

# AGENDA

## BROADSHEET 7

Welcome to **Broadsheet 7** which again shows a very gifted variety of young voices, and paintings by young artists. This **Broadsheet** accompanies the 'Sheet Music' issue of *Agenda*, Vol. 42 No.2. This time it has been decided to represent the work of **four chosen artists, Suzanne Clark, Claire Dorsett, Samantha Allflatt and Olga Koroleva** in greater detail than usual. **Simon Pomery** is the **Chosen Broadsheet Poet** in the 'Sheet Music' issue. Simon, and the poets below, have all been chosen for their strong, distinctive voices and are well worth looking out for.



**Suzanne Clark:** MS 3

**Suzanne Clark**, 27, lives and works in Brighton. She specialises in abstract and animal portrait paintings. Her abstract paintings (mixed media, large scale on canvas and small works on paper) are organic in form, and topography is a major source of inspiration. A prize-winning artist, she has exhibited widely, including in the Royal West of England Academy, Bristol and in The Business Design Centre, London and has received a grant from the Arts Council. She gained a BA Honours Fine Arts degree from the University of the West of England. She runs workshops for adults and children and is a support worker for the Frances Taylor Foundation which is a

homecare service providing support to adults with learning disabilities in the Brighton, Hove and Portslade area.

**Chloe Stopa-Hunt**, 19, is currently reading English at New College, Oxford (where William Cookson, the founding Editor of *Agenda*, read English). She has twice been an overall winner of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award, among other prizes for her poetry and translations.

### **longtime winter**

Winter is not a  
tentative  
woman but  
sometimes in February  
a knitter by the guillotine  
threatens in her woven smoke

the dark valley where  
lost, wet stones prostrate  
themselves Westward

not even aspiring to be glorified

it is like ash seldom-scattered over  
a white balcony  
like thin coins of sleep laid  
smoothly on my eyes

and when she has razed all  
the glare grey cities  
then, then  
the milk bite of a cadence will  
recall the frosts

### **Lyric**

#### I

The lingering, to say nothing in the  
close-cloaked blossom  
to consider the taste of each other has  
vanished away, and you, unkindly  
could carry with your  
falls over the edge  
with your throwing-aside of us, this –  
you have to lie on your  
back under the white ceiling (darker and glossier silk because  
we have released it  
and we have released it)  
in the white breeze  
in the white breeze

## II

And something tears slowly  
into your picture, the black sweep  
of your hair –  
leave it about you  
oh touch it  
touch it not

remember, I'm sure you will  
the rooms and the windows hardly shining  
and he strokes it all over entwined  
he forgets you

Odysseus, you dream  
of white  
you wake up shivering.



**Suzanne Clark:** Seven Sisters – Birds over the horizon.  
Mixed media on canvas.

**Martha Sprackland** (18) lives in Merseyside and has been writing poetry for about nine years. She has twice been a winner of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year competition, in 1999 and 2005.

### **Ghost**

The rough wood has kissed  
an imprint below your elbows,  
the red-lip pattern ridged  
like a wound,  
testimony to how long you've been here,  
leaning out of an old window like laundry.

You look like a blackbird  
fragile, bony and  
wrapped in pupil-black material  
which shimmers and glints like stars,  
feathers zipped in closely, watertight,  
I sealed them myself...

It is hard to believe you can fly at all.

Your idle hands uproot the moss-trees which  
grow like an idea, an  
infestation, shredded with your nails.  
You are embedded within this square  
like writing on a page,  
like a face in a mirror,  
like the statues you overlook.

I'm going to draw you out into the light,  
limb by limb paint you from the bleak walls  
to the hard sky and the sugary, hazy air,  
remove you.

Out of the shade your pale skin will freckle,  
a handful of pebbled kisses  
brushed across the cheek.  
the thrushes will be loud,  
throwing their startling audio to the ground, and  
you will lift your head,  
unfolding like a leaf,  
awakening.

## **Icarus**

I never felt so close to the sky  
like a breath could move a star  
the sun.

I did feel a flicker lick my skin  
sizzle the hairs on my forearms  
the filaments of my wings.

you were far enough below  
to feel the drip of wax  
heat dislodging me from the sky

but close enough to see me outlined  
fire-edged against the sun  
like an angel, blood-edged.

and you turned away  
eyes burnt with salt and heart  
the arrows of guilt searing your skin

you never knew if I fell or flew,  
pressed against the sun like a magnet or a stone,  
plunged deep  
waxy lump beneath the cobalt sea.



**Suzanne Clark:** Geese. Oil gesso on canvas

**Tolu Ogunlesi**, 24, is Nigerian and lives in Abeokuta, Ogun State. His poems have appeared in journals in Africa, the UK and the USA. His collection of poetry, *Listen to the Geckos Singing from a Balcony*, appeared in 2004 from Bewrite Books, UK. He currently works as a management consultant in Lagos.

### **I Dared To Call Him Father**

(for Fidel's daughter)

#### I

once he was Papa –  
blending and unblending from night  
till he grew into a Parable –

imprisoning you in Chinese  
grey uniforms, and pilfering your cartoons –  
since his effigies would be far more educating.

now he has matured into a Pariah.  
you were lucky.  
other people got stung got bullets, got burials.

#### II

now it stalks, justice stalks  
the streets of Havana  
freedom cries out, like a kitten holed up

beneath night's tarred tongue.  
now the unchaining  
of distant waves, waves crashing

upon the shores of shackled hearts  
waters that taste like milk  
fresh from the blood-bathed nipples of revolution.



**Suzanne Clark:** Beach 5. Mixed media on canvas.



**Suzanne Clark:** Chicken (cropped) series 2. Oil on canvas.

**Alex Wylie**, 26, is a research student at Queens University, Belfast

**Madrigal of the Broken Mirror.**

Drawn together and apart  
    by lines of fault, I who shiver in your heart  
Examine, now, removed,  
    these singularities, the loved unloved  
Shattering in triggered moon-  
    light, scumbled, a reflected room:  
Gabbling hands; sanctums  
    ruffled by the wandering comedians  
For profit, youth, things  
    exposed as everyday, knockabout songs –  
Fraught with love, the diamond face of Pierrot  
    impinging, rising, stone of laughter in the throat –  
Ludicrous with drooping brass: your heart's  
    disordered face is hewn apart –  
  
Together.  
    The moon itself your mirror.

**Zoe Brigley**, born 1981, was brought up in the Rhymney Valley. She won an Eric Gregory Award in 2003 and an Academic Bursary in 2005. She has been published in such magazines as *The New Welsh Review* and *Poetry Wales*. Her first collection of poetry, *The Secret*, will be published by Bloodaxe in 2007. She is currently at the University of Warwick working on her PhD thesis on three contemporary women poets associated with Wales: Gwyneth Lewis, Pascale Petit and Deryn Rees-Jones. She also teaches Creative Writing and Literature part-time at Warwick University.

## Migration

*Estos huesos brillando en la noche  
estas palabras como piedras preciosas  
en la garganta viva de un pájaro petrificado.*

- Alejandra Pizarnik

The native language  
is dead as Esperanto.  
Creaking cicadas  
remember and sing trilling  
consonants among

fertile Spanish groves. At last,  
the birds will migrate  
to wet forests, their heads bald.  
Black feathers fall on  
the cities and countryside.

In jungle they perch  
on the black body of a great lizard:  
*cocodrilo* sleeps  
with birds on its pitted back:  
a survival pact.

Vultures cry:                    *cipactli*,  
                                         *cipactli*,                    *cipactli*.

My country, *cilfach*  
*cefn*, uneasy annexe  
to an upright land.  
This country seesaws between  
two continents. Here

is the house where I was born  
and here the school house.  
My people working the land  
for its sweet composts,  
grafting pear and apple boughs:

*peren ac afal.*  
Grandfather's empty birdcage:  
the long plumed bird  
that he coveted and kept  
for his own is dead.

The crow's song:    *crafangau*  
                                         *crafangau*                    *crafangau*.



Notes on 'Migration':

*Cocodrilo*: crocodile (Spanish); *cipactli*: The Great Lizard (Aztec); *cilfach cefn*: backwater (Welsh); *peren ac afal*: pear and apple (Welsh); *crafangau*: talons (Welsh).

## Our Lady of Snows

*O meichti ladi owr leding – tw haf*

*At hefn owr abeiding...*

Ieuan ap Hywel Swardwal

You pass an old woman crossing the bridge  
and offer me a brown paper parcel;  
your outstretched arm is the frozen river.

Inside the paper, a woollen coat, thick  
and red, its buttons glint synthetic gold  
at the shuffling old woman crossing the bridge.

*Frozen winters at home, the cold blossom  
of snow: knees blue and purple from skating  
when the river froze to an outstretched arm.*

*At night my mother's voice reading aloud  
and the window that never closed rattling  
above village women crossing the bridge.*

Pulling on the red coat over my dress  
is a consolation and I gaze for fish  
beneath the frozen river, an outstretched arm.

I must wait for some conclusion to this,  
our meeting, some signal that I can go.  
I am the woman crossing the bridge over an outstretched arm, the frozen river.



**Claire Dorsett:** Histology: Maroon/Yellow. Mixed Media on canvas.

**Claire Dorsett**, 21, is a third year student of Fine Art Painting at the University of Brighton. She is originally from Warrington in the North West. These paintings are based on images of human cells under the microscope, her main concerns being with formal aspects of colour and form rather than the subject matter. Experimentation is a key element of these works where she uses a variety of different methods to create many different marks within each piece, striving to keep overall balance, though not at the expense of the energy of each image.

**Rebecca Goss**, 31, works for *Poetry Review*, in the Poetry Society. Her first collection, a pamphlet, *Keeping Houston Time*, was published by Slow Dancer Press in 1997. Since then, her poems have appeared in various national anthologies and

literary journals, including *Ambit* and *The Reader*. She had two poems in **Broadsheet 4** under the name 'Bennett'.

### **Sonnet for Clare**

We walked across the hospital car park,  
nightly, for the whole of winter. I held  
your arm, watched our cold breath cloud in the dark,  
wondered what we could face tonight, startled  
still by her weight, the rings getting bigger  
on her fingers. Ward 2X, the Chaplain  
had left leaflets, offered to deliver  
her from evil, yet we heard the wailing,  
smelt the shit in her bed, saw windows fixed  
shut with surgical tape. We pull our chairs  
close, routinely make her drink, break biscuits  
in half and for that small time with her, share  
the burden of telling stories that she  
treasures, but forgets in seconds, nightly.

### **Mollie and the Peacocks**

for Angela

The peacocks come, all thirty of them,  
shimmering across the drive,  
to be greeted, admired, spoilt.

She feeds them raisings from furry pockets,  
pearls rolling from the split in her robe  
as she leans to reach the furthest bird.

Like a gloating General,  
she watches her feathered army  
devouring black wrinkled skins,

speaks to them, whispers her latest news.  
They know all her secrets, more than the gardener  
Who occasionally picks up her cigarette-holder

just to feel its ebony smoothness,  
replaces it exactly, on unfinished letters.  
Mollie sucks the last sticky raisin from her finger

turns inside to smoke, wait for groceries.  
The small van rattles up the drive  
carrying bread, cheese, butter, cake.

Mollie approaches the driver, sees her body  
bent with age in his window as the peacocks  
swarm to protect her, fan their dazzling salute.



**Claire Dorsett:** Histology: Pink/Brown. Mixed media on canvas.

**David Sergeant** was born in 1979 and grew up in West Cornwall. He has worked as a teacher, civil servant, bookseller, waiter, barman, circus tent erector – and is currently reading for a DPhil in English Literature at Oxford University. His poems have appeared in *Stand*, *London Magazine* and *PN Review*.

## **Lightings**

I could go down these women at the bar  
And light them like a row of candles.

Like a vicar for the evening service,  
Moving down the vaulted gangway,  
Though the church is empty, his faith redundant,  
No-one watches.

But look at his face! It is a warm curl of butter  
Balanced on the knife-blade of his actions,  
Offered to the candles one by one – they never refuse.  
His eyes follow his hands  
As if they had just come into being and he were amazed,  
Perpetually amazed to see them there –  
Or were afraid of their motives, best friends not to be trusted.

Each wick can be seen to lean towards the flame  
As though to sip at it, as though they were twin poles of a magnet  
And cannot keep apart:  
Which is ridiculous.

What We Most Want Will Destroy Us.

But look at them now, ablaze! Sixteen yellow flames  
Arcing down the stone and wood, so bright  
They are darkness, all, and when I close my eyes  
Their flared-up shapes remain,  
Black on white and white on black,  
Something I have touched, have done, have made.

## **To What is Circling Outside the House at Night**

The black musk eyes  
Of the fox: come to me.  
I cannot be quiet.

The narrow hull of ribs  
Slipping through straits  
Of a gatepost, or a wire fence:  
Come to me. Hurry, be quick.

I will place my hand against its naked flank,  
The lacing of ribs: I will pretend  
To be taking its temperature.  
Come to me. Like a shadow,  
Or the logic of sex, cunning,  
Darker than how it is. Come to me.

I will walk down one morning  
To ashes gone cold in the daylight  
And there it is, asleep on the rug.  
Its fur will be a faded brown,  
Threadbare, a bonfire put out.  
I will trample it through with relief.

### **The Cat**

What must they think of the cat  
In the five or six fields it hunts through?

It must be like having a bully  
Fifty feet high  
And never knowing when he'll arrive,  
Plucking roofs off houses  
And fishing out the inhabitants.

Or living through  
The sudden hot purge of a militia,  
Sluicing the universe thoroughly  
Like a nuclear wind  
To clean things out.

But I know the cat  
As a little thing upon my desk  
Docile as a mannequin.

What must we think of the cat  
When it purrs like a melting engine?

Easy to say it's a hypocrite  
But you'd be wrong, it sees  
No conflict. It kisses

Through a mask of blood.  
Astonishingly  
It really means it.

**Neetha Kunaratnam**, 30, is a French teacher, currently working at Malvern College in Worcestershire. He was born in London but has also lived in Japan and France. His parents are both Tamil Sri Lankans, but Neetha was not brought up in his mother tongue and speaks very little Tamil.

## **Wheal Coates**

Beyond the plummet of this rock world,  
Even the scree has taken on russet,  
Taken on evening, only to lose it again.

We are rich here, could fill a knapsack,  
If we wanted, with the bell heather  
That blankets the headland

Or the shocks of yellow gorse that  
Spatter the moor like splotches of sun.

Ferns line the path like lilac  
Caterpillars, curling into the crisp  
Of the sometimes breeze. The ruins, jutting

Out like a Cubist vision, are watchful.  
You can read vigilance in the slats  
Of the meurtrières, adorned as they are

With greying blackbirds. From such  
Silence, it seems as if only the sea itself  
Is squawking. Gulls overhang

As cormorants splice the sea  
Into a patchwork of lanterns.

Seeing the men climb the rock-face  
You say it is because no foothold  
Is certain that we shall always observe,

Before the sunlight blinds us forever  
Like a stingray. A dog yelps suddenly  
Like a rattling chain; the dusk tumbles

In tongues: *Don't you see?* Of all voices  
The inner is most insistent: *Don't go.*  
Solitude is in the choosing, after all.

## **Nuit Blanche**

The mosquito's kamikaze turn  
And the wasps drumming dawn  
Through invisible windows

Awaken you. Dazed by midges  
And your sweat a metallic coat,  
A lacquer of teeming rivulets,



The wood-cotes are wheezing,  
And coo-cooing midnight  
Like a grandfather clock  
Warbling its drawn-out semantics;

Their wings beat fleshily,  
Thumping the leaves  
With an argument of branches

That seem to possess veins  
And want to keep them  
For the duration of the bout

The night propels its black blood  
Into the loam; but the dawn is wet  
And withdrawn like a cautious lover,  
Or Virginia, in mid-dream, playing solitaire.



**Claire Dorsett:** Red/Grey. Mixed media on canvas.



**Kerri French**, 25, lives in Brookline, Massachusetts, U.S. She has studied at Dublin City University and the University of North Carolina, where she received the Robert B. House Memorial Prize in Poetry. She has spent the last three summers in Britain and Ireland studying Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes through a research grant. She is currently a professor in the English Department at Mount Ida College.

## **Gone**

Meaning: no more whiskey in the cabinet,  
shampoo in the bottle, film in the camera.

Meaning: he has boarded the flight home,  
the lubricant and condoms are expired,

she spent next month's pay check on shoes.

Meaning: the invitation to the party got lost

in the mail, or maybe was never sent at all.

Meaning: the faucet is still running, clock

still flashing sixteen minutes too fast.

Meaning: sad movie, library book overdue,

oil stains in the driveway, white laundry  
turned pink, morning pollen caught in hair.

Meaning: what he touched has all been saved.

Meaning: mostly, she still misses his hands.

**Omar Sabbagh**, 25, has just finished the first year of a PhD in English at Cambridge. He has now taken time out to work on his poetry. This is his first poem to be published.

## **Correspondents**

*for Youmna, the good ear...*

Night had settled, stately, ceremonious even  
and, like a goddess or at the least  
with the genius of some prehensile mimic,  
so had you: you were a sister to the mist,  
as noble, as crucial.

The long idea  
had always been that we'd meet like this,  
strangers but for the uncanny  
grip on each other our pens  
had given us. Meet  
by this particular pond, where I'd spent

the light and shadow of my youth,  
rehearsed to you so many times, the one  
by which I'd actually written  
most of my searching letters – half-apologetic but lined  
with the stony effort  
of a fetal craft – a writing starring the scar  
of my loneliest self, washed with browns,  
greens, mauves, russets, a talent  
farmed by the Autumn wind.

*It's warm tonight. The sky is dark  
but it feels close, like a low canopy  
of wool soaked in brandy.*

That was my greeting, unhesitant.  
You smiled, making your mouth  
under your eyes  
and the sweet nut of your nose a present  
eased open: knowing it.

*The future is a gift, you once said.  
Now we're together,  
together we'll find the evidence.*



**Olga Koroleva:** The Room I, from a series 'Memories of a Room'.

**Olga Koroleva**, 19, is originally from Russia and now lives in West London. She is currently doing a Foundation Course in Chelsea College of Art and Design, and her major interests are in painting and lens-based media. She likes combining both of these into one piece of work. She also works part-time in Jessops as a sales advisor.



**Olga Koroleva:** Room II from the series 'Memories of a Room'.

**Naomi Foyle**, 39, lives in Brighton. She is the author of *Red Hot & Bothered* (Lansdowne Press 2003), and the editor of *Mairtin Crawford: Selected Poems* (Lagan Press 2005). Current projects include the libretto for a chamber opera version of *The Snow Queen*, and a PhD at the University of Wales, Bangor, researching the role of the heroine in narrative verse.

### **Secretary to the Sea**

Shop windows tide her over  
lonely evenings on the town:  
from rows of silver seashells  
she picks out her next phone.

Sighing in the bedroom -  
will she ever earn enough? –  
she folds her clothes like unread notes  
of resignation and of love.

In the morning, at the bus stop  
she tries to stay awake;  
hot coffee at the office  
keeps her head above the waves.

For if the sirens claimed her,  
if she stopped treading water,  
the fish would drown, the moon turn brown  
the ocean's heartbeat falter.



**Olga Koroleva:** Self Portrait

**Tupa Snyder** is a PhD student, studying creative writing(poetry) at the University of Exeter, supervised by the poet, Andy Brown. She has an MA in Creative Writing from Illinois, USA, under poet Lucia Getsi.

### **The Language of Flowers**

Your notes are green this May. They say 'bluebells  
are everywhere', or 'the lilac is ready to flower'.  
I see you in a quiet morning potting geraniums,  
gazing through the window with uneven panes  
that makes the light curl on walls.  
Gourds arch graceful necks to the sun,  
's's and 'c's forming parts of words  
behind the violets' still-eyed gaze.

'As if by magic' you write, tulips pop up  
and the startled birds-of-paradise are  
alive on the table full of bills and unopened letters.  
Your garden waves with cilia and rose;  
crests of crocus and wild iris;  
azaleas aflame under the magnolia tree  
as petals shower. 'Sarah whistles to a boy'

you write, or perhaps her mouth as 'o'ed at owls  
sweeping in evening on their wings  
and Nancy carving pumpkins on the swing  
has red-gold hair unfurling to her waist.  
You tell me how the red-bud blooms.

**Ben White**, 23, graduated from Cambridge University with a BA in English Literature in 2005. He has spent the last four summers in Palestine, living in the West Bank, doing a mixture of volunteer NGO work and freelance writing. His articles on Palestine/Israel and the broader Middle East have appeared in such publications as *The New Statesman*, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, *Middle East International*.

### **Earth Woman**

Earth woman  
no illusions this time

your body does not grow old,  
holds back time.  
a fire inside keeps  
your skin alive and your eyes

what?

pierce and capture

clinging to shadows  
bathed in the moonlight

there can not be  
another

and now we face things as one body  
my hands on your stomach  
and our eyes looking ahead

Earth woman  
who leaps  
and holds on to the dance  
it is impossible to bury you

from your mouth comes air  
and your fingers give light.

### **Strong**

Strong

like the wind that caresses the cheek  
or blows the tiles from a roof

stronger than the tree  
rooted in the generations  
it doesn't move  
and its branches always bear fruit

strong  
like an idea  
that rises anew with each youth who  
raises his fist and dreams

yellow petals ripple  
and catch your hair  
so you close your eyes to  
breathe

strong like the sun  
on your uplifted face  
and the cascading water on your back

your fears have nothing compared  
with this strength

they are shadows that melt into light.





**Samantha Allflatt:**

Detail from 'Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril'.

**Samantha Allflatt**, 25, was born in Vevey, Switzerland, to an English father and a Greek/Swiss mother in a family of artists among whom figure the English painter John Crome and the Greek artist Nikos Ghikas. She graduated in Fine Arts at Central St. Martins where she experimented with 2D medium such as paint, photography, photoshop, collage in drawing. She describes her work as a blend of doodles, collage, automatic writing and obsessive drawing, which is put together on MDF boards. She is interested in the way these elements work together to form self-portraits of the mind, or mind maps, through conscious or unconscious decisions. Each drawing is led by its own rule. Nothing is planned or predictable. Everything is a succession of chances, free association, mistakes and impulsions, yet there is a certain level of control in the execution. Her art shows how she makes sense of herself as she copes with living and working in London.

**Sarah Hesketh** has appeared before in the **Agenda Broadsheets**. She is currently enrolled on the University of East Anglia Creative Writing course, studying under George Szirtes. She lives in Norwich.

### **Hedgehog**

Spared the spade by an inch!  
    How I envy the hedgehog  
    his curl. His heart  
is unhurriedly wintering its joys  
before lamplight,  
    his hopes all stacked high  
like peas for the shelling.

There are low suns now.  
    And a swollen tongue  
in a twiggy mouth.  
The summer's raft  
of unaccomplished rhymes  
    do not dampen his rest  
    as he stares into the season's  
vast and uncomplicated fires.

### **Ogrod Saski, Warsaw, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2005**

The first butterfly, unlovely yellow  
dances his slow-beat can-can on concrete:

Warsaw's walking wounded are taking their Sunday stroll,  
unmaking their god by turns about the public grounds.

How quickly we are all assailed by faith,  
in the first hot sun of the year,

these splashes of broken glory  
in history's rumoured pause.

By night our blue-glass, yellow-glass tears  
shall light all the way into the north.





**Samantha Allflatt:** Detail from 'Trees grow silent fruit, beneath the suffering sky'.