

Web Supplement to the 'New Generation Poets' issue of *Agenda* Vol 49, Nos 3-4

We have pleasure in celebrating two artists here: Karina Rosanne Barrett, and Susan Gathercole, courtesy of the Martin Tinney Gallery, Cardiff.

Karina Rosanne Barrett was born in Derbyshire in 1981 and studied Illustration at Glyndŵr University. She lives in Snowdonia and paints the surrounding landscape, citing Anglesey and the Llŷn Peninsula as her main sources of inspiration. More often than not, she paints 'en plein air'. This is her first exhibition at Martin Tinney Gallery.

She says of her work; 'For this exhibition I feel that my work has taken a deeply personal direction. The subjects of my paintings include locations that I have connected with on a profound level in recent years. This connection enables me to observe and to create intuitively. My viewpoint as an observer has altered; there is an exploration into the landscape in a wider sense, as opposed to focusing on specific dwellings. My work always starts 'on location', then my ideas are developed further in the studio. I am constantly striving for fluidity in my mark-making and control in my palette to emphasize and intensify the desired mood of each piece.'

Born in 1962 in Glasgow, **Susan Gathercole** graduated in Fine Art from Liverpool in 1984. She works in a small studio overlooking the trees towards the mountains near Llanberis where she has lived for over 20 years. This is her first exhibition at Martin Tinney Gallery.

Speaking about her work, Susan says 'My pictures suggest a story - perhaps about a vibrant red parrot feather from a bird my grandparents kept in 1920s Egypt; a dark pebble given to me on a beach many years ago; a scrap of material from an old dress. The objects all hold some vivid memory, meaning or feeling for me, and I hope to convey some of that to the viewer. Latterly, various figures have begun to appear in my work. These are all part of continued observations of the natural world, imaginings, feelings and memories.'



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Drws-Coch-Gorwel-Glas

Kate Ashton (1948) was born in Beith, Ayrshire. She trained as a nurse in Edinburgh then worked as a features editor on *Nursing Times* before moving to The Netherlands in 1979, returning to Scotland in 2003. She has published fiction and non-fiction, poetry and full-length translations from Dutch. Her poems have appeared, among other publications, in *Shearsman*, *THE SHOP*, *The Glasgow Review of Books*, *Shadowtrain*, and *Northwords Now*. A pamphlet, *The Concourse of Virgins*, came out from Lapwing Publications in 2012. Her monograph, *Whatever Things are True*, about the Frisian writer Teatske Alzum, and a memoir, *Losing Eric Gill's Eden*, are pending from Frances Boutle Publishers.

Who by Water

I
relics

I left the forests for you, but you wanted more
from me. I did not know what, had never felt
that longing others have for nearness to the sea –

but now you throw trees in my path
and fight your way into my human
sloth, my human longing to be free,

you cast up debris at my feet like votive
offerings, rigor mortis of stem and ashy
sediment, land is your reliquary. So

sleek your curls wrung from the pool,
a girl puts up her hand to cold forehead
in feigned surprise, or vanity –

that being seen was what I did not know:
the vanquishing blank look that stares
beech back into her burnished

womb, that strips pine down to briny web
far-flung and hung with hostages. You
do not keep your promises, you keep

leaving. At first your hand lay light
on me, but soon I learnt the vigil
of the land, ebb tide, futility.

II

crossings

Sea-buried summer's cast-off trance
lies heaped like dreams of play where
footprints fill and day-danced turrets kneel -

you taught me this: to seasonally die
and take the salt for what it is, wisdom
even the wagtail learns, fraught acrobat

fording the creek, and that crossing may
be succinct in this starched levelling, stiff
reach for heaven and earth annulled

and doubly drowned, impartial laying
of the burden down on some far shore, so light, no
lighter cargo, from where the bar bites

at the tide with bare white teeth, hungering,
to dune-hid marsh that sighs, licks briny
lips scented with pine whose pulse runs

slow and dark as beat through peat-quenched
beast hard hunted down and steeped to stone
where Grass of Parnassus blows -

you keep the secrets that I seek, and are
always leaving. Do you remember me,
throwing yourself at my feet, weeping?

III

passage

I see what you mean, the burying,
the sucking clean of sand that leaves
a hand curled carefully to ear

listening (the way the child slept,
always with rapt attention for
the opening of a door) like all

the others abducted in the midst
of dream, conducted from the place
of suffering kaolin-lipped,

tongue-tied and haughty
as a blade-torqued queen –
there is no need to roar:

the day-shy fugist mounts her dais
again insisting on rehearsal, hauling
dirge after dirge towards the shore

recalling that which went before –
forgetting is all we ask,
but not so tethered a tide

that inadvertently the pulse
slides into that smooth quietus
too soon, too undiscerning.

IV

equus

You are not wary of the aftermath
but rush white-cheeked to fill
the river's narrow need, where

woman waters turn their backs on you,
dreaming of height, welter of white,
quartz crèche and in the spate

glancing caress of she who leaps
to lay and lay down her life. Yes,
some still know their way home

upstream, or flushed unshod from field
to shingle, kelpy noose sidled
loose till mane and tail

lie white along the wave again – they
were here long before us, small
when first they came ashore,

tip-toeing the tide, prancing, pawing
salt floor, leaving the ancestors to rear
and bow in perpetuity. It was inborn:

how to high-step the swell, breast
surpliced crest, turn shy cabochon gaze
guileless towards tomorrow.

V

white

Colder than hellebore
you chant the far hills
south from sleep

as though delay incensed you
and time lost waiting for the thaw
were mine, who doubts, builds

crumbling walls against spring
melt while marching cataracts
recall contract unbroken

since the fall – and curled like
ammonite in the curt clutch
of evermore I know

the small dry place we cling to
as summits crawl in self-ascent
for deposition by the stars

and fathoms far a madman
slips the lanyard on the mast,
missteps the deck

and in an ecstasy
of following and dread
sets foot beyond his terror.

VI

prophecy

And now you loop with lace
the red rock's riven face, ruffling
her cheek as since the dove

none has touched her,
and is it burn or is it blush
in headlong rush to bathe in blood

where evening's wine-glutted
priest throws back his head, sinks
to his knees at the straight meeting place -

smooth bed of star-limbed sleeper
lost from she who waited on the stair,
green sea-glass glance of he

who from the womb perceived
the nothingness of air and fled,
preferring anonymity - you keep

foretelling death of earth
unheard by master at the wheel
who shudders at the stifled stars

and savagery beneath the keel. Your law
is never mild where we are born,
your law is ravage.

VII *sophia*

This was how you came before –
rough tongued tale-teller wild
as rain, shy prodigal of no

abode or name, vagrant voyager, woad
sailed son of she who brought
obedience to birth where day by day

we test oblivion, wandering barefoot
where the world ends, writing our name
in last light, gazing out to where

the shard-dashed alabaster heart husk
rides of every creature lost from flight,
caught in night net, downed by brine

clustered in the quill where only gimlet
sky should be – I have come to the very edge
where words are washed away

and am afraid for that sweet breath,
salt-milk suckled speak of death
by sea but not by drowning,

cold soliloquy of broken jade rinsed
of old servitudes and quietly dressed,
devoid of histories, unfinessed, proud.



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Low Cloud, Mynnydd-Llandegai

Beth Somerford lives in Brighton with her composer husband and has four grown up children. She acts and directs, and also runs a small pottery. Beth Somerford has had poems in a number of publications. She was first runner up in the Frogmore Prize in 2014. Beth's alter ego, Sam Chittenden, is Director of the creative training company Different Development, and author of *Rhyme & Reason: The Poetry of Leadership*.

Haven Brow

Walking the cliffs' rough sinusoids, Haven to Flathill,
on the Seven Sisters' brows
where the soft earth folds in origami;
a confetti of chalk nibs litters the grass
and lovers leave mosaic messages.

The cliffs' tatty endings are a rough French pedicure.
Below their giddy drop,
the darker smatterings of stones –
tarry, ored with iron – and tracts of olive algae,
spread like a wound to the sea.

Looking back towards Seaford Head
below the Coastguard's cottages
a patch of chalk is dirty auburn –
smudged with rust like the stain
of some home-dye accident.

From Cuckmere, the Sisters' faces seemed to fall
as theatre curtains, opulent,
draped with denial, and white,
like the blank fact of absence –
flinted here and there with promises.

Yet hefting along to Birling Gap I am Queen –
admirer of this massive canvas –
feet gravid, light-headed,
scalp prickling with joy
and the bliss of missing someone.



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Over Fachwen and Dinorwig from Llanberis

Rosalind Hudis is a poet living in West Wales. Her publications include *Terra Ignota* (Rack press 2013) and *Tilt* (Cinnamon Press 2014) In 2015 she was highly commended in the Forward Prize for Poetry, was a runner-up in the Aesthetica Creative Writing Competition, and was placed first in the Cinnamon Press Single Poem Prize. She is an editor on *The Lampeter Review*.

Stroke

It was a caesura
in the lift of cup to lips.
For a beat, her eyes died
then flickered back, puzzled,
as she slid
gravely to the floor.

All her words
flurried up in one sweep, left.

Some returned to the hospital
to scavenge syllables
the nut-shape of an 'o'
We were keeping watch
by a too wide window
that laid her silence bare,

We were keeping watch
for a sound to root
like a chip of bone,
grow.

'o' would be enough
to restore her.

As 'o' restores in flickers

a part-crumbled city.
She dawdles in the vetch
beside a bombed-out terrace.

Nightly one street lamp richens
its searchlight for her shadow
to meet uncertain others.

Veterans are younger, line
Remembrance like crows.
Black rain in November.

Foghorns lowing from the dock;
her mother, Em, cups
and uncups an ear, undecided on hope.

*

The casual day when Em walks on to work,
as a house behind implodes.
Heat: an echo of stilettos.
Returning, sees one side has gone *utterly* -
a bedroom that glows,
indecent, in late sun, a lace shade's rocking
tease One wall, two pegs, a man's, a woman's coats
below them a suitcase, charred boards,
a precipice And then tinnitus like dawn:
the suitcase was full of starlings
is later what she repeats
and again, how she couldn't break

through air that held back, glassed.
For minutes she'd seemed to tip
down floors of her skull

For minutes, the birds.

My mother dies first on the left

good hand, marriage ring, lopped
from ninety years of grip.

The side the sun falls
mornings, its unfelt heat.

We group on her right, catch the eye
that reflects us, tunes

to a name
on the light side of memory.

We grasp
as she grasps the bed rail

with her weak hand
where touch drops away.

When she dies on the right
her fingers meet.



Susan Gathercole: Red Moon



Susan Gathercole: Alstroemeria

Robert Smith is a Londoner who now lives in Cambridge. His work has previously been published in *Agenda*. It is strongly influenced by music, and makes conscious use of imagery for its principal effects.

Claustrophobia

A prescience in the flesh,
the pores forming in the skin
its dense clamminess,

the breath strenuous,
preemptive over the diaphragm
as crowds unfurl

from the barriers
the pitched banners of their manpower
drowning out protest;

the spent oxygen
rising in the chest, the ribcage
forced open:

grappling over the backlash,
nerves cells swarming rows of their own
gibberish.

Wendy Holborow was born in South Wales, but lived in Greece for fourteen years where she founded and co-edited Poetry Greece. She has won prizes for short stories and poetry some of which have appeared in *Agenda*, *Envoi*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Roundyhouse*, and many others internationally. She is currently studying for a Masters in Creative Writing at Swansea University. Poetry Salzburg have recently published her pamphlet *After the Silent Phone Call* (2015). She is a member of the Literature Wales Writers of Wales database.

Solitude in Sipicciano

Works of art exist in infinite solitude... Rainer Maria Rilke

abstracting words sounds sentences
verses whole poems and narratives
from a void that seems unfillable
until inspiration is bogged
down like a boat sucked into sand

stuck needing a huge wave
to dislodge it

*

her solitude annihilated
by the imminent arrival of certain of her friends
whipped up in a whirlwind
of tasks preparations the mundane
that takes her away from the sublime

people have stolen the words that come
in her isolation – extinguished
them with babble and chatter – her mind
clogged by an idle clutter of words

she should live like the artist Lear
who preferred to write letters
than have friends intrude
into his solitude

The Uffizi, Florence

It is surely worth the wait, the long queues, the drifting along endless corridors into hundreds of rooms of Madonnas, (with or without child), sifting through calamities, wars, tortures, tombs, to reach Botticelli's La Primavera, Spring's allegory, portrayed by the artist with the easy grace and warmth of early Renaissance art, the integrity and spirit of the artist embracing a slow pace. But it is Flora, goddess of flowers, centre-right casting blossom from the folds of her sprigged dress, her winsome smile stealing the limelight from Mercury, the Three Graces, Chloris and Zephyrus.

This painting sums up the optimism of the season the nascence of spring, a genesis for everyone.



Susan Gathercole: Evening - Offering

David Cooke's most recent collection is *A Murmuration* published by Two Rivers Press. He is the co-editor of *The High Window*, a quarterly online journal of Poetry and translation.

Gold

Its lack of reaction has made it unique,
that and the way it can magnetize fools:
forty-niners, Midas, the futures mob –
so gung ho, yet always dazzled by it,
like urchins dreaming of gilded pavements.

Locked in a vault, it validates paper.
It's what the rich cling to when the bubble
bursts, smiling at the rest of us, our mouths
agape, who wonder why what's left
is fool's gold, when the real stuff vanishes.

Acquaint yourself with history, the endless
grubby tomes we've filled. From the Age
of Gold to the Age of Iron the avalanche
of grief it's caused would make you think
we had gathered mountains of it

when, if we had managed to find enough,
we could divvy up into shares for all.
So trudge across the moonlit ploughland
with a metal detector, unearthing
hoards of coins so hastily abandoned.

Crack open the mausoleums of men
who died like gods and crawl on hands
and knees and belly into the furthest chambers
of open-sesame caves. Circumvent the man-traps,
wyverns, the wall-eyed Cyclops.

And when you've relocated every X
that marks the spot, cart the whole lot back
to a public space: each ingot, trinket,
medal, plate, with every other ounce and scruple.
You will be amazed how little there is.

Reduced to a cube of twenty metres,
you can slip it beneath the Eiffel Tower
or set it up as a glitzy Ka'aba.
The pilgrims will pay to circle round it.
They will never ask where the bodies are.

Keith Hutson has written for *Coronation Street* and many comedians. He now writes only poetry. His poems have appeared in journals including *The North*, *The Rialto*, *Magma*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Stand*, *Prole*, *Butcher's Dog*, *Interpreter's House*. Keith has won a Poetry Business Yorkshire Prize, judged by Billy Collins, and has had poems placed in competitions. A former editor of *Hinterland*, he now edits *Avis Magazine*, delivers poetry and performance workshops for the Prince's Trust, and hosts the monthly WordPlay event at the Square Chapel Theatre, Halifax.

Genie

I'm only amateur, but every evening
I turn, travel back to Pantoland where,
when commanded, I can stand
spontaneous combustion on its head:
Pouf! and here I am, intact.
Another bang, I'm blown away –
a suicide bomb but without the blood.

Of course, home hasn't got the right effects,
but I'm out a lot: Aladdin's close
and loves a transformation scene,
lit by a lava lamp, pretending
we're elsewhere. And yes, there's magic,
on the carpet, swapping wishes,
a thousand and one nights of them.

Bound forever, then, we'll disappear.

Fun Box

Back then, spin dryers danced. Unplumbed
and full of saturated nylon – nighties,
slacks – ours would rock at first, then shimmy

round the kitchen till somebody sat on it.
This was a lot of fun, but Auntie liked it best.
She'd light a cigarette and wait

until the rock got rapid – quiver with a beat,
frantic but tight – then climb aboard
and settle, blowing smoke and full

of quiet wonder. In the moment.
Misty eyes alight.

Gill Learner lives in Reading. Her poetry has won several awards and been widely published in journals, and in anthologies such as *Her Wings of Glass* and *Fanfare* (Second Light Publications, 2014 & 2015) and *The Day Destroyed* (Wilfred Owen Association, 2015). Her first collection, *The Agister's Experiment* (Two Rivers Press, 2011) was generously reviewed and her second, *Chill Factor* (June 2016) contains poems from *Agenda 48/3-4 & 49/1*.

Desolation Point, Greenland

(oil on canvas) by Julian Grater, 2015

Under grey-black water, a history of failures:
split spars, smashed masts, hulls shattered
when the freeze gripped.

So much sky, so little ice – a world dissolving;
monochrome except for the green heart of a berg
floating on what it was.

Here lie the vertebrae of seals, jaws of walruses,
ribs of whales flensed for the try-pots, blurred
by the silt of years.

Four months with no light except from a fitful moon:
the freeze holds, rebuilds. When the sun lifts,
the glaciers accelerate their slide.

Phalanges that carved scrimshaws grope
among skulls that swam with images of children, wives,
that warmed with dreams through endless nights.

In limbo

I am condemned to this menagerie of the unnatural:
grotesques of the imagination wander here.
There are many who never found a happy-ever-after
but we're the Grendels, Quasimodos, Calibans and Quilps,
shunned by everyone with satin skin, well-spaced features,
limbs of standard shape and size.

My desire was for acceptance, friendship, love
but the abhorrence of mankind perverted me. I swung
like a pendulum from tenderness to the urge to squeeze
the breath from fragile necks. The necromancer's names
screamed in my head: 'monster', 'vile insect', 'frightful fiend';
his loathing stabbed me to the bone.

I took revenge: his brother, father, bride, close friend, all died.
He swore to hunt me down. In his pursuit I lured him
to endure the scorch of deserts, rat-gnaw of hunger,
torment of Arctic winds. Yet his end brought little peace;
it revived those sensitivities so long suppressed
and the anguish of remorse.

He sparked this hotchpotch body into life but she,
who invented both of us, shared in my curses:
grief for her dead children scarred her mind.
Two centuries from my ice-death, I am tortured still:
guilt fills the hours. Sometimes I must find a lonely place,
drop to my knees and howl. If only she hadn't given me a soul.



Susan Gathercole: Offering

Mark Haworth-Booth (born 1944) appeared in 'New Voices' at the Voice Box, Royal Festival Hall, in 1992. He published *Wild Track – poems with pictures by friends* in 2005 and won the London Writers poetry prize with 'Fernald Point' (about his first encounter with a goshawk) in 2006. He worked as curator of photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum and now lives, gardens and campaigns for Green causes in North Devon.

Artefact

The photographic paper is slightly textured – it has a certain sparkle under lamplight. My uncle must have toned the print in sepia but beige stains show he didn't fully fix it.

He'd risen from the table at the coffee stage, focusing a Leica on his guests – a dinner party circa 1950. A marcel-waved young woman, men in penguin suits.

He clearly used a flash bulb: light streaks down the pretty wine flutes. Six candles in white

ceramic candelabra, a vase of flowers
and one man is apparently a wit

although my father at the table end –
wearing his period toothbrush moustache –
seems caught in mid-chew or swallow and
only my mother is ready to laugh.

She's nearest to the camera, seen in profile
and such a lovely evening dress – the flash
picks up its shimmer, a small string of pearls
and the edge of a heavy glass ashtray.

The fingers of one hand are crooked as if holding
a cigarette. I check and nothing's there
except her sapphire engagement ring –
square-set with diamonds. Just that and thin air.

Pond portrait

Sometimes the pond is so clear I can view
toads stationed on the bottom, still as sculptures.
Beetles loom through their kingdoms, monster newts
glide by and busy boatmen flex their oars.

I've heard that the old caliphs of Granada
kept in their courts great bowls of mercury
to catch the light and shimmer in the fancy,
but I prefer this mirror film of water –

a reservoir of plankton, protozoa,
springtails, rotifers and watermeasurers.
Everything floats in diaphanous gauze.
A breeze like sherbert refreshes my gaze.



Karina Rosanne Barrett: blue Moon over Elidir

Nick Burbridge is an Anglo-Irish poet, playwright, novelist, journalist, short story and song writer, who lives in Brighton. He is the author of three books of poetry: *On Call* (Envoi Poets, 1994), *All Kinds Of Disorder* (Waterloo, 2006) and *The Unicycle Set*, (Waterloo, 2011). His plays include *Dirty Tricks* (Soho Theatre), *Vermin* (Finborough), and *Cock Robin* (Verity Bargate Award Runner-up), and have been broadcast on BBC Radio. He is an award-winning songwriter.

Refuge

The time comes to face facts.
This is no dark alley, but a brick mews
set back carefully from the main street,
armed with circling lens and arcs of light.
The door shuts out a harsh night.

I linger in the stained white lobby
as the duty worker – thick lenses,
Ramonés t-shirt – checks me out,
and bounds upstairs. When he returns
my daughter shuffles in his wake;
he waits, as if we should be introduced,
and goes back to his booth when we embrace.

Her room is glossed and battered
with the usual yellow bucket –
the last guest left in a body bag –
but a shelter with some heart,
spartan surfaces intently covered
with her bedspread, ornaments and posters,
the shelf lined with children's books.

We laugh and spar like strangers.
I pick out a familiar old cover –
Ming Lo Moves the Mountain –
and at once the space around us yields
to another, with cloud-patterned walls;

she gazes at me from her pillow,
leaning on the fireplace,
telling her a peasant woman's tale,
who, when rocks start
tumbling on their hut,
commands her husband to discover
how to shift the peak above.

Only the long-sought for counsel
of a wise man wreathed in clouds of opium
persuades them that it might be safer
to remove their dwelling, piece by piece,
across the valley, to a kinder mountain.

Now our laughter echoes from a deep place
as our eyes meet. This is no cul-de-sac.
Months of lies and threats have closed
my door on her, yet our despair
and anger disappear like sharp stones
falling from the sky. This is where
she is defined. I stand with her.

Years may pass before we find some way clear.
We turn back to small-talk; I lose patience,
she averts her eyes and fidgets,
aching for her next hit. But we don't cower.
In a moment we have moved
from there to here. We seek no blame.
We face facts. Neither of us is ashamed.

Michael Mc Carthy grew up in West Cork and works as a Priest in North Yorkshire. A winner of the Patrick Kavanagh Award he has published three full collections, *Birds' Nests and Other Poems*, with Bradshaw Books. *At The Races*, and *The Healing Station*, with Smiths Doorstop. Also two children's books in verse with Barefoot Books. Magazines include *Agenda*, *Oxford Magazine*, *Poetry Ireland*, *The Reader*, *The Rialto*, *The Shop*, *The Tablet*, *Queen's Quarterly*. *The Healing Station* was chosen by Hilary Mantel in the Guardian Books of the year 2015.

Saivnose

Nobody, not even the Master was sure what the name stood for, only that it rose east near Carrigfadda -meaning the long rock, and flowed into the Ilen at Bauravilla below Dereeney Bridge.

It was not a big river as rivers go, but it was big enough. Once, long before our time, a girl had drowned in it. She slipped off stepping stones near Breadagh Cross.

On summer evenings around dusk you could watch the fish leap the Drominidy falls, where after dark, night after night Jerome Jerry Connie and friends were too quick for the bailiffs.

A net across the bottom, and a few stones thrown in at the top left them with a nicely collection of brown trout, their taste all the sweeter by the way they were caught.

From the northern inch across from Mickey Ireland's cottage down as far as the waterworks, and the footbridge we crossed on our way to school was the stretch that I knew best.

In winter the line of rusted ferns and mulch left on the fields marked how far the flood had come out. The winter before last was as high as I'd ever seen it. My brother says he saw it worse.

In summer when the water was low the gravel gathered in a heap in the middle, you could see the shine on the stones like amethyst, and under the brow the banks had a black beard of withered moss.

My uncle swam at Poul Na Guella after he came home from China. He read his breviary in the shade of a furze bush. I swim here now. I leave my breviary at home, and dive straight in.



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Rain, North Wales

Robin Thomas spent many years in the petrochemical engineering and construction industry having qualified as a chemical engineer. Some twenty years ago he obtained a part time degree in English Studies from the then Polytechnic of North London, followed by an MA in Victorian poetry at the Open University. He dates an interest in writing poetry from this period but has only managed to write sporadically until recently. He completed the MA in Writing Poetry at Kingston University in 2012. He has twice been shortlisted for the *Buzzwords* prize.

Expedition

Great God! This is an awful place – Captain Scott

Several times a day my mother
sets out for the South Pole:
struggles layer by layer into outdoor gear
tugs at her snow boots, threads and tightens their laces
comes blinking out of her tent
loads the sled, calms the leaping, yapping huskies
inches forward into the wind.

At night she eyes the mountain
readies herself with ropes, crampons, grappling gear, pitons
hauls herself up
reaches the summit with a great sigh
stares into the unfathomable dark.



Susan Gathercole: Coast

Timothy Houghton had *The Internal Distance* (Selected Poems 1989-2012) appear in a bilingual (Italian/English) edition from the Italian press Hebenon/Mimesis Edizioni in 2015. The translators are Luigi Fontanella (many awards, books, and scholarly articles) and Annalisa Macchia. His first book, *High Bridges*, was published by the English press Stride. Other books were published by Orchises Press. Recent work has or soon will appear in *Stand*, *Ambit*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, and *Cyphers*. He has worked at Yaddo, MacDowell, and Hawthornden Castle. He coordinates birding field trips and does surveys for Audubon in Maryland, USA.

At the Bay Windows

Where small rooms
closed around us in summer
and heated our talk amid a clutter of knickknacks,
our grandmother came to stay in July, she in her wheelchair,
her history with polio. The bay windows of the dining room
juttied out like a bastion, overlooking the Boulevard creek
from the hill we lived on.
She'd sit there for an hour, a second hour – Emeritus Commander
of something we avoided. Her collection of glass birds
covered each sill and shone in sunlight.
My brothers and I adapted to her presence
grudgingly. If we opened the freezer, she judged us
from her Chair: an ice cream bar should be a reward
after chores, after proving ourselves, and so we ignored her.
Screaming drunk, grandpa (who had just died)
pointed a gun at her once, then at himself,
while my mother, a young girl then, watched.
A second later, he was calm: gun in drawer, his words
like transparent paint on the walls. Years later he'd sit all day
in his deep leather chair, smoking Pall Malls, his self-wind watch
stopping on the armrest. Was it the creek that fascinated her?
You could only hear it at night, when the shining birds were quiet
and wet stones took over. On some level, we understood
her position—our father having died a few years before –
and wondered how she got around, so well, in her chair.

Gerard Smyth is poet, critic and journalist. He has published eight collections of poetry, including, *A Song of Elsewhere* (Dedalus Press 2015), and *The Fullness of Time: New and Selected Poems* (Dedalus Press, 2010). A sequence of poems, *We Like It Here Beside the River*, with a drawing by artist Donald Teskey, was published in a limited edition in 2014 by The Salvage Press. He was the 2012 recipient of the O'Shaughnessy Poetry Award presented by the University of St Thomas in Minnesota and is co-editor, with Pat Boran, of *If Ever You Go: A Map of Dublin in Poetry and Song* (Dedalus Press) which was Dublin's One City One Book in 2013. He is a member of Aosdána and Poetry Editor of *The Irish Times*.

Instrument of her Art

(Homage to Jacqueline du Pré)

*I don't really see much distinction between
Words and the bow being drawn over the cello.*

Robert Bly

That instrument of her art, she held it like a sceptre
and changed the mood from andante to allegro.
Back and forth, to and fro she moved
the bow that gave the kiss of life
to a maestro's rhapsody, a maestro's lament.
Soulful Elgar, Boccherini – some jester called him
Haydn's wife. Even in death, she touches us,
especially in that moment on the gramophone disc
or hissing cassette, when the orchestra stops,
sits dumb and she's alone: no first violins or second strings,
no woodwind or brass assembly, only her cello
like the lyre of Orpheus at its most transcendent.

Back to School

*.....and I knew
that part of my life was over.*

Stanley Kunitz

It was the end of August when I stood
where the country bus stopped to pick me up.
It was where four roads converged
and blackberry bushes
were in their moment of renewal.
I said farewell, she looked bereft –
the unmarried aunt who was my summer mother.
I didn't want her fuss, her hugs
and not her kisses that drew a crimson blush.

After weeks of running footloose
I was going back to a city schoolroom
and schoolyard blues:
the spit in the eye, the thump on the back,
the look that said *You're dead*.
Where you had to be quick, no time for rhetoric
when the bully's bare fist was scoring hits
on the weakest member of the gang.
Where sticks and stones could break our bones.
Fingernails scratch until our faces bled.
But what hurt most were the names
that were falsehoods: *Snake-in-the-grass*,
Piss-in-the-bed. *Telltale*. *Teacher's Pet*.



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Joe's Farm

Dylan Jones has published two collections of poetry; *Dreaming Nightly of Dragons* (University of Salzburg 1996) and *Balances & Turns* (Umbrella Head 2011). He has developed an interest in presenting his poetry visually as framed prints, and in October/November 2014 an exhibition of archival poem-prints *A Bird Flew By* was held in the Cafe Gallery, Aberystwyth Arts Centre. He sings and is a co-songwriter with mid-Wales romantic melancholics 'The Sheiling'.

Together

Because they came through
so many years turmoil, it
was fitting at last things
would settle down – the kettle
come quietly off the gas, simmering
cease, and the temperature even out
to something reliably pleasant,
something the hands could rub
together at and relax into peace.

Easy to be with them then,
chattering in the pink cottage chairs,
leaning toward the two-bar electric;
remembering what was humorous
and, without ever saying it, acknowledging
the debt we owe to each other,
the pleasures we turn up, forking
through our lives.

Outside, a thrush sings,
a winter sun hides behind council fencing,
and next-door's cat is again at the window
waiting for the treats you give him.

One begins to doze, slumped
in his high-backed rocker.
One talks on, scrunching a tissue,
the stories beginning to flow.

And comforting words spread through the room –
tales I might have heard a few times over
still bringing out the laughs –
your smile, the light on your glasses,
the last thing visible at dusk.

The Boy with a Weetabix Bowl

When the boy
with a Weetabix bowl
stopped circling
the roses –
And one petal
his finger had brushed
settled onto earth
black with compost –
something retreated
into itself – thought nothing
of hurrying –

And his mother
and sisters in their act
of carrying
jugs of orange juice
down the concrete steps
from the council-
house French windows –
with equanimity
felt motion
ebb away –

And a song thrush
singing
through the white hawthorn
drew breath that held
oxygen of a lifetime –

And in this mid-note –
And in the hidden fraction of their carrying –
And between his stride when the bowl
was licked empty

came the sun bearing
light to the estate
and spreading, in the hearts
and minds so casually arranged there
(and against all odds and expectations)

hopefulness, of all things
hopefulness

What Matters

The hair
whitens to snow
and assumes a kind of permanence

the hand
cannot unclasp
and lays a mottled lightness over mine

the eyes
translate blueness
through mist that cataracts to grey

we talk
or do not talk
it is only being here that matters



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Celtic Lands

Angela Kirby grew up in rural Lancashire, 1932, but now lives in London. The author of five books on cooking, gardening and related subjects, her poems are widely published and broadcast. In 1996 and 2001 she was the B.B.C.'s Wildlife Poet of the Year. Shoestring published her four collections, including her latest, *The Days After Always: New and Selected Poems*, 2015. Much of her work has been translated into Romanian.

Sub Zero

We heard him on the radio,
this most unlikely polar hero
who'd survived against all odds
everything the weather threw
at him and something about
his words struck both of us,
we caught each others eyes,
remembering those times
when things grew perilous,
the air around us turned icy,
words froze in our throats,
crevasses opened between us
and though most of the time
our relationship stayed well
on the right side of chilly, one
wrong word could turn things
heavy, dangerous, the weather
closing in till we'd become lost,
engulfed by the resulting
whiteout and quite unable
to find our way back, either
to safety or to each other.

Arthur Broomfield is a poet and Beckett scholar from County Laois, Ireland. His poems have been published in *Acumen*, *Agenda* (Broadsheet), *Orbis*, *Envoi*, *Poetry Ireland*, *Cyphers* and more. His study on the works of Samuel Beckett *The Empty Too : language and philosophy in the works of Samuel Beckett* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2014) is available from Amazon.co.uk

Nothing to be Done

If I could lay you out
on lenient couch
and softly correct
your contradictions,
heard and unspoken
heart and enchanted,
with my embalmer's hands;

If I were to rid you
of your fiends,
to leave you to
the flesh and blood
of the bread and circuses
you loathe,

If I were to dead head
the hot angst
that burns the grip
of your gossamer traps,
and leave you
silent as a moth in winter,

would you, crushed,
perish in the void,
and leave us,
nothing,
not even a word?



Karina Rosanne Barrett: Y-Garn and Dinorwig Quarry

Chris Hardy's poems have appeared in the *Rialto*, *Poetry Review*, *the North*, *The Shop*, *Tears in the Fence*, *Acumen*, *Agenda*, *The Interpreter's House*, *Stand*, *Dark Horse* and many other magazines, anthologies and websites. He has won prizes in the National Poetry Society's and other competitions. His third collection was published by Graft Poetry www.graftpoetry.co.uk

Chris is in the trio LiTTLe MACHiNe (little-machine.com) performing their settings of well known poems: 'The most brilliant music and poetry band in the world', Carol Ann Duffy.

Pulse

Lying on your side, unsmiling, calm,
the shawl up to your chin.

You have come down in the dark
from a globe of water,

slick blue fish suddenly small
red ape, anemone fingers.

While I remember how we all got here
and wonder what might happen next

you watch the evening light upon the wall,
feel a touch where your skull breathes.

Through the window and the door
the world is there, just over there.

Soon each moment will spread before
and behind you like the sea, but now

all there is for you is your
immortal, unopened, second.

Red, White and Blue

My grandmother died in Calcutta.
She is still there, her name and her bones
in South Park Street Cemetery.

Her daughter was taken straight
out of the city, north
to the highest mountains in the world.

I suppose they hoped the cold air
and white ice pinnacles would freeze
the fear out of her.

Then they sent her home.
Three weeks with a couple she can't recall.
What could they have said to console

the tiny figure in a corduroy coat
staggering across the deck
as the sea toyed with the ship?

In London her aunts wept
when she brought her dead mother's
red-haired ghost into their house,

all that was left of the slim figure
waving at the top of the gangway,
going off into the blue.





Susan Gathercole: Cowslip and Quails' Eggs



Susan Gathercole: Reflection – pastel and gouache



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