragonfly with no fire/Diaphanous with no intent . . . like a sea with no waves . . .' There is, though, a plea for positive life in the fourth stanza: "Dance in the light of the silvery moon/Laugh at the life that's inside of you . . ."

When Your Garden's Overgrown – (apparently a tribute to Syd Barrett) somebody 'gets away from it all' and goes on an extended, escapist artistic holiday, one physical consequence of which is neglect of his garden. Perhaps he's very isolated, or he might have had someone to look after it. More disturbing emotional depths are hinted at in 'the writing on the wall' and 'He wished the world/Would fade just into sight/and oh, the feelings that changed/Were thicker than the brush/strokes of fame'. *Around the Lake* is quite thought-provoking. *Around the Lake*: the lake is an enclave of tranquility amidst the hustle and bustle of fame: "There's a triumph/In the buy out/Of a sell out in the Park". But in the place of tranquility is further vital tension: "It's only in the weeds that bind/Some barbed wire in your diet/That leads us where we don't belong . . .". *Drifters* – the one adrift in the urban wilderness is always guided by a partner's voice. *Paperchase*: we all know the Boy Scout and Girl Guide activity of blazing paper trails, but this song develops the idea bizarrely. The second stanza refers to 'paper planes' of paper darts, but these assume vast, death-defying proportions 'Flying too close to the solar flames . . . Was earth not enough for you?' Under these conditions the senses are numbed, and the numbness continues when the flight is over: "You can't hear the words at all –/While you're in your free fall. The person/entity ends up in anonymity – 'Merging into black 'till you can't be seen'. With *Be Happy Children*, the album concludes on a note of benign sentimentality.

I see the numbers are credited as being co-written; I wonder if the lyrics are Paul's. Interesting to compare them to Paul's own comment on the album: "I think the mood of the record is really colourful," he explained, "it's like modern psychedelic music – if there was any concept at all, it's to take people on a kind of sonic journey. Not in any thematic lyrical way, but a purely musical colourful trip." I do get a 'thematic lyrical' vibe from the album.

Incredibly rich in musical texture it is, especially the instrumental bridge passage *Sleep of the Serene*, which takes off imaginatively in multiple directions, embracing orthodox instruments and reverb effects. *Twilight* seemed to promise something comparable; need not have been quite so brief. *The Water* has a tasteful acoustic guitar backing, with some Mantovani-esque strings; it also has the most up-front vocal in the album. *Tempi* in *Sonik Kicks* range from Hard Rock – *A Dangerous Age* has echoes of *The Kinks*, *The Attic* and *When Your Garden's Overgrown* – speeded-up Blue Beat/Reggae (a bit reminiscent of *Madness?*), to Flamenco-rock fusion in *Drifters* and Gospel/Soul in *Be Happy*. *Study in Blue*, with its rippling piano coda, is quite reflective. It is also the most varied track on the album, having an abrupt – and exciting, change of pace with the 'stronger all the time' verse. The piano motif is reiterated in *Dragonfly*. I feel that the long intro to this track would have merited a title.

A true masterpiece of eclecticism – from the upper stratosphere to ground roots level. Weller drew on an exceedingly diverse range of musicians to perfect this multi-faceted work. "If Albarn hovers over some songs, former Blur guitarist Graham Coxon contributes three tracks, actually nestling alongside Noel Gallagher on *The Attic*, a Britpop bedfellowship unthinkable 20 years ago. Everyone has calmed down since then; everyone, that is, except Weller, gripped by a muse so frenzied you almost feel sorry for the disorientated Mods." (Kitty Empire, *The Guardian*)

Dave Russell

Graffiti corner

alison99	ugly and raw	
Member	on my face, tearing it apart and	
Therapy	turning my mouth into a cartoon.	
They don't tell you this at the doctor's.	Suddenly I am the woman in Israel I saw on the telly,	
It's all, 'CBT', and 'Positive Thinking';	grieving for her son,	
'Take these once a day,	wailing uninhibited,	
they might make you feel worse,	head back, arms loose,	
at first.'	the Russian woman clutching the photograph of her lost husband,	
	the Pakistani man draped over his brother's coffin....	
But it's not until I get back home		
that I feel it coming,	I am definitely not British!	Sun Jun 03, 2012 12:58 pm
welling up from my bones,		tonyh
my tummy,	But I know this grief	Re: Therapy
my throat,	is part of being human	I understand it Alison, not just for cbt either.
demanding my attention;	and I put my arms out to this foreigner,	and welcome
'wait,'	I take her hands and let her wrench me open;	
'I AM ON MY WAY!!'		Thu Jun 14, 2012 7:22 am
	and at last	patrick
And I let it come,	I am calm.	Member
this grief,	The air is cooler,	
howling from afar like a stranger,	the sky is brighter,	Re: Therapy
louder and louder	and I look out older	Alison yes !
till it bursts,	and happier	P
	on a new day.	

On Monday 1st October the Live Music Act 2012 (LMA) came into effect.

At a stroke it will facilitate the creation of tens of thousands of potential new live music venues in England and Wales.

The LMA amends the Licensing Act 2003, introducing a new and historic exemption from entertainment licensing for performances of live music between 8am and 11pm. If the performance uses amplification there is an audience limit of 200. If unamplified there is no audience limit.

In pubs and bars that already have live music permission on their premises licences, existing live music conditions will not have effect when live music is being performed between 8am and 11pm. Within those hours, conditions such as restrictions on performer numbers, genres, or amplification would no longer be enforceable.

Under the LMA, pubs or bars that don't already have a live music authorisation on their premises licence will now be free to host live music between 8am and 11pm, subject to the 200 audience limit if the live music is amplified.

But in these and other alcohol-licensed venues, the live music exemption could be reversed if the venue disturbs local residents. At a licence review, the LMA allows for local authorities to re-impose conditions on live music performances.

The benefit of the LMA licence exemptions goes much further than pubs and bars. Subject to the same hours and audience conditions above, the exemption for live music extends to all workplaces. This is a broad term that includes offices, shops, schools and hospitals.

The LMA also does away with the requirement to licence the provision of entertainment facilities. Among other things, this means it will no longer be a potential criminal offence to put a piano in a bar for customers to enjoy, or for a school to provide instruments and a PA for a charity fund-raising concert by pupils. Lastly, the LMA makes it possible for recorded music, rather than solely live music, to accompany Morris or similar dancing.

It all sounds great – but the benefits for pubs and bars could be undermined if a worrying and indeed misleading suggestion within the DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) revised licensing Guidance is ratified.

This Guidance is secondary legislation to which licensing authorities 'must have regard'. The words of the Licensing Act take precedence, but the Guidance is what usually informs licensing officer enforcement. And paragraph 15.14 of the revised draft wrongly suggests that licensing officers might in certain cases circumvent the LMA and impose pre-emptive conditions on live music even when there has been no licence review. The draft was put out for public consultation by DCMS on 22 August and this closes on 28 September: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/9291.aspx> Serious concerns have already been raised by the music industry and campaigners, but it is not yet clear whether they will be satisfactorily addressed. The new Guidance will probably not be published until the end of October. If it fails to meet the concerns already raised, its implementation could be further delayed in Parliament or subject to judicial review.

For some campaigners, like John King, the revised licensing Guidance may create more problems than it solves for live music. His thorough and entertaining analysis has been published by MusicTank: <http://www.musictank.co.uk/blog/devil-in-the-detail>

For a DCMS summary of the effect of the Live Music Act see :http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/regulated_entertainment/8955.aspx

Performance poetry may count as the performance of a play for the purposes of the Licensing Act 2003, and therefore potentially licensable as a 'regulated entertainment'. The LMA wouldn't change that, I'm afraid.

Hamish Birchall

Nick Monks: was born in NW England. He studied philosophy at Hull university. Has worked and travelled widely for six years. His first collection "By The Canal" is available from masque publishing.

Bio- Nick Monks was born in NW England. He studied philosophy at Hull university He regrettably spent ten years where he was serially abused and treated negligently by mental health staff.

He found a way out and has worked and travelled widely abroad for six years. His first collection "By the Canal" is available from masque publishing

Bio- Nick Monks was born in NW England. He studied philosophy at Hull university. Has a mental health problem which actually helps his writing. He has spent about six years working and travelling abroad. His first collection, "By the Canal" is available from masque publishing

Ben Gray: Little Shadow Puppet describes the feeling of being made invisible, silenced and little more than a puppet in modern society and the mental healthcare system. The poem tries to communicate the feeling of being made to dance like a puppet to a tune that is not your own, that suppresses individuality, creativity, freedom of expression and real dialogue between people. The shadow puppet is also a metaphor and can easily be pictured in the imagination. The poem suggests that the experience of hearing voices or being labelled with 'mental illness' can make people feel like 'a shadow of your former self'. The shadow is also a metaphor or image for the dark and perhaps destructive experience of hearing voices that other people cannot or will refuse to hear. The poem was inspired by Wayang Kulit, a theatre of the shadow puppet from Indonesia.

The Frozen Sky tries to communicate the metaphysical and spiritual aspects of human existence, which are often forgotten in modern society and dismissed by traditional psychiatry. People labelled with 'mental illness' can feel frozen out of society and their spirituality or beliefs fractured like ice, so fracturing and breaking the self. Their prayers or hopes, raised to the heavens like the branches of a tree, can seem to be empty and left unfulfilled.

Dr. Ben Gray is a voice hearer, academic and researcher who has published several poems. He lives in Wivenhoe, a small coastal town that was once a fishing village and thriving port, but is now better known for its community of artists, writers and academics. He is currently a service user expert at Rethink Mental Illness.

Robert Hertner: Last August there came the sad news of the demise of Robert Hertner, who was briefly a trustee of Survivors Poetry, on the recommendation of Celia Potterton. This is a tragic loss, as he had well-articulated plans, supported by his high-level computer expertise, to help Survivors 'go global' and attract mass participation on the net. His groundwork, happily has been preserved, and hopefully will be implemented in the future.

Robert had long suffered from chronically bad health, and had a few months prior to his decease, barely survived a month in intensive care.

His sterling qualities are outlined in the funeral address article below

Dave Russell

NB: TMO = Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation

Robert Hertner: Suddenly at his home in Holmfield House on Wednesday evening the legend that was Robert Hertner passed away. Robert, known as "Bucky" or "The 9 Stone Cowboy" worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for fellow residents north of the borough. His relentless campaign against residents being bullied by TMO staff has resulted in the sacking of some but not all of the TMO bullies. He was currently holding the TMO to account over a vulnerable resident being assaulted by a TMO staff member. For some time he had been asking the TMO for proof of identity of the person said to have carried out the attack. As usual the TMO refused to reveal this information

Robert was a generous man always first to put his hand in his pocket. Never afraid to make a counterattack when in the pub. Robert will be sadly missed by all who knew him and it is unlikely that his likes will ever be seen again.

A talented musician and film maker Robert captivated audiences with his unique style.

An outstanding guitarist, composer, arranger and songwriter Robert produced some wonderful recordings.

Robert was an inspiration to many. Tracey Emin the well known artist is said to have taken inspiration from Robert's living room,

Anyone who met Robert could not help but be impressed by his wealth of knowledge both useful and useless.



<http://vimeo.com/survivors>

Join us to celebrate
21 years of Survivors' Poetry
Thursday 8 November 2012
6.00 - 8.30pm
The Poetry Café
22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX
Featuring performances from Survivor Poets
Refreshments provided
RSVP by 1 November to celiaj@blueyonder.co.uk
www.survivorspoetry.org

*“Thank you
to all our volunteers,
supporters and to the
organisations that fund our
work.”*

if you wish to

make contact and respond to anything you have read or if you wish to contribute, please either email: info@survivorspoetry.org.uk or write to:
Survivors' Poetry
Studio 11 Bickerton House
25-27 Bickerton Road
London N19 5JT
Tel: 020 7281 4654
www.survivorspoetry.org

Survivors' Poetry is looking for new volunteers to join our small team. If you have good English, and have an interest in poetry and have some time to spare, please contact Simon Jenner.

We are particularly interested to hear from individuals with business and arts project management experience. You may have an interest in poetry or literature, or have worked in a commercial enterprise. Whatever your background we'd be interested in hearing from you.

Please contact;
simon@survivorspoetry.org
T: +{44} 020 7281 4654

Donations:

Find out why your donations are vital for the future work of Survivors' Poetry. Please visit our website's Donation page to find out about our projects. You can make donations online via our Donations page or via the website bookshop. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to Survivors' Poetry or if you wish to include Gift Aid, please make your donation via mycharitypage.com. {Please note that a 2.8% fee is added to your donation by mycharitypage.com.}

<http://www.survivorspoetry.org/donations/>



When you make a donation via Mycharitypage.com. YOU will be CHARGED a 2.8% fee. For example **if you donate £5, an additional 0.14p will be added.**

Network

Winter 2012 #40

Leeds Survivors

Contact Tom Halloran:
Tel: 01924 820 779
Email: tgh52@talktalk.net

Bristol Survivors

Contact Steve Hennessy
email: cd2007g8825_2@blueyonder.co.uk
www.steppingouttheatre.co.uk

Manchester Survivors

Every Mon 4–6pm workshop
Common Word, 6. Mount St.,
Manchester M2 5NS
Contact Jackie Hagan
email: jaclynhagan@hotmail.com

East Sussex

GROW–
Meet every Tuesday except during school holidays at:
The Children's Library
Robertson Passage, Hastings
Contact: Ashley Jordon
email: jordan72uk@gmail.com

High Peak Writers

Works in association with The Grapevine – a local mental health charity. Located in Buxton.
Contact: TBC
email:

Stevenage Survivors

Meets up every other Friday
The Friends' Meeting House, 21 Cutty's Lane, Stevenage
7.30–9.30pm
Contact: Roy Birch
email: royb@survivorspoetry.org

The Bread is Rising Poetry Collective

<http://www.thebreadisrising.org/index.html>
For info; contact: thebreadisrising@excite.com
or 001-347-534-5715 [USA]

York Survivors: SWAY

SWAY (Survivor Writers and Artists, York):
Contact Brinley Price: brinleyprice@yahoo.co.uk;
mobile: 07985 510458

Poetry Café

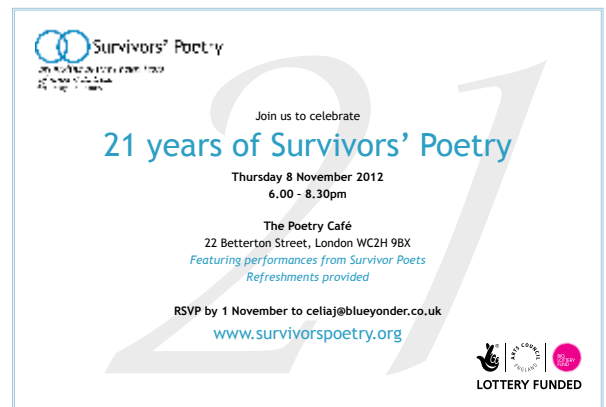
22 Betterton Street,
Covent Garden
WC2H 9BX
T: 020 7420 9888

11th October 2012

**SIBYL MADRIGAL & ALEX
WARD / KATHERINE TOY**

8th November 2012

Survivors' Poetry is
coming of age.
Please join us at the
Poetry Café with our
founders;
**Joe Bidder, Peter
Campbell, Frank
Bangay, Hilary
Porter and friends**



13th December 2012

KATH TAIT

10th January 2013

TBC

Tottenham Chances

399 Tottenham High Road,
London N17 6QN
T: 0208 365 0653

25th October 2012

**GEESINK NORBA / TONY MAR-
RESE / BADEN PRINCE JUNIOR**

23rd November 2012

TBC

28th December 2012

TBC