

AGENDA

BROADSHEET 10

Welcome to Broadsheet 10, yet another demonstration of young talented poets, specially selected for the sure ring of their voices.

The two chosen Broadsheet poets in the current **Lauds** issue, Vol. 43 Nos.2-3, are **Caroline Clarke**, 30, and **Adam Wyeth**, 29.

In this Broadsheet we are focusing on a highly promising young Yorkshire-based Scottish artist, **Norrie Harman**, 30, who comes from Edinburgh. Norrie has a BA Hons in Drawing and Painting from Edinburgh College of Art (Heriot-Watt University). In 1999 he received the Paul Girdwood Memorial Prize, and in 2000 The Latimer Award for Outstanding young Scottish Painter, Royal Academy, Scotland.

His public commissions include The Daily Record, Glasgow, The Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh, The Caledonian Brewery, Edinburgh, Edinburgh International Airport and Hempsons Solicitors, Harrogate. He has also completed a number of private commissions for individual clients and businesses.

The Artco Gallery in Leeds (info@artco.co.uk or www.artco.co.uk) has worked with Norrie for a number of years and is at the moment featuring a solo exhibition of Norrie's new work inspired by a recent trip to Berlin.

Norrie's work can be seen on <http://www.artco.co.uk/exhibitions/1162>



Norrie Harman: View to the Sarcophagus – mixed media

Loveday Why, 23, studied for an English Literature degree at Warwick University. She left a Masters in Romantic Poetry at Cambridge University in order to water-play and write in Australia which is where she is now. She edited a few issues of *Avocado* poetry magazine (Heaventree Press), and she founded and edited Warwick university's small poetry magazine, *The Poetaster*. Her poems have appeared in several poetry journals, and she won the Derek Walcott poetry prize in 2006.

Stay Close

for Jenny

I would give you my eyes, my throat for speech.
A hoo-poo flies, from black a scarlet wing.
Things pass, stay close. Behind. Within our reach.

The Siskei River tries two lands to breach,
a flat topped mountain worshipped like a king.
Oh, I'd give you my eyes, my throat for speech.

There's room beneath the palm tree for two. Each
knows what's true. I shake for you. For this thing
to pass, stay close. Behind. Within our reach.

It is Sunday. We hear the pastor preach.
Storm. The tent is broken. Bites in a ring.
I'd give you my eyes, my throat for speech

or send lucky beans, shells with whorls of peach.
But to these gifts and others don't cling.
Let things pass, stay close. Behind. Within our reach.

Your name is in driftwood on every beach
I visit and now I run when I sing,
I would give you my eyes, my throat for speech.
Things pass, stay close. Behind. Within our reach.

Dead Head

She doesn't grieve like other people.
If she cries (rarely) her tears feel
fraudulent. Can't take bad news on an
empty stomach. So in the kitchen,
she hacks apple flesh into
wild cubes, blending them
to a puree to mute the noise
of anxious voices, the curve of a kind
shoulder that helps her in her game,
shrouding the receiver and the
life she knows has ended by the
growing cramp in her back.
Dry eyed, empty headed,
she bursts the skins of everything

A.J. Ward, 20, was born in Welwyn Garden City. He is currently the only student to be studying Creative Writing in combination with Drama at the University of Cumbria in Carlisle. This is his first poem to be published.

Another Kind of Haunting

So much talk of ghosts when we moved into this house,
A time creased mansion with ghosts in its veins and arteries,
plug sockets and light switches. Every flickering bulb
a vengeful spirit, every thud in the night a trapped soul.
Now, only one room is haunted, taunted
by the echo that was you. Picture hooks on the wall miss
frames, hangers in the wardrobe long to be embellished.
You left more than empty shoeboxes in that room, this house,
Memories. Echoes. The residue of your residence.
You haunt us now, taunt us wherever you are.



Norrie Harman: Polish Girl – mixed media

Bobby Parker, 25, comes from Kidderminster. His work has been published /accepted in many poetry magazines such as *The Coffee House*, *Curlew*, *Cauldron*, *Fire*, *Iota*, *Obsessed with Pipework*, *Purple Patch*, *Urban District Writers*, *Weyfarers*, *Rain Dog* and *Krax*. He ‘believes in art . . . everything else feels too temporary.’

Please don't surrender

Behind your face
where rain meets the windows
and damp brings tissues
flying to your eyes like crumpled doves
I see your parents burning like candles –
are you the wax that formed a sad girl
below their melting shapes?

Behind your face
where the adults are children
who forgot to fear the darkness
where strange horses drink silver stars
from puddles near a creepy barn
I see your farmhouse-lights begin to fade;
I feel powerless, as if this is how you'll stay –
I hear disembodied footsteps
Walking away...

Torture

I like to hold the cat
by our cage of zebra finches
and let her watch them darting
back and forth between their perches.

Cradling her intense nature
I can feel her muscles tighten like ropes;
as her gaze anticipates their every flutter
we are fascinated, we make jokes

but it is very cruel: the teasing, the terror.

In my arms her weight
becomes light as an empty pillowcase;
she'll yearn for them forever –

I watch her waiting for the cage to vanish,
she doesn't know this will never happen –
then again neither do I – and our birds sing
and sing and sing and sing

as God cradles me in the sky.

Bananas

If your words were skinned like bananas
and left on my pillow with your thoughts
would the fruit be white as a boiled bone
or wet and bruised like a rugby player?

If your thoughts were played like music
and blasted from the stereo of your heart
would it be Blues sad as sunken ships
or the complicated jazz of a tormented mind?

If your heart was the captain of a boat
sailing through the storms of your grief
would he sharpen his eyes on the horizon
like two suns setting behind treasure island?

If you completely share your grief with me
I could eat bananas and listen to music...
I could be a passenger and call you Ahab...

I could call the white whale your miscarriage
as you rub your tummy, singing and whispering
to a dug seed – I could reach into the future
and bring you back a rainbow.

Jason Spear, 33, was born in Norfolk, Virginia. He graduated from the Universities of Georgia, and Lyon in France, and completed a Teaching qualification at the University of East London. He has worked, teaching mainly, in Prague, Philadelphia, London and Lyon, France where he now resides.

Homage to Rafael Alberti's Three Memories of Heaven

i

It was before the carnivorous patience of spider webs
spread across the Empires of your dreams,
before the rash judgment of rain brought them down
in the reckoning of tenderness,
it was before the meeting of the first goodbye
and long before the whispered mention of the hollow way of strangers
when distance was not a part of time and space

ii

It was before both joy and grief
engraved their sweep of years on the ever-changing face,
It was before hands reached out for something always lost.
Maybe it was there I met you.

iii

Before we had names to speak with.
Before the rose and the crumbling of the rose
to the dust that blows about forgetfulness
before the ruin
and the immaculate memory of the ruin
where nimble nothing roams so quietly.
Maybe it was there.
Maybe it was there I met you.

James Midgley, 21, is a Literature and Creative Writing student nearing the end of his undergraduate degree at the UEA in Norwich. Recently his poems have appeared in *Fuselit*, *Iota*, *Magma*, *The Pedestal*, *The Rialto*, *Seam*, *Smiths Knoll*, *Stand*, and *Stride*. His chapbook manuscript was shortlisted in the 2007 Poetry Business competition. He edits the poetry journal *Mimesis* www.mimesispoetry.com

Two Soliloquies

i

Muntjac barks snag in the black veins
of higher branches, and I am startled

by a grandiloquence of wings
echoing through the empty head of the sky

like fleeing memory. And it's often
sounds like these

– the hedge shaken like a child's
toy maraca, apples thudding –

that run before me, just around another
twine of holly,

as if someone walked ahead, a beater,
discarded thought, a past self.

ii

Reverse-engineer the meal. We can find
component parts – that bloodied meat,

a baby's rattle, the sounds of birds
in the clouded rafters.

Do not christen, quantify or value.
Judgement is another kind of sauce.

Steam is a white hand prying the nose,
taking the skull like a bowling ball.

But even this vapour must be reduced,
its shrill whistle cut back

to reveal an infant piping, a lullaby
of pitch and incoherence, footfalls.

Once realised, that babble is hard
to shake. And there's another voice

shouting beyond the kitchen window
clothed in tall grass and twittering;

words or a word beyond hearing, though
you can guess, or think you can,

the meaning. Steam rises,
the noises mix,

and you are outside, shouting in.
Soliloquy with audience *in absentia*:

a kinder way of talking to oneself.

Tract-or

My parents tell me it was my first word,
that second syllable over-spoken,
like a big wheel in the mouth.

Probably thanks to the open garage
past the woods and nettle paths, home
to six of the things at a time,

the smell of oil so thick as to clog
my nose and mouth, bluebells grown up
by the walls drowning in it.

Back with a cigarette now, imagining
above the back-and-forth of courting owls
that heavy trundling sound,

the son who chooses all this over love.



Norrie Harman: Garage Carcass – mixed media

Robert Yates, 35, was born in Southport. He works in London as a translator (his translations of Baudelaire and Rimbaud are on the Brindin Press website). His poems have appeared in *The Wolf*, *The Frogmore Papers* and *London Poets*. He has performed his poems at RADA and on Resonance FM.

Liverpool Echo Poets' Corner

I recalled the cruel facts of man's dichotomy
As I walked this morning to the hedge end,
Where a man who had had a frontal lobotomy
Was walking through the mist like a legend
Of our troubled times;

And as I saw two students in the spring of adolescence,
Reading from their Milton anthologies,
I realised that, like schizoid bank clerks in convalescence,
We tread a world of dead tautologies
And difficult rhymes.

Robert McClure, 26, lives in London with his partner of seven years. At 25 he was diagnosed with Asperges syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder. Robert showed an interest in the use of language at an early age. This later developed into a passion for reading and writing poetry.

Parks and Gardens

The iron gate had scarcely latched
Before your eyes closed in
All the flowers had been uprooted
And the air filled with yellow pollen sparks

It felt like time was running backwards
Around us, the emptied flowerbeds
And I could barely catch my breath
As we emerged into cold 9 pm

We cut ourselves on the jagged edges
Where the park abruptly turned to road
And the trees were felled by lampposts
In the darkness of the city

In my hanging gardens there's a lamp
Wiping the shadows from the sundial
And I only bolt the gate
When the last blossom's closed

A reliquary

Stones lodge themselves into crevices,
between the paving stones, buried deep,
under dunes of moss,
asleep in the muddy cracks,
until I cast them out with a handy stick
and they scatter, rattling along the tarmac.
I listen and then read the signs,
knowing which ones to keep
And rinse them clean.
Little marbles, granites, flints,
rolled between closed palms.
Some sharp as thorns, cursing,
or sandy smooth
drop into a jam jar
brim-filled with treasures:
a quartz, a clay bead, a tooth,
I will re-inter them
in their glass sarcophagus,
bury them under history books,
comprehension, and long division,
an overgrown cairn
beneath my unmade bed

Aviva Dautch (29) works as a Creative Educator for the British Library and as Interfaith Officer for the Board of Deputies, facilitating dialogue and conflict resolution between faith groups. Aviva is a student at the Poetry School in London and these are her first published poems

The Persimmon Tree

*I saw the sun as one green light
like a green persimmon. Angel fruit.
A green sun like a green apple.*

Mimi Khalvati

Why am I caught by the persimmon tree,
tall against the Spanish campo?

Drawn by the hard fruit bowing
its branches to the ground, I circle its trunk,

creeping around it at a distance like the moths
corkscrewing the citronella candles.

It's that the fruit seems so foreign, solid,
no trace of the squished blush, the *sharon*

that I know by its Hebrew name.
In Israel my grandmother would quarter

it onto my tongue saying *suck*,
soft sweet seeds filling my mouth

until my cheeks blistered on the acrid
skin. *Suck*, she'd command, *suck!*

The Rainment

“God’s first action when expelling Adam and Eve from Eden was to sew them clothes.”

Midrash Bereshit Rabbah

Did God measure Eve’s cup-size and Adam’s inside-leg
in inches or wingspan or using a ruler of python skin?
And did He ask them what they’d like, or didn’t He care –

dressing them in polyester, tightening their waistbands
with seams that rub. Or maybe He gently wrapped
them in waterproof cagoules and pashminas –

threading an obelisk ready for hemming,
dampening the cotton with tear-dipped fingers,
or spinning cloth from sheep, a Vesuvius of blood

spitting from His pricked thumb, or knitting leaves
together with vine, purling stitches from the world’s
knotted skein slowly unravelling on its axis.

The Garden

The pool limns the evening as dusk falls
across the hills. The pool is scattered
with drowning wasps floating like feathers.

I beat through its waters, pulse its length,
and water quicksilvers skin, skin
is mercurial, porous, absorbing the light.

Not this pool but one from twenty years ago,
sunk in the slant of a dead volcano, lay
cracking with the sun alongside a garden

etched with wild grasses and peacocks’ tails –
when I shook myself, I’d dew them with ice-drops.
One morning I watched my father swim,

his limbs molten silver, star-shaped, drifting
with the wind like drowning wasps. Later,
when the noise erupted and they dragged

him out, they led me away, into the garden.
All I could hear was my own breathing,
all I could see was a profusion of eyes.



Norrie Harman: Stray Dog – mixed media

Katie Smith-Fiddy, 21, was born in Norfolk. She is in her final year of a degree in English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster University. After graduating, she will be moving to Chester with her fiancé.

Playing out

On concrete like pitted skin
Ben and I played tennis,
and found birds, their blood red
against the dead gray
of the ground.
Fence-post fingers pointing to the sky
combing the grass,
hair on a stretch of skin, next to
the oak defiant.
It was a man with raised fists.
Proudly, we climbed,
the trunk marked blackly by lightning
heroic and war-wounded.
At home the miserable stub of lavender,
jutting like an amputated limb,
lonely in our garden by the roses.
It had bloomed once.
My father thought it was a weed
and cut the whole thing down.
It made my mother cry
then laugh.

Expectation

We cut each other with our stares.
Your blood is ink
it has stained me
it has mingled with mine.

I am frightened of the dark
you leave the curtains open.
Sometimes I cry in my sleep
when I wake up there are stains on the sheet.

My lips get sore from
kissing your cracked feet
with a painted mouth. Your
Red eyes regard me.

You laugh with your heart open
and watch the adverts. Running on
this smooth edge of discomfort
that you're used to.

My words hang in the air
like pieces of glass.

James Potts, 21, is currently reading English Literature at Merton College, Oxford. He was a Foyles Young Poet of the Year in 2003 and 2004, twice won *The Times* Stephen Spender prize, for translations from Latin, and has been a Fellow of Hawthornden Castle. As well as poetry and translation, he enjoys writing and adapting plays. His current project is editing *Oxford Poetry* magazine.

White Light

Only from behind a thumb can I look
at you: inscrutable, single point of light,
now on the edge of perception I see

above the visible surface, pure white
with dust, filaments, satin streaming,
a shimmering coronet, pearly bright.

Your mind, like your beauty, ever dreaming
beyond its limits, expands beyond my sight,
flying out, desperate, thinning, gleaming,

until gravity pulls back thoughts in flight,
in elemental fusion recombined:
the new core flings heavy into the night

elements, making planets of the mind,
to the limits of gravity flinging
an equal, constant light, over the whole blind

universe, scattering, arcing, ringing
from the tops of atmospheres, and once might
flare to brilliance, leaving surface spinning.

Praises for my Francisca

*Novis te cantabo chordis,
O novelletum quod ludis
in solitudine cordis.*

I'll sing you with strange new strings,
O small new thing who plays
in my heart's solitude.

Be entwined with garlands,
O luxurious woman
through whom sins are absolved!

Like obliging Lethe,
I shall drain kisses from you
who are inspired with magnetism.

When the tempest of my faults
disordered all my narrow ways,
you appeared, Divinity,

like the star of the sea
among bitter shipwrecks...
I shall hang my heart on your altar.

Reservoir full of virtue,
spring of eternal youth,
restore the voice to my silent lips!

What was impure, you burnt;
What was rough, you smoothed;
What was frail, you strengthened.

In hunger my tavern,
in darkness my midnight-oil,
steer me straight always.

Impart, now, your strength to men,
bath sweetly scented
with delightful perfumes.

Shimmer about my loins,
O corselet of chastity,
water dyed by seraphim;

chalice tremulous with gems,
salted bread and tender mouthful,
celestial wine, Francisca!

(from the Latin of Baudelaire, C19th)



Norrie Harman: Retail Park – mixed media

Omar Sabbagh, 29, is a Lebanese/British poet. He completed a (second) MA in Creative and Life Writing at Goldsmiths in September 2007, and that same year began a PhD on Temporal Experience in Conrad and Ford at Kings College, London. His poetry has appeared in earlier *Agenda Broadsheets*, *Poetry Review*, *The Reader*, *The Warwick Review*, and is forthcoming in *Stand*.

Victim

They *will* talk of the echo chamber
When I am all gun. And late in December
They'll point at a leafless sorrow
And say that only weeds survive –

The while, I'll hear the beaten wives
Of fear, the rain-hiss and the gale-lash
Of their big floating broken spirit:
For what they lack they lack like fluid.

They haven't the sky strung with gum,
They haven't the earth mined, the sea
Plumbed with their littleness aggression.

What's missing is the future, trip-wire.
They misunderstand the dimension
Of time, how it distends – hope – tall.

Pedantry

He took a book with him
To travel with.
Didn't read a single line
The way there, the way back,
Never gave a word the honour
Of his mind, but clasped it
Tight to his breast like a second heart.

In the book was a story,
The story of his life,
As it was and would be.
The journey there and back
Comprised the entirety
Of that life. Two hearts, then,
And not a single eye.

Still Life

For Ermanno Bencivenga

Sorry, love, I've lost the gift of play.
I no longer know
how to make the space for it,
the necessary air in which
a new vein with a new brief might
set its tracks and circulate.

Somehow, I've come to be
fixed with a stunned face, unable
to respond to the world's rapid movements:
a handsome boy sitting here waiting
for the curtain to fall
and then the music.

The Lyrical Mafioso

Start

With a salutary mixture
Of chaos and panic. That's the recipe.
Call up with wayward potions
The beginning before the beginning,
And the one before that, and so on.
Get everyone caught
In that blackish storm, and soon
You're entering the state of discovery.

Go on: drop them in it, friends and family,
Just there, before the Big Bang, say:
As good a place as any
To sniff with your doggish sense
For duplicity, or draperies of betrayal.

The weak ones will get lost
In the forestry and barbed wire.

Then they'll sing for their lives.



Norrie Harman: Abandoned Caravan – mixed media

Harriet Alida Lye was born in the springtime just outside of Toronto, Ontario. As a Canadian with only a British passport and currently living in Paris, she knows her home is wherever she is.

A power struggle between the light and the dark

In the half-light of the limp August evenings,
I would pull the pollen-laden stamens
off the evergreen tree on the front lawn
as the horizon pulled the copper-penny sun
into its black, breaching womb.

Gamboling around with my school frock on,
I would scatter the yellow pollen on the grass, the
driveway, the sidewalk. Twilight skies streaked
with dissipating cirrus; abandoned sticks of chalk;
front-porch lights, flickering. Singing to myself
“I am sprinkling the dusk, I am
sprinkling the dusk.”

Eyes shining in the crepitating dark,
like oyster shells in the inky sea,
the little harbinger of night
danced in the dusk, in the dust.

* *

Before white-coated shoulders brushed up
against the hushed doors in the
artificial lighting that carefully
evaded daylight; before anyone
explained how to be afraid.

In the halls, the people come and go
but keep their doors closed
and their eyes down.

In the halls, the transport-workers – a
sterilized name for the bringers of
night – wheel the children’s limp little bodies away.
They keep their eyes down.

* *

There will be toast and bitter marmalade for breakfast
and an elegy for elevenses. Overly casual, clean; no references
to ashes or to dust. No mention of the
swollen neutrophils, blooming wildly

like the first snowdrops in the North of England
in an unusually mild March.
We will talk about how much our little girl loved the world,
and how it escaped, all before a buffet lunch.

Preparation

She began preparing for death at fifteen. When she felt the rumbling – a rumbling deep under the earth, at its very core – she knew that it was just down the hill, round the corner and coming up the crooked path. She got ready. First, she adjusted her time frame and started thinking about the beauty of impermanence.

- Mummy, can we pick the tomatoes today?
- They're not ready to eat until they are red.
- But what happens if you wait too long?

Instead of rotting, she got to go at her most beautiful: exploding like a light-bulb or a firecracker. No decomposing, no decaying, no blood turned rancid; glitter, bursting! from her fresh seams –

She quickened her ripening process and convinced herself, with sturdy mind, that it was better that way. On the day she felt it coming, she changed out of the cotton gown and put on a pretty dress: she wanted people to remember her wearing a summer frock that floats on the breeze; pretty, whimsical, and carefree.

- Have you ever had a near-death experience? she asked.
- I almost got into a car-crash once. You?

Secrets instilled in young blood, white blood bloomed from formerly red rivers.

In flushed health, she fell apart.

Thoughts on Ripeness

i

Go to the ends of the Earth, my Love,
and put your ear to the ground
where the water meets the shore.

Kneel at my feet.

Palms flat to the curve of the world,
let it take the form of your fingerprints.

Palms flat, head down; crouched in
reverence – a prayer of
anticipation.

ii

In the golden half-light of my
Prime Meridian afternoon,
when you are just waking up,
 come to me, and wait.
The elderberries are ripe: it is
time to make wine.

iii

The moon is full, it's late July,
the night is thick with limpid
girls and fireflies.
Fireworks electrify the corrugated rooftops
 that reflect the moon.
The night has that melancholy
smell of lilacs, smoke, and the mo-
ment before rain. O -
pen your mouth to catch my kiss
on your tongue.

iv

She is like a perfect peach:
brimming with possibility
and just about to go bad.

v

You have the curious face of a
canvas left blank and titled "potential."
I have the hopeful face of a
mirror, blank, too,
 when reflecting you:
 luminous.

vi

It's funny, isn't it, how
lilacs begin the process of
dying before even reaching their
 climax.
The effulgent explosion of
 little purple blossoms,
when at its fullest, is already in a
 state of decline.

vii

Suckling newly
Soured milk –

viii

I am holding on to you
with a fierce belief –
common to kangaroos
& the Indian Summer – that one
day, a big wind will come;
that one day, one day soon,
your afternoon will be
my afternoon.

Until then, wait for me
at the heels of your ocean, Love;
keep your ear to the Earth.
Listen for the secrets I am sending
across the Atlantic –
Now: I am ready
Now

Elena Tomorowitz is 22 and a recent graduate of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio. Her influences include Charles Bukowski, T.S. Eliot, and Harryette Mullen. She plans to attend graduate school, but for now the characters she meets at her bartending job must suffice as a means of inspiration.

Once Inside My Mind

It all happened quite
quickly,
or so I thought.

It crept out
and I could not grab hold of it.
Its slimy body slid out of my ear
and onto the floor.

It snuck under the coffee table
beneath piles of magazines
television controls
cardboard tissue boxes
cheese paper
and chips.

It gently penetrated
the plush rug
stuck its claws through
the floorboards
and disappeared below me.

And I could do nothing to get it back.

Emily Woodford, 21, lives in Wiltshire and is a Creative Writing undergraduate at the Bath Spa University. She also has a four month old son. This is the first poem Emily has had published.

Jacque

I could have written you a poem

About a poppy perhaps.
Hundreds hung above your unlit fireplace,
Lifeless.
You willed them to unfurl,
tentatively inside at first,
edging out to feel the air is warm
then exploding into bloom.
Unapologetically
bleeding all over the carpet,
filling the silence with vigour,
A pulse.

Stoically you watched
With bated breath,
huddled beneath winter layers
waiting for summer.
Enduring long bleak days.
So lost in reverie
Summer passed you by,
pausing momentarily
to reach her hand into your window
scooping the poppies from their frame.

I could have written you a poem

About a poppy perhaps.
Your hands would brush the page.
Oblivious to the lifeless paper,
You'd surround yourself
Feeling for the rigid stem's wispy hair
caressing cool, smooth petals between frail fingers
Their promise of hope and life
Seeping into your skin
Filling your veins.
Running your hands through my words.

I could have written you a poem.



Norrie Harman: View to the Sarcophagus – mixed media

Jamie Liddell, 29, is a journalist awaiting his big publishing break. He graduated in English from Clare College, Cambridge. While freelancing and planning to start a family, he is also working on a novel.

The Desert Does Not Speak Out

So, there are strange feet on me.
These things will pass, I've learnt, you're told
of old, will pass accordingly
and with a great deal of circuitous shuffling
undoubtedly, upon me;
and, occasionally, I expect
to be partially, terribly wrecked –
to have lots of me blown into bits amidst cries of great suffering.

And, longer than you remember, I have lain here, resplendent,
downtrodden, drifting, simply being,
seeing, witnessing each incident,
each new notch on each bow, on each gun,
each little thud its descendant's precedent;
Men have wondered if it would ever cease
and then at the last lost hope of peace
and died, and bled into me, for millennia, in the glare of the same old sun.

And these bits are just pieces, parts of some
of me, now, under the wind; and these
uneasy invaders looking for a hero's welcome,
these faithful defenders and their dignity
are just my newest, most gruesome stratum –
and strange indeed it seems to me
that you fight despite my grainy history,
despite my mute reminder that mine is the only victory.

To Grandad, Love J

I saw a film today, old boy:
the English army had just won the war
and somewhere in the jumbled joy,
the victory, the agony
of the birth of peace there you were, cap askew,
standing at the corner of a cobbled avenue –
you wore a different face,
your uniform was different, too,
but you were definitely you –
and as you watched the dance wheel all about you
I caught the future in you, grand,
sun-beamed to me from behind the screen,
lit like a candle in the black-and-white,
a standard in the corner of a cosy living-room,
a flare over the flatness of a field –
you flicked your fingers in a quick salute
and turned away into the crowd of peoples.

*

It is always you, you see, and me
(or the me in you) I see when I consider
that watershed, that bloody birth rite. It is you
between the lines of great histories,
behind the scenes of great documentaries,
your voice over the kitchen table with a slice of marmalade
in measured tones telling a world of war –
a frozen canal near Nijmegen,
breath frosting on your stiff upper lip –
a Dakota like an angel on the airstrip –
vignettes giving living to the dying and the dead,
the lines on your face like trenches, escarpments,
the Rhine and the Volga and clear Scamander.
And I, ardent for your glory,
hanging on to every story
like a birthright, an heirloom from the days of doom,
remember how you held my hopeful hand
and told me I would never have to fight
- my land inviolate, your monument –
and, later, your silences, and thinking
you met the gorgon face to face, and stayed,
remained a man in your flesh and blood,
and wondering if I could catch a glimpse, a reflection
in the polished brilliance of your eyes.

*

But if as a child I looked into you
in search of a hero's scars to share,
a hero's spirit cracked open, laid bare,
for the sake of the myth I missed the man,
the frailty and the gentle hand,
the strength in holding strength behind
the bars of an elegant, civilised mind;
I missed the nobility that was not earned
on the battlefield with the blasted and the burnt
but in the moments of a lifetime's knowing
the constant revelations of lifetimes growing,
the dignity of teatime in a garden chair,
of a fresh shirt and tie and clean underwear,
the education in a walk in the park,
the virtue and the valour in a quiet remark.
I had not yet learnt how not to look
for the climax, the end at the beginning of the book,
had not yet learnt to seek the peace,
the loves that endure when the rages cease,
had not yet learnt just how much more
you had to teach me than the fury of a war.

* * *

And now everything is finally different.

*

I would have asked you, you see,
what you see in me,
the fruit of the tree
from the fruit of your flesh, me
standing or sitting by you or oceans away,
what you would say
to the man before you, to my being there,
if I told you everything.
But you have seen it all,
heard the melody of life through its rise and fall;
heard the angels sing,
heard the demons preach,
taken arms across a troubled sea,
taken consolation from poetry,
brushed dust from your cuffs and begun to teach;
stretched for the truth, for a Collected Works,
for a pen and a peppermint,
a pitchfork and the penultimate chip
- with a wry, apologetic grin -
and a little sauce to dip it in;
sinned and been forgiven, and forgiven sin;

aimed catapults at cats, and paid the bills;
have wondered at the Levels and the Quantock Hills,
have chuckled in Dunster at the blush of the sun,
avoided flushing spiders down a Matlock drain,
snatched coal thrown hushed from an idling train,
whispered lullabies and whistled with the songbirds,
counted out tablets and been bowled out,
scored and witnessed conversions, and changed bibs,
handed out prizes and given orations,
lain on your back in the dew and cuddled,
held your God in your heart and a stick in your hand
and trod the righteous path, and I can tell you nothing.

*

But I can tell you this, old man –
and listen, then, if you have ears
if you are beyond questions you are not beyond love.
What you have left are lifetimes of love,
generations and regenerations of love,
love woven into worlds and times,
love like a new life in the veins,
love spiralling round and round a line
through the hearts and minds of we who stay behind:
if you are beyond us you are not beyond our love.

And there is a love beyond our love:
there is one who has been waiting for you,
lingering, lightly, behind the screen,
patient for you beyond the curtain,
beautiful, constantly, endlessly true.
For you she is as she was for you;
she is as only you saw her,
reaching out for you from behind the veil,
taking your hand and showing you the way,
with love, with you at last forever,
with you and for you and for each other,
and in death now there shall be no parting
and the rest is silence, the rest is peace.



Norrie Harman: Downtown – oil on canvas

Carly Lightfoot, 23, comes from Exeter. In 2006 she graduated from the University of Exeter with a degree in Business Studies, and she is currently working in a kitchenware shop. She has had poems published in *Pulsar*, *The Rialto*, and *Monkey Kettle*.

Train Passengers:

Requisite drunk; a parent trying to turn down the volume
of their crying child; group of giggling teenagers showing off
iPods, hip-pop screaming through headphones—
diffused sound like white noise on TV after stations closed,
at the loneliest part of night, before the sky unfolded its arms
to myriad channels of dust and light. These are the passengers

on every train I've been on, their faces change;
roles performed by different actors on a perpetual tour
of towns looked down upon as provincial.
In forced proximity we dare not meet eyes, so stare at or through
grubby windows last cleaned when the rail network was privatised.
Views across run-down rows of terraced housing

like Lego bricks sold at boot sales. Laundry hangs from lines
as though misshapen bunting nobody bothered to remove
after a long-forgotten event; a visit from a minor soap star
now in rehab, or the opening of an increasingly dilapidated building
by the Duke and Duchess of somewhere or other.
Gum on the floor, newspapers scattered,

no one using the toilet because it smells like the factory
that as children we were told crushes bones to make glue.
And between the cacophonous exchanges at stations
there are cello creaks of carriages carrying microcosms of Earth,
each passenger an Atlas holding up their version of the heavens.

Hymns for a Godless Existence

Very few are awoken
by the sun—
it's mostly ring tones and alarms,
which are far less pretty, but seem to do the job.
Maybe all of these days that drag their cracked heels
wouldn't if they hadn't started
with a jump. Silent shifts of colour
cannot wake me anymore;
whisper to me before the bleeping begins.

Once, whilst pondering uncertainties,
she wept. The tears fired her face
like prayer mat carpet burns on knees.
She cried and tried not to again.
Wondering what to do next
when each day is composed of the same words
in a different order, she decided
that hoping for more proved she could at least hope.
And that is important, however uncertain.

Edward Smith, 20, is a student at university and lives in Lancashire. He is influenced by Dylan Thomas, Keats and Ginsberg.

Momma

Momma just sits and stares,
I don't think she really cares,
I know she's confused
Full of ideas
She's bemused
But no one will review,
A twisted kind of destiny with no way through
Her mind is undone,
She thinks of a different son,
Under a sun which is melting
Her companions dissolve like
The burning stars as she says
I've been wondering where you are

It's all right momma,
Hide your scars.
She struggles to be content
To live a life of merriment but sometimes
Bonds can't be broken
Glancing at the past she hopes the present won't last
I know she has regrets like Judas after he collects
But momma, take those diamond rings and pawn them for a new king

Like a mother to a sun she kisses
Me then runs and like Jesus
Been betrayed I fall into her game
So as her mind drifts and lifts into
Someplace afar she yearns for direction.
A sense of taste or sight like no other
And she'll strive until her presence is but a date on a wall

Laura Pros Carey, 27, grew up in Tarragona, Spain. For her PhD at Glasgow University she is translating the work of six Spanish poets of the so-called Generation of 1927.

Translations of the Spanish poet, Pedro Salinas

Pedro Salinas is considered one of Spain's most important love poets, alongside Bécquer and Garcilaso. He lived in Spain until 1936, when he left the country for good at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. He spent the rest of his life in the U.S. and in several Latin American countries, teaching and giving conferences. As well as a poet, he was an important critic in Spanish letters.

Water in the Night

Agua en la noche, serpiente indecisa,
silbo menor y rumbo ignorado:
¿Qué día nieve, qué día mar? Dime.
¿Qué día nube, eco
de ti y cauce seco?
Dime.
-No lo diré: entre tus labios me tienes,
beso te doy, pero no claridades.
Que compasiones nocturnas te basten
y lo demás a las sombras
déjaselo, porque yo he sido hecha
para la sed de los labios que nunca preguntan.

Water in the night, hesitant serpent,
minor rippling and unknown direction:
What day snow, what day sea? Tell me.
What day cloud, resounding
echo and dry riverbed?
Tell me.
-I will not say: in your lips you have me,
kisses I give you but not clarities.
May night compassions be enough for you,
and the rest, leave
in the shadows, since I was made
for the hunger of lips that never ask questions.

The way for you to love

La forma de querer tú
es dejarme que te quiera.
El sí con que te me rindes
es el silencio. Tus besos
son ofrecerme los labios
para que los bese yo.
Jamás palabras, abrazos,
me dirán que tú existías,
que me quisiste: jamás.
Me lo dicen hojas blancas,
mapas, augurios, teléfonos;
tú, no.
Y estoy abrazado a ti
sin preguntarte, de miedo
a que no sea verdad
que tú vives y me quieres.
Y estoy abrazado a ti
sin mirar y sin tocarte.
No vaya a ser que descubra
con preguntas, con caricias,
esa soledad inmensa
de quererte sólo yo.

The way for you to love
is to allow me to love you.
Your giving in to me is
silence. Your kisses
are the offer of your lips,
for me to kiss them.
Never will words, embraces,
tell me that you existed,
that you loved me: never.
Blank pages tell me,
maps, omens, telephones;
you don't.
And I'm hugging you
without asking questions, for fear
it may not be true
that you live, and that you love me.
And I'm hugging you
without touching you, without looking at you.
I would not want to discover,
with questions, with caresses,
that immense solitude
of only me loving you.



Norrie Harman: Lone Man – oil on canvas

Alex Fox was born in deepest Lincolnshire in 1974. He went to University in Leeds and lives there still, with his partner and two young sons. After working in residential care and with young people, he now works for a network of charities that support unpaid carers.

His writing veers between the flat lands of Lincolnshire and the rock climbing country of the North. Memories, endings and things almost and not quite passed on feature prominently in his writing, which appears in *Agenda's* online *Broadsheet 9* and translations pages. His sonnets will appear in the winners' anthology of this year's Open Poetry Sonnet competition, as two of the runners up.

The wild flying road

The safest memories I carry are
wide flat fields from the family car.
In the back we're belted up, smirking at Mum
who sings while Dad's stitched glove awes
the wild flying road to hum.

I believed us content. A view each.
Familiar destinations to reach:
an Aunt who served sliced tongue;
an Uncle who dismembered clocks.
Voices scoured of melody like psalms.

I wasn't prepared for their talk of loving.
I thought they liked miming living.
Her usual frown. His usual cough.
A second solid as brakes locking.
"It's not just loving, it's loving enough. . ."

Learning to name clouds

The sky wasn't ready to receive us:
as clouds mopped after sun spills,
hills gulped heat then, shaded, cooled,
lobbed wind around in rowdy gusts.

The thermals puffed on their cumuli:
mediocris above us, blooming congestus
to the west where calving plumes rested
on collapsing columns. Our new canopies

lay limp and sighed. We wouldn't get to fly.
The instructor saw the front ahead:
first, ice crystals spun to cirrus threads
stitched the tattered blue, then altocumuli

unravelling to stratocumulus stratiformis -
a muddle that lowered the sky. In grey
calm, we soared until rain stopped play
with a darkening drizzle of nimbostratus.

Grounded, I weighed up the trade: unlearn
the vast truths of the childhood sky,
the storied mind whose empires
rose for me alone above the plains

back home, and earn your place in a hive
stiff with Latin, riddled with equations:
the architecture of these brief cradlings,
their seraphim views, our pegged out lives.

Don't dilly dally

Your golf course went first, drained down its own holes.
Spinning off the ring road, Sainsbury's followed;

not much missed I'm sure. But when you lost Wickes
I found you bewildered by your battered tin tool box.

The streets began to fray from the city limits.
At the bottom of the High Street we'd fetch up in mist.

Where the branch library was, the blank books flapped.
The Chemist dissolved, the Butcher got the chop,

"Where have all our places?" you asked me, gaps
where your sentences stopped. I made up simple, happy

answers. Stepping stones still reached the corner shop,
perched on the world's new edge, with the pillar box

where you posted video cassettes. Some Sundays, Chapel
flickered on. We hummed hymns. To save us the trouble,

our friends erased themselves, vaguely smiling.
The house buckled. The cutlery bred twisted offspring

that wouldn't work, so you ate with your fingers.
The past, like a carpet, rolled up behind us.

Night leapfrogged day. The future was forgotten.
You found the toilet washed up in the kitchen.

The names fell off our photos, then the faces.
When at last we were visited only by spaces,

I howled myself hollow. You hugged a cushion.
"Look at what you've done. Look what you've bloody done."

You wept like an infant - a boy I'd never met,
at his dead mother's mercy, waiting for the belt,

and no matter how I'm tender, now I never snap,
that moment's unforgotten and we're trapped;

cradled in the claw of that demented instant.



Norrie Harman: Rush Hour – oil on canvas