

Welcome to Broadsheet 24

Featuring young artist **Ben Clarke**

Ben Clarke is a 24 year old painter who lives and works in Camden Town, North London. The painting practice he developed when studying at the Slade was at once thematically and formally conscious. His dissertation, 'Folk and Art in the UK: The Workings of the English Making Class', took as its starting point a walk he did from London to Suffolk and a series of recent paintings; He began to make tavern scenes, portraits of bearded artisans and disabused street-urchins, rural picturesque scenes and paintings of Gothic churches and Tudor mansions, painted in a fast, caricatured, simple, direct way. Most of his work attempts to either document contemporary life or address history. A more recent series of paintings documents the local and regular drinkers at The Cock Tavern Irish pub in Somers Town, London.

Although his work is most often rooted in some form of observation or documentary, he wants to imbue it with a sense of humour. Like the tragi-comedy 'borne of much bitterness' in late Picasso and Kippenberger, he wants to be able to at once maintain a childlike playfulness and a bitter sarcasm. 'Tom Cooper', 2013, embodies this contrast – a dumb, oafish artisan, like a Luddite, completely engrossed in his work, his hammer caught swinging forever, scandalously unaware that the world has moved on, hilariously oblivious to the viewer's pretentious admonitions about contemporaneity.



Rosamund Taylor was born in Dublin in 1989. In 2015, she was chosen to take part in the Poetry Introductions series run by Poetry Ireland, and gave a reading as part of the Dublin International Literature Festival. Her poems have appeared in magazines in both the UK and Ireland, including *Crannóg* and *The SHOp*. In 2012, she was short-listed for the Live Canon International Poetry Competition and for the Montreal International Poetry Prize in 2013. Last year her poem 'Between Cuper and Kirkcaldy' was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Mirtazapine

It snowed in April. Now I see blackthorn and hawthorn
finally in leaf, and crumpled hart's tongue fern.
The nausea from the pills never quite eases, and
I have a new tremor in my right hand

but most days I climb on Arthur's Seat.
I don't follow a path. I go knee deep in mud
and bog and see only bird-watchers, wrens and rabbits.
I'm driven by this restless ache inside,

a need to run, to be nimble and rootless.
The long grass slows me down. I stop for skylarks
too, when I hear them calling from nest to nest,
but I only see grass trembling around the high lochs.

When the sun comes, the damp rocks glisten,
and I feel wild as a deer when I walk through the gorse – a deer
timid and unable to trust, my skin twitching at every sound,
my eyes rolling white as I hide among the trees.

I can't breathe in my flat. I have no job,
no food in my cupboard, no clean clothes.
Up here I am answerable to no-one,
skin scratched, clothes torn, disturbing only a mistle thrush.

Risperidone

He prints the prescription on thin paper,
the ink rubs off on my fingers.
I'm trembling in the heat. The wall marked

with rigid squares of sunlight, the pill
chalky. I take it with milk.
Half an hour later a panther lies on my chest.

Nothing hurts. I can't move my mouth or toes,
I sweat the shape of the panther
and I've seen ghosts for weeks,

tattered flesh on bone, stories
from children's books and suddenly
fish: manta ray so wide and white

they reflect the sky. Spinning gently,
no voices, only water
pressing me down, a girl behind a rock,

fish reflected in her eyes, vast shapes
turned to silvery dots. Stay here,
I begin to say, here you are safe,

but colours blur, I float up.
Awake, my hair sticks to my scalp,
standing on legs full of bees, I go to the window –

the moon wide as a manta ray's belly.



Rachel Plummer, 31, grew up in Cambridgeshire. She studied nuclear astrophysics at university before moving to Edinburgh to establish an animal shelter. Her poems have won a Troubadour Prize, come second in the Penfro Poetry Competition and were highly commended in the Poetry on the Lake Competition two years running, as well as being commended and shortlisted for various other prizes. She has two young children.

The Moth

We were not lost. We left no trail
of breadcrumbs, skimmed no pebbles
on the moss. We walked, calves wet
with cuckoo spit. The moistened air
was peat-smell, bark-smell, soft
cocoon unwinding.

We were not lost, and not alone,
and yet we were still startled
when the moth lit up our ragged path,
wood-winged and dim. We paused, we
watched it trembling, low
in the wet, leaf-mottled light.



Ben Parker was born in Worcester in 1982. In 2012 his debut pamphlet, *The Escape Artists*, was published by tall-lighthouse. He is currently poet-in-residence at the Museum of Royal Worcester.

The Cinema in the Woods

In the woods behind your house
there is a cinema

that is so old the screen
is stripped bark
and the seats are oak stumps.

There is no organ accompaniment
only the mournful call
of a solitary owl.

The acorns are nourishing but bland.

Each evening the phosphorescent glow
of the latest feature
brings an audience of moths
who do not appreciate the extensive use
of dream sequence.

I think about you and how much you
would appreciate the extensive
use of dream sequence.

All of the films shown here concern you

and most particularly your hair
and its appearance
in different qualities of light/weather.

Tonight there is a slight breeze. Your hair
is lit by a neon sign.
It is a paradise of amber wings.

Two Cities

Inside the city is a smaller version of that city replicated exactly. Inhabitants of the first visit this diminutive mirror the way others might consult an oracle, a counsellor, accountant or family friend. Before any decision is made it will be tested on the doppelgangers. No prospective investment or business partnership is undertaken until a trial run has been completed; no marriages or sexual liaisons can begin until the erotic, emotional and physiological compatibility of the participants is proven in miniature. All new buildings are constructed there first. A cloud box and UV bulb modulate the weather, matched as closely as possible to the expected conditions due to effect the 'host', as they style themselves. As to the respective philosophies, deep reasoning in the larger concerns itself mainly with certainty and natural order. Theirs is a teleological and conservative outlook. The smaller meanwhile believes that the larger is an echo of sorts, an epiphenomenon of their activity, the way a lamp can cast a shadow significantly bigger than the object it illuminates.

Kevin Graham, 32, lives and works in Dublin. He has a BSc in Applied Computational Linguistics. His poems have appeared in various journals such as *Acumen*, *Magma*, *Stand*, *The Shop*, as well as the Templar anthology *Peloton*. In 2012 he was selected for the Poetry Ireland Introductions Series and in 2014 he was nominated for a Hennessey New Irish Writing Award.

The Changing Colours of the Sea

Alone at last. A stiff breeze, a pillar
of light faintly separating us.
We have become newcomers
to love again, combing the wrack
left stranded on the shore.

Your iris glitters pure memory,
ripples a kind of turquoise
flash that says deeper blues
lie within. I hold this sequence
at bay – or rather

it holds me – and we turn
like the tide away from those poor
creatures we once were
to something else,
and something else again.

Lifted

On the road, the old familiar path bending
under sycamores to football pitches,
kissing seats, playgrounds, dogshit,
scattering magpies, startling squirrels.

Each step is something else forgotten
and remembered, left behind, retrieved
by a curious wind. We hold
our breath in the rose garden and wait

for the failing light to reveal that thing
we must have missed – maybe the redstarts
or the dunnocks, the wagtails

or the waxwings, the air alive with
their arrival and departure, flitting
with colour, lifted with song.

Shallow

Little soul, hunched near the river,
its babble far away like the waterfall
of blood through the heart,
the complex root of your survival.

*

Little brook, happening so fast
in thinned-out sunlight, the shallow flow
of your copper bones, that insistence
and persistence, like blood.

*

Little wave in your narrow bed,
hands pushing up to unopened sky,
a globe trapped in amber, the waxy
tenderness of joy.

*

Little love, alive to woken song,
a blueprint of tinted life,
breathless, growing a world inside
a world, a river inside a soul.



Sarah Parker is 31. She achieved a BA in English Language and Literature at St. Hugh's College, University of Oxford and an MA in Modern Literature and Culture, 1850-Present Day at the University of York. She currently works in publishing. These are her first published poems.

Cycling

We met yesterday
by accident on our
bikes.

Mine glows new
as I rest it beneath
your gaze; you
mention only how
sturdy it looks.
I notice yours
obliquely,
a bike that you
journey on,
to me lost in focus,
as I see instead
your truth willingly
shown unshown:

all those miles
unknown travelled
and your eyes tell
one story I know
as I rest, home now;
that your time is
measuring into
sand, all moments
seen close to
the last as
we cycle away
our paths.

It's The Apple Blossom

The hushed quiet of words
well said beats rhythms
in my heart.

It's the apple blossom,
seeing it white pink full
in bloom, a cloud
of beauty and promise,

that catches my breath
and holds it still in my
heart, unwilling to lose

the way the blossom tracks
the season through pink bud
to full white bloom, then a
petalled carpet fallen rain
beneath the arched branches.



R. E. Thomas was born in 1988 and grew up in Stamford, Lincolnshire. He is currently completing a Ph.D. in quantum theory at Trinity College, Cambridge.

What the trees know

The trees know, of course,
And always know,
Marked out against a liquid, pastel, burning sky
In mourning black and the ashen dance
Of tired, dendritic fingers.
The trees know, of course,
And always know,
Amid a frantic and a restless world,
Gasping for air and light,
Straining toward the unflinching stars,
And twisting, writhing, burrowing down
For some deep, richer union with the Earth,
For escape and for connection,
For standing still, but standing up
Before the onset of the winds and waves.

Trees are sad —
Defiant, resolute,
Anchored in a world adrift —
But sad.
Trees are sad, and that is why
One may find comfort in their shade:
No mockeries here for us, who seek
But rest and solitude
And the quiet guidance of the wise;
No judgement passed nor weakness shown
But that our exhaled breath and tears
May fortify and strengthen
And yet give birth anew.
Trees are sad, but there is
Majesty in sadness, for
The trees know, of course,
And always know,
They have seen it all before,
And lived it all the more.

The bells are worse

The bells are worse
Than all the arcane, accusatory faces,
The wild, blind, all-seeing eyes
Set into stained glass
Of the Saints in their Heaven, or
The ineffable luminaries of a better age.
The bells are worse
Than the gleaming portraits of those
Who trod this road before,
Whom one cannot hope to emulate,
But from whose silent gaze of oil or stone
Still comes the metronomic question:
'And you? And you?'

The bells are worse,
With their sharp, unerring hammer blows
And their flat and pitiless cries.
Drang!
Each peal a sorrowful incantation,
A requiem for dead time, and
A lament for the doomed.
Drang! Drang!
A lament? Or a rebuke?
For there are no prayers of charity
For our poor souls' repose,
But each dull chime announces
More time condemned to die,
And each new echo yields the chance
To fail again and fail again.
Drang drang! Drang drang!
Ideas not born and roads not taken
And what a world we might have made
All mourned by their withering call,
And the hopes of the boy at play,
Or the dying man's prayer — 'I wish. I wish.' —
Consumed in their ceaseless toll.
Drang! Drang!
Stop! Stop!
Drang! Drang! Drang!

Aisling Tempamy was born in Sligo in 1985, but has lived in Cardiff since 2005. She completed an MA in English at Swansea University in 2012, and hopes to continue a PhD in the near future. Her poems have appeared in *Orbis*, *Envoi*, and *The Rialto*, among other journals and anthologies.

You Won't Remember Me

You won't remember me,
so I hope you don't mind.
I took all your alcohol
and tins of fruit cocktail.

The doctor said it didn't matter,
that you don't need them now,
and that when it comes to it
you won't remember him,
and you won't remember me.

Alumni

It's hard I suppose, to remember.
So many faces, so many names
another Chloe, another Smith
a fat one you never liked from the start.

In the prospectus are last year's smiles,
and in the alumni newsletter, there is talk
of business start-ups, roles on *Casualty*,
and someone returning as a teacher

because there's no appeal in talking of
the dropouts, the check-out assistants,
You'll celebrate the success, ignore the failures,
and the fat one you never liked from the start.

Rob Yates, 23, is temporarily residing in Wellington, New Zealand as a bookseller and bartender, having previously spent nine months moving through Indonesia. He came runner-up in Oxford University's, St Peter's College *McKay Poetry Prize*. He originally hails from Essex.

Old Doze Sitter

I have lulled back to a land
where all is china, painted and crisp;
there are no smudges dull on the edge of things,
after the fire and the finish, all shines.

Now, my seat-trap engulfs, is comfy
but worn through to the threads, swallows my whole
muggy bark with its corners frisked from it.
The larger I have grown the more fog and seep is.

‘Bethany! Bring an old lump some stout and water.

Throw blocks on the embers, gut them so they rise!’
There is black fuzz on the panes, it is night
but not yet grossly dim, just shadowed,
in the hour when a room's borders are less sure,
the pigs out tumbling the fields lose their own form
in the musk dark as they muddle the turf with their tusks.
Oh! I am giddy with sounds, for at least they are certain.
I thought I'd drifted into a clarified dream but no
that was just the hacking of a barn door.

‘Bethany! Tell Ryan he must check the horses.

Their home has been pried open by the gale!
They must be snorting and afeard!’
The hour turns boldless to the next, the clock's careless
in its switch, it is no human thing,
just flagging in our passing.

Above the hearth (still no fresh logs)
a painting of a young man with his hounds,
fizzing for the hunt, the May breeze open,
everywhere, a field beyond gorgeous and brute,
fenced, placed, fixed by the same wild that floods
the man's chest and his dogs' tongues,
noon at its birth and height, the steady horn
prepared with paint to sound, but ever still.
The canvas weathered by the parlour's dust,
the living room, the old breath of the house,
or maybe it's just my eyes thinning.

‘Bethany! Bring that stout, that fuel, my evening meal!’



Heather Wells, 26, is a published poet who brought out her debut poetry collection *Maiden Voyage* this year. Her poems have appeared in *The London Magazine*, *Poetry Salzburg Review* and *Enigma*. Over the last two years she has been the Assistant Editor of *The London Magazine*.

The First of October

The sun on my face feels different,
a new warmth to it.
The ground beneath my feet feels different,
a new vibration underground.
I look at the dogs in the park differently,
they leap like the squirrels do.
The air does not feel recycled,
it is a freshly made batch.
The Albert statue takes on a new glory:
it basks in gold, like the Autumn leaves,
its erect points in unison
with the black spears of Queen's Gate.

Humphrey ‘Huck’ Astley, 33, is a poet-singer-songwriter based in Oxford. His writing has appeared in a range of British and North American publications, including *Aviary*, *Ditch Poetry*, and the 79 Rat Press anthology *Nothing to Say*. He is the author of the three-part concept album and PRS Foundation stage show *Alexander the Great: a Folk Operetta*. His pamphlet *Stones through the Windows to the Soul* can be downloaded from humphreyastley.co.uk.

Mirrors

We're getting to that age now,
when our parents will retire
into stories – I'll never forget
your barn owl of an old man
in the armchair facing the lottery
of an illness that replaced him

from the bare feet up.
He seemed to own his lot the way
only the middle-aged can –
with bad moods for balms.
And when they loomed like
too much information, we'd return

to the untidy room across the hall,
where I learned to play the bass
by playing along to Hendrix songs.
He died a legend at 27 – younger
than we are. Does this mean
some chance has passed us by?

It means some other chance is yet
to pass – we resonate
when glancing off the mirrors
in our paths. And by the time
our children have learned to write
this poem, we may have grown

apart. But when we get to the age
that makes its mark in stone,
our bodies will ungrow into
a broader kind of being –
and they'll speak to each other
on the level life drowns out.

The Life

With child she sits nursing
the first of many drinks
that will be too weak to free her
from the knowing
or the known.

She will have to look after
herself, now that being alone
has a sense of humour.
As the life yawning

inside her – a Russian doll
that once lay in the grain
of its grandmother – drinks

through the membrane
of this familiar stranger

the air that carries them all.

Little Glyphs

The fact that I am
talking to you now
is a thing of iron
drawn from the vein,
drawn from the ground.

I wasn't there for you
at the end.
But I can speak
of the end and be true
to your grit soap voice.

*How you would laugh
to be told we are one*

Absence is its own
antonym. Remember
the poem by Szymborska,
in which Nothing

speaks of something,
just not the something
that was sought? Nothing

is what's brought home,
token of undiscovery.
Long ago we hung it
in the nursery of the gods,
who squawked
until we let them live
forever in our place.

*How you would laugh
to be told we are one*

Maybe there is only
one true god. You saw him
flourishing his scalpel
up close. We see him
burnishing his sickle
close by.

We cannot allow him
conviction.

Let us fight fire with ash,
press it to our eyelids
until war paint wells
and embellishes our skin
with little glyphs
that needn't mean a thing.

The fact is you are
dead and I am
alive and they are
not opposites.

*How you would laugh
to be told we are one*

Georgina Pett-Ridge, 21, has just finished studying English Literature at the University of Reading, England. She aims to continue writing, and hopes in the future she will have more to put in her biographies.

The Writer

For No-one

Pressed between the pages of
his and her life,
you broke my wings
(creating life with a

flick of your pen,
only to smear the pages).
I sit amongst the red of
corrections and revisions

and indecisions. You
tore the spine
and I cried.

Was a writer that
never wrote, but to
say you did not love me.

Jack Simmons is a 20 year old poet from Bristol, England. He is also a musician, currently fronting a theatre show as they tour the United Kingdom. He tweets at: @Jack_Simmons.

They Will Make Documentaries About You

I will find your hand in the dark of the theatre.
I will dab your damp eyes,
kiss the small of your back like
the great freckled Sahara.
You and I live for drama so
I will write you a poem,
I will explain my heart in it.

Let's be adult for a second.
Say, we are walking together in the sideways rain,
and your umbrella has a life of its own.
The cars hulk by, we catch ourselves quivering
like Afghan heat in the windows of Union Street.
Would you kiss me?
You said once I was a balloon and you had lost me.
Well, I feel you on my torn breath.
What breath I have left is yours.

I will find your hand in the dark of the theatre.
I will fuck you like the movies.
Let's gasp like rivers in the deep of your bed.
Let's find mountains in ourselves,
I'll feel you need me on my neck.
I sigh and sigh in my sleep these days.
I will write you a poem,
I will explain my heart in it.

Say, for instance,
I am at war with myself on the living room floor
as you rocket from work in an alien city.
Sometimes I wish to be gulped by the traffic.
Sometimes I wish I will never wake up.
When I wake to the sight of you – you,
it is autumn in my heart.

I will find your hand in the dark of the theatre.
I will find your hand in the kaleidoscope night.
Sometimes I wish I will find your hand
on the bloodied sand,
as the city's swallowed up on the horizon
by a Titan that eats heartbreakers.

I will write you a poem,
but this is not it.

Imagine the film whirs on,
we are heaving crenulations full of old smoke,
old worries; you are thinking about Iceland,
you are shaking like a leaf for the Middle East.
All I am is the geography of your body;
I will find your hand in the dark of that theatre,
wrap you to me and leave with the heavy ghost
of loneliness blasted to laughter.

I will find your hand in the dark of the theatre.
I will realise my smile on that long walk from work
and you will kiss me, I will be stalactite still.
But you cling to me like you are wallpaper
they will make documentaries about you.
Good of you to meet me at the bike tracks.
Good of you to lease some life in to this dull day,
this glum sun.

What if, say,
we are blinking in the salt – wind, the city blinking back.
I feel your laugh in my skin run through me like a gong.
We are children's TV with the death in us.
Floating somewhere in the dead matter of the beach
there is a universe of roses where
I will find your hand in the dark of the theatre.
That is what I chose to believe.

Kwasu David Tembo is a third year English Literature PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. Now aged twenty-six, he was born in Maseru, Lesotho and grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe, and Lusaka, Zambia. He completed his undergraduate studies in Victoria, Canada before moving to Scotland to pursue further education. His debut pamphlet, *Swimmer*, was published by Oak Press in 2010 in Victoria, Canada.

Dreamers

I sit and draw here
upon the drawn out dawn
colourless and void,
Night venom no antitoxin can amputate,
alembic veinfire brass mired in mirage.
A mixture of man and mutated menace,
gagged I watch
the thin ones are sick with beauty.
How they twirl in the dialect's gait
of those gathered and sweating
in imperfect enjoyment.
Dancing transparencies,
yoked with creased garlands
and crushed circlets
ripped clean from caprice gardens.
These tiger lilies and lotus panthers
are flying in the updraft of
ritual swords and lances.
Clean wounds un-lanced
numb to the salt of the weatherguage
that burns the pirate's marked hand.
Wet and throbbing, the dreamers dream here.

In a desert of finery, searching for the forgotten waters
where the poppies in their bellies once grew
over the hedge of hegemony, they leap
to see oblivion's birthmarks, wild now
the Deucalionids despair
in the front row of the theatre of secrets,
a poor show for rich foxes
thinking with pocket watch symmetry
and finesse looted from the hard places
on weekend crusades made possible
by the patriarchy they openly mock
as they sweat and swallow
and blink and breathe uneven
in the evening that cuts
the throat of the thought of leaving.
Surefooted as they dance

on the edge of the razors they have
stitched together into make shift dancefloors,
seeing gods and titans
naked in the warped mirror
where the bitter snow melts and runs.

They have drunk all of the sun
and it now crackles in their hair
flung like lightening bolts
and old receipts from when
they purchased the world
with their sex and mighty fear,
their styled innocence shaved
by the edge of lenses
they laugh, weak and invincible,
apparel smothering scars
with the art of make up
to scarf the darkened eye
'gainst the coming days of wrath
and the cold gavel's echo,
pressing themselves 'gainst the doors
of the broad chambers demons daren't enter,
with daggers in their backs
and quilted scars from the tinnitus tyranny of light whips –
Hark, the blood angels storm the Centre in silence
where dull dreams sleep like uncut diamonds
'gainst the black velvet of hope.

Shoulder tapped like a terrorist call
Butterfly queen, looks at me
sea green and shimmering
with emulated escape velocity
'will you lie to me?' she asks,
but I'm already beyond the door
falling like a staircase
anywhere alone and safe
I hear the illusion I left behind lift her hair
and whisper clear 'farewell'
then cut the line
and fire the wax ceiling
as I take my place in the bed of anonymity
to dream like a dull diamond
and kiss the root of Virgo's thighs
that taste like the wine of water scorpions
no antivenom can alley
as we embrace and disintegrate
under the weight of the shadow
of the deformed eschaton

my generation has made
in the image of our impotence.
Where know-how once deposed
the dynastic reign of angles,
now acquiesces
price paid in full,
fleshy and hung on drooping cables
with the gore to its back
it can now dance and chirp
in full throated ease
'we are cured!'
Oh elephant man,
with your gossamer breast,
your ruby eyed hawk
the colour of smoke flown
down a gown of neon-less ash.
Troy is aflame as the thing sprawls out out of place,
eight tentacles and a tusk of dull Titan steel
jutting from of its face.
The starling reborn from a puddle
of thin black ink like a spell gone wrong
gone left, before the priestesses wetness
is spent, and again he'd be made to stand
with whip in hand,
red coat and top hat
under hypnosis
beneath the red tent.



Patrick Widdess, 35, was born in Cambridge in 1979. He currently resides in Newport, South Wales where he works as a copy editor. He has reached the national finals of the Hammer and Tongue poetry slam twice and his poetry has appeared in publications including *The Guardian*, *Orbis*, *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears* and *Cake*. He runs the poetry blog and podcast *Headstand*.

Dawdling

When you're ready to go
Remain almost where you are and depart
Half forgetting if you're going
Elsewhere, anywhere, somewhere or nowhere.
Hang limp from train handrails,
Wait for crowds to disperse,
Stand on the same step of the escalator
Until the ground slips beneath you like a fish slice.
Survey shop windows
Stop to blow your nose
Read flyers
Stroll for departing buses
Count pigeons, bollards, people and leaves.
Lose count.
Compose haiku at traffic lights on empty streets.
Watch your watch mark off the minutes
Or, better still,
Leave it at home.
Let each hour linger
And don't forget to drag your feet.

Feeding the spacemen

I like to feed the spacemen swimming in the sky.
They smile as they dive for the morsels I throw.
There's more and more of them these days,
with their gadgets building strange structures.
They're larger than they used to be
and they're running out of space.

Stephen Noon, 27, is a philosophy graduate and theology post-graduate.

After Thomas Mann's Doktor Faustus

III

To carve – peace
him none
 Tempter
of already tempt
vain external – made asymmetric
 music made illiterate
arabesques in sand –

XLVI

Lamento – angel chorus
ordering
 is total – gap: a higher *telos* –
Lamentation – the strictest work

XVI

hiding sentiment. Thought in empty possession –
modulate B major to C major –
 timpani,
trumpets enter on the fourth, the sixth interval of C.
... in Spanish jacket –
 hell-hole of lusts ...

XXXV

amused reason debased –
 attendant being dares not
to be –
 seen – half-suppressed smile

XXVII

 surrounds
crystal-water
 the sun.



* * * *

