

AS ABOVE SO BELOW

ISSUE 5

Circles / Cycles / Spirals

Spring 2020



River Severn at Atcham
Photo by Wren Miller

Welcome

It's been a tough year so far, but still somehow, we manage to create poetry, create magazines and create community! Many thanks to all contributors. I've found all your poems enriching. I hope you enjoy this issue!

I love to bring a community of poets together here, including the very established and those new to the scene. It makes for a wonderful dialogue.

If you've got three poems in this issue, you'll find one near the start, one near the end, and one in the middle. If you have two poems here, there will be one nearer the start and one nearer the end. And if you only have one poem in here, it has been paired up with another single poem at the mirror end of the issue: As Above So Below, you see!

Next issue will come out in the autumn and will be on the theme of: dusk / dawn / liminal spaces. Feel free to have a play and submit your best efforts. Submissions open on 1st July and will be open until 30th Sept.

May you stay safe, stay sane, and stay creative!

Bethany

Bethany Rivers
Editor

CONTENTS

	Poem	Author	Page
	Discrete Infinity	Malene Engelund	4
	Interlaced	Maggie Mackay	5
	So much tenderness is needed	Steve Thorp	6
	When I learned that Auden was alcoholic	Ann Cefola	7
	At the lake	Chris Northrop	8
	By the River Dwyfor one October Evening	Julia Forster	9
	Where I'm Heading	Paul Waring	10
	Words	Olivia Brookfield	11
	I Was There	Hermione Sandall	12
	You look at me	Sophie Depas	13
	Life cycle	Rona Fitzgerald	14
	Depression Circle	Jenny Robb	15
	Drawn into Circles	Karen Paul Holmes	16
	The Rookery	Cherry Doyle	17
	Round and Round	Robbie Gamble	18
	My Words	Hermione Sandall	19
	Freggio	Malene Engelund	20
	All Clear	Sara-Jane Arbury	21
	What comes through	Steve Thorp	22
	The last time I sit with you	Ann Cefola	23
	Isolation	Martin White	24
	Lepidopterist	Cherry Doyle	25
	Seagull Morning, Blue Ridge Mountains	Karen Paul Holmes	26
	The Shamanic Poet	Robert Best	27
	Yellow, Early September, Late Evening, Cherrywood Lane	Charles Leggett	28
	Taking Leave	Rachel Stanworth	29
	The Ballad of Llanymynech	Hermione Sandall	30
	Mangata	Olivia Brookfield	31
	The Girl Who Knew The Moon	Paul Waring	32
	Yggdrasil	Clare Crossman	33
	Sedona Walk	Chris Northrop	34
	Beatitude	Ann Cefola	35
	An odd species	Steve Thorp	36
	The Child on the Stairs	Moniza Alvi	37
	Jakob	Malene Engelund	38
	 BIOGRAPHIES		 39 - 42

Discrete Infinity

We learned weather
as early as newborns.
Not cold as you would know it,
no, ours was the teeth of frost
and the thief of all colour.

Warmth was animal,
it rested in the fur of creatures
whose stables shared our houses.
Following their slow bodies
with our new, half-blind eyes,
we might as well have been a litter
clawing at shadows, scuffling for teats
to latch ourselves onto,
we wanted them that much.

Words came in gusts
we took 'storm', 'ice', 'bud'
into our mouths,
caught 'rain' on our tongues;
we grew language
as if we were its soil,
bred voices in us,
a field of voices
opening from us
calling *now now now*.

Malene Engelund

(Previously published in *The Wild Gods* from Valley Press)

Interlaced

The Scottish knot is ancient;
one continuous spiral of love,
token of our connection
with the everywhere of life.

These days its strands are frayed.
The knot twists and swirls
like a corkscrew tight
with unresolved tension.

My nation's forced
into a crucial turn,
breaking the rope-circle's tie
with auld alliances.

A crescendo of Scots' voices clamour
unity within diversity, whistle Ode to Joy,
coils deep into human hearts.

Maggie Mackay

So Much Tenderness is Needed

(For and from Nora Bateson)

This familiar sky, this deeply known landscape,
this breath I take, that is keeping all this alive,

right down to the cells; the antibodies that fight for me
and give me fever on this hot April evening.

There has always been a kind of sensibility that, when
recognised, has taken us farther out into the widest sky,

deep into the cellularity of myth and story. It goes
beyond fear, and does not tremble at the half-known;

I guess this is what might be known as courage — a fire
that seems so random, a different kind of contagion

that spreads by soul contact, through a crisis accepted in
solidarity, and is in the meeting of a gaze and the knowledge

that we are in this together. And, at last, you will know it is not
about how you have loved your self, or how your healing has gone,

but how this preparatory work will spread through the world,
into the crevices and deep places, into the forests and dark places,

into the hearts of the many and the few, into the ways we are
embedded, as we always were, in this short life and all its frames.

Ecologies are mindful and material; existing beyond us, infinitely so,
but that is as it is and how it is. This is the way for tomorrow to come.

So much tenderness is needed — there is a tender need for everything —
and there are tensions to hold and they are held right here:

in the fear and the fury, in rumour and rejection, in the fevered bodies
we inhabit, in words that spread spells and delusions.

And in this familiar sky, this deeply-known and tender landscape,
this final breath that I will take, will be keeping all of this alive...

Steve Thorp

When I learned that Auden was alcoholic

I felt tender toward him, forehead the flat
shock of hair displaced, thin neck-tie, splayed feet,
tobacco-creviced face, sour perfume exhaled by skin
that always hangs in a room he's no longer in, friends wondering where
brilliant conversation went, original man absent.

At the altar, Eucharist-fed, where holy alcoholics meet unborn and dead.
Crusading to save Miles Coverdale's words in the Psalter,
16th Century English preserved like scarab in amber
he begged the Anglican Committee not to modernize nor alter.

Like all of them, in pursuit of thirst, he tore off wax wings,
but not before his haiku asked to be taken that final night,
in the Vienna hotel where a glazed postcard on the dustless desk
spies an amazing sight: a poet piercing the ornate ceiling, a man
breaking westward, a shimmering of lyric light.

Ann Cefola

At the Lake

Geese wade in ripples
of cirrus clouds reflected
across deep skies.

Chris Northrop

By the River Dwyfor one October Evening

A heron led me to this bench:
there's an absence of breeze,
decades' worth of driftwood,
and the apricot dregs of sunset.

Quick as kingfishers,
two kids in turquoise
dart down the riverbank path,
the kissing gate clangs

as a woman exhausts her dog,
the river ripples over boulders
like a pianist's knuckles
and streams into the still black pool

where I sit now and think of you
gone exploring with old friends
like Max on this bench's brass plaque.
Dawn this morning was a bowlful of peaches.

Julia Forster

Where I'm Heading

hangs like an unanswered question
a stranger I daren't ask for directions.

The Circle Line chokes with commuters,
platform pores grouted by soot and shot gum.

I suspend
lost as the brown lace-up hurled between tracks
from a foot that wouldn't thank you for it now

pack inside the delayed 8.22, free from ice-breath
and loveless arms of Tower Hill tube

its conveyor belt heavy with faces, parcels
snaked once more along tunnels

not knowing
which stop will be last; days I carry
the undelivered answer like a cross

another day
another seat
another window

Paul Waring

Words

After
I have gone,
there will still be
velvet moss
in a
blackbird's nest,
and the gossamer
of a bee's wing
glistening
like
silk in
sunlight.
Tides
have already
ebbed
and flowed,
washing my
footprints away
as if I was never here.
But striving to touch
your heart with
my words;
like
circles
from
a flung
pebble
that kiss the shore,
is worth the trial.
For when my dust
is scattered
in the wind,
the words
are
where
I'll
live.

Olivia Brookfield

Depression Circle

1. My mood spirals down
outside is light, life:
sleepless eyes stare blankly.
2. My voices hate the world,
hate all we have become.
Poisoned darting thoughts
once sharp are slowed.
5. but my mood spirals down.
In the depths of madness
does evolutionary truth reside?
3. Voices stilled, flickering thought
a death hawk moth,
haunts my starved body.
4. Saved by love, chemicals, talk.
Thoughts disordered, reordered.
Awakened eyes reflect anew
sparkling, coloured spectrums –

REPEAT

Jenny Robb

I Was There

I was there when something was lost -
who more present than a baby
in her mother's losing?
Near as a womb,
wordless friend to her breasts,
close confidante of all the parts of her
that needed him and had him no longer.
No surprise that you folded me into
the spaces he'd left.
You've been dead twenty years. Only now
do I see what you gave, what you took.

You shouldn't have died, oh, you shouldn't have died,
I tried to be you, I tried,
without knowing;
and how
can a small girl, a beginner at life,
be a grown-up man
with warm eyes
and creased clothes
and a temper that sparkles and then
goes out like a match that won't burn your fingers.

How could I miss you? I was you -
only I wasn't, and follows
I would never be whole.
I was there, I was there
when you were pulled
away from my mother,
and I was in her arms instead.

Hermione Sandall

You look at me

And we see one another.
You're a nice lady - you say.
The other carer comes
Says we must change your pad.
It hurts you
To be moved
You cry.
She is quite rough
And it hurts me.
I catch your eye
And silently
Let you know
That I understand.
I wish I could be gentle for her
But I can't.
I'm sorry.
The other carer
Shouts at me.
You know how to do it.
Just clean her.
I don't want to hurt you anymore.
I don't want you to feel this indignity.
I catch your eye.
I hope you understand.
I'm doing my best.

Sophie Depas

Life cycle

The Emperor has asked me to make a new *Bi*.
The jade is resisting my craft, I need a perfect circle
no other elements, only a light wax.

And it must not be rushed. My hands are shaking -
maybe it will not be ready in the time my master demands.
I know we must be going to war.

The lucid glow of the jade soothes my eyes.
I think of my family miles away in soft verdant hills
their future rests in my wavering hands.

I imagine the swirls in our local pond as boys
throw rounded stones. Or tree rings, layered
like the Emperor's silk woven from cocoons.

My hand steadies. This one may be my last -
I am thirty-nine, due to retire and make way
for another artisan, with young hands and eyes.

Rona Fitzgerald

Drawn into Circles

Last evening, I placed fresh towels on both dog beds,
heard scratching and rearranging in the night.
This morning, each dog lay curled
into a circle of towel
like a bird's nest.

How life loves
a circle:
the sun
cups of tea
pizza, roses, embraces
wedding rings, cathedral domes
bells with fat notes radiating like ripples from skipped stones
the egg, the womb, the round opening, downy heads
suckling mouths, breasts, full stomachs, eyes filled
with delight for bubbles and bouncing balls.

Why do we box ourselves into corners
put our babies into rectangular cribs
build square houses and boxy buildings
drive cars to perpendicular crossroads
stare at newspapers, monitors, dollars
go to our rest in hard-edged coffins,
slowly lowered into matching graves?

It's a comfort
to imagine our rounded bones
becoming round bits of the globe,
our spirits rising to orbit among spiral galaxies,
joining those who completed the circle before us.

Karen Paul Holmes

(First published in *Poetry East*, Spring 2010.

Also appeared in *Untying the Knot* from Aldrich Press, 2014)

The Rookery

The rooks have left the rookery, and sit along the wire,
bleeding into ashen sky like ink on blotting paper.

Nimbus at their cheeks, and moonlight under-wing,
they ruffle in a string, and leave their home
as hollow as a shadowed lung.

On Sundays, spinning silk between the branches halts,
but this November Monday lies uneasy on the shoulders,
leadened by the space behind the rooks, and

I am left to read the ghosts within their onyx eyes -
decipher friction in the limestone clouds,
but tarmac twists ahead as every day, and
breath just leaves my lungs like hundreds of black wings.

Cherry Doyle

Round and Round

So hard to get out of the spiral of ruminating.
These things are not at all the way I want them to be.
So hard to get out of the spiral of ruminating.
These things are not at all the way I want them to be.
So hard to get out of the spiral of ruminating.
These things are not at all the way I want them to be.
So stuck in the spiral of ruminating.
These things all get in the way— where do I want us to be?
And then— it always feels a miracle—
a chunk of truth splashes down
sending out rings of waves
that calm the waters
calm the waters

calm

the waters.

Robbie Gamble

(Previously published in *Soul-Lit*)

My Words

My words reel through the night sky
drunk with weightlessness, puffed by the winds of space,
from Sirius to Vega, Altair to Antares,
past galaxies, through misty nebulae.

Word winds, whirlwinds, word tornadoes, smoking up from the fever
of Delhi's red cow-dung cloud,
or black particulate smog that hovers
over Beijing;
sentences stretch like rubber bands;
the insupportable tautness, thinness, whiteness
splits, and half of it shoots back to sting;
but the other? The torn end that lassoed the stars?
is it a child, who reached escape velocity,
flung out in widening parabolas,
but is still your child,
and may feel still
the chilly interplanetary wind?

Hermione Sandall

Freggio

(after Christian Schad)

I never meant for this; to show up at your door
lost and waist-deep in humility.
Even your front step is a mess –
week old rubbish bags spilling with your life,
an orchard of bottles blossoming in greens and yellows.
You open, half clothed, and let me in
knowing that even after everything
I've come back to your hand,
needing to be fed with something resembling love;
that no other finger will run gentle
along that scar you gifted my cheek.
So I've returned, naked and grateful
with a single narcissus as my witness tonight.
See the veil that divides us from the city;
the black ribbon I've tied around my wrist;
neither of these are lasting.
If you asked, I could undo them both.

Malene Engelund

*(Previously published in *The Wild Gods* from Valley Press)*

All Clear

Suddenly sunshine cracks the world. Cut glass.
The windscreen wipers sweep away diamonds.
It has stopped raining. Overhead, a rainbow.
The car skims down a dazzled motorway.
Today, there's no such thing as cheap happiness.
The value of everything has no price.
We are together, warm, dry, safe,
passing the news from the hospital
like a parcel around a circle, carefully.
All clear. Light a candle every year
on this birthday of days.
Every forfeit is a gift.

Sara-Jane Arbury

What comes through

(Words from a meditation)

What comes through?

Two dancing robins and a flurry of sparrows,
a lone lost pigeon in its plaintive monotony;
the wisdom of yesterday's world and
the promise of tomorrow's;
the rose scented memory of a momentary dream;

the word and the silence and the knowledge of infamy;
the serious injunction to do nothing at all;
the perfect stone and the pock-marks of weathering,
that tells us of the epoch, and the ancient storm.

My witnessing is the only silence under the canopy;
my witnessing is watching the familiar shapes of existence,
for I am the witness of a wave that has been rolling in
since the silent days; the stone-worn, storm-borne days.
Gulls follow. What comes through is the slow grace
of their hardly moving wings.

What comes through are the spaces between;
the silence between words,
like places encountered in a moment, then forgotten.
There will never be a word that can put a name to this,
as what comes through is bathed in mystery,
and what comes through is dappled in significance.

What comes through?

Two dancing robins; their imperceptible breath;
a home for the crows and, hidden in the bay-tree,
the flurry of sparrows, and their startling annunciation.

Steve Thorp

The last time I sit with you

In the dry grey bark outside your room:
A tribe of winter birds, nuthatches with staccato tracks,
one downy woodpecker with red scarf and black-white tweed,
scour the dead March wood. I follow their drilling,
mid-day invaders, their feast.

Asleep, mouth open, your chest rises like someone drawing
a bucket up a well where enough can never be scooped,
only dreams, and more dreams; we two suspended
between winter and spring, breath as measured as
our shared Scots skin and slender bone.

Years ago you dreamt, *I don't have much time.*
I heard that and paid more attention since then,
like birdwatcher recording slight shivers of wing.
I turn away to see immaculate trunks bare
and ask, *Who will remember they were there?*

Ann Cefola

Isolation

Looking back I think there had been hints before it all happened. Little whispers perhaps almost too quiet to hear or understand. The year Twenty Twenty had arrived and we were wondering what might be in store. Twenty Twenty had a ring to it, perhaps it would be a time like no other.

At the beginning of the year I was puzzling over the hardest jigsaw I had ever attempted. A thousand pieces to form Hokusai's image of a great wave, fisherman struggling in a tiny boat with Mount Fuji, a witness in the far distance. At the same time I was reading a book about a man who had spent over thirty years confined in a Moscow hotel, surviving during the time of the revolution and its aftermath. A strange tale of endurance and resilience.

As I studied each jigsaw piece, trying to find its place, the world outside began to intrude. Winter storms, Ines, Denis and Jorge swept across the country toppling trees and power lines. Soon rivers began to flood, and people had to leave their homes. Then there were stories heard on the news about a strange new virus that, some said, had its origins in diseased bats and monkeys in a Chinese animal market.

empty skies
silent streets
the earth takes a breath

Martin White

Lepidopterist

Exhale and they were gone.
Beneath the oak, along the crumbled field,
sunlight steeped their wings like coloured glass.
How can these membranes bear the weight of souls
as if they were no more than whispers folded into night?
Exhale and they were gone,
the prior weeks discarded - crêped and hollow as a final breath.
I kept their faded shells long after they were due to crumple into shadow.
This, such unassuming life led out like lightning
in amongst the blushes of magnolia,
rotating yearly as the field opens up its scars of tin and bone.
Exhale and they were gone.
How few these moments - whiskered feet on fingertips,
the slightest brush of gold,
how pitiful a human to an oak.

Cherry Doyle

Seagull Morning, Blue Ridge Mountains

I wake to a duotone picture—
pink lake and clouds,
gray mountains, gulls circling, diving.

Then sunshine reaches 'round Bell Mountain,
catches the birds, illuminates them bright white.
More seagulls than usual this morning,
tissues floating from the sky.

One comes close to my window,
rhythmic wings with black tips.
He dives toward his reflection,
an image so clear on still lake,
it looks like two birds will collide.

Their morning chores complete,
fifty or more flock harmoniously at the sandbar.
Yet on the water, each glides solo,
trailing a gleaming wake.

Gulls winter here.
Like all fleeting things, they're special to me.
But, in this January of record lows,
why didn't they venture farther south?

Maybe the birds come for the same reason I do:
to contra-dance among mountains,
where melodies—migrated on lips and fiddles—
still hover, preserved for generations
and for those who join their ancestral reel
through crisp Appalachian air.

Karen Paul Holmes

First appeared in *No Such Thing as Distance* (Terrapin Books, 2018)

The Shamanic Poet

Every word is steeped in mystery.
Every line emerges from the crack
Between the Worlds.
Every stanza bears the blessings of Spirit,
And every verse is layered in meaning.

Come closer, for there is more to tell!

The ink shapeshifts onto the page,
From the confines of cartridge
To carve wisdom onto the bark of the world,
Conjuring memories from the paper
Of the forest, of which once it was a part,
And from which it has never truly left.

The Poet writes from Dream, from Innocence;
Not merely a passive channel,
But as a mischievous herald,
A passionate creator,
A bridge between the Worlds,
Seeking a higher Truth.

Robert Best

Yellow, Early September, Late Evening, Cherrywood Lane

Three stars describe
a right angle. A huge moth

surges through a cone
of grainy lamplight. Branches hang

like ill-assorted dreadlocks. A doorbell
glows across the cul-de-sac.

Three or four dogs can't shut up.

Two full-grown trees inches apart,
with smooth rocks assembled at their base,

are a hairy stork,
beakless and contemplating

a step towards the street.
An apparent wrong turn

is unhurriedly corrected
under the auramine glare

of the blind alley's bulbs.
A basketball baseboard's hoop, long

without strings, yawns
with the freeway's relentless, dry tongue.

Charles Leggett

Taking Leave

Taking leave of convention
I run to a forbidden shore,
where others before me have both resisted or surrendered.
The stale 'oughts' of this world fall with a splash,
a decaying flotsam of my life's vocabulary,
all washed up.

Only the scattered benedictions
of a few eager stars
brightly call me onwards,
through thigh-slapping merciless water.

Rachel Stanworth

The Ballad of Llanymynech

They tore her clothes, they ripped her skin,
they stole her only treasure;
Bronze Age, Romans, Mercians,
robbed her at their pleasure.

Pale as a ghost she lay, unclothed,
the chalky, bare hillside:
a finished-with woman, shamed and cold,
all in white, but not a bride.

In spring, the wood sage and marjoram
pitied the ghost-white woman,
they clothed her skin with a grey-green gown,
they bowed with the wind's sighing.

Come summer, clover embroidered her gown
with pink French knots, at the hem,
yellow wort chain stitched round and around,
wrest-harrow feathered the seams.

Twining convolvulus and bryony
wove her a warm cover -
with the fall of the leaf and the shortening day
she slept, and sleeps forever.

Hermione Sandall

Mangata

Only the osprey
in mountain crags,
hovers over silver springs,
as they trickle from river to sea
like pulsing veins.

Under the sun's fire,
along the mangata of the moon,
spindrift rises from the swell,
gathers vapour
to veil the stars.

Without us knowing,
the lofty wind
summons strength,
heaves clouds above hills,
their countless tears

descending in
luminous stitches of rain,
more precious than gold,
swirling in the basins of the earth,
nourishing the guzzling soil again.

Only we changed the world -
cast our toxins into the deep,
not listening to the hissing waves,
whose voices whisper
while we sleep -

*'We are fastened to you by a rope of sand,
but the hand of the moon pulls the tide.
Ours are the winds, and the rushing streams,
Take care of us! Take pride!
Take care of us! Take pride!'*

Olivia Brookfield

The Girl Who Knew The Moon

She felt the pull of full moons
summoned to altar cliffs
showered in marbled light

telescopic eyes
trained to dock deeper
each time

ear cupped to clock magnets
align currents and tides –
I think she knew.
In a dream
I saw Venus at solstice
shy behind strawberry moon

I thought it was her
that this time
she'd strayed too far

or been called –
but in midnight mist,
I couldn't be sure.

Paul Waring

(Previously published by Eunoia Review, 2017)

Yggdrasil

World tree of deep shade, connecting sky and earth,
the rings told seventy years when it was felled,
nine worlds and summers written in its girth.

Of magic, shadows and the nights' gold
decay grew in its trunk which winter weather
rotted out with frost and so the wood was sold.

No shelter from the rain when it is stormy
Leaves like stars, have fallen a green veil,
branches stacked and burned, becoming history.

Smoke writes on the winter sky, a silver scale.
The stump remains to mark the ash was there
like the illustrated pages of a Grimm's fairy tale.

Across the snowed lawn the footprints of a hare,
on the Black Fen there is a shiver,
no legends left or birdsong, the garden fence is bare.

For want of wood we cannot sail a river,
without the heavy branches, no music in a gale.
For want of trees there is no fireside glimmer.

without the ash, the moon has nowhere to sail.

Clare Crossman

Sedona Walk

wind
twisted in
the arms of
scrub pine

Chris Northrop

Beatitude

Walking down Madison, I think, *Wednesday I will be able to weep* although, at the noon healing service, unexpected tears pull the priest from her carefully memorized prayer, catch her breath. Puts hands on my temples near my eyes, as if to cool overheated thoughts, and prays for *all good things*. I had hoped for *the heavenly country* ascribed to one next to me, but she seemed to incant what I needed.

Wednesday, I will be out of the white cubicle, fluorescent lighting, black ergonomic chair. Wednesday, I will not hear the conductor chirp *thank you ladies* as a stranger and I display tickets. Wednesday, I will not push the glass doors of Grand Central and flow like water through cars and around buses. I will cry, and be blessed, as someone promised long ago, before she was born into that house with the wide porch in Fort Smith, or more recently, that heavenly country not accorded me.

Ann Cefola

An odd species

An odd species,
always leaving home,
always in motion;
this compulsion
was never
consequence free.

Expand your mind,
attract invitations,
visit foreign places,
or visit teeming
wonderlands beyond
your back door.

Now I am a
stay-at-home — like
all of us must be –
I wonder why I
have been so stuck
on anticipation,

why the journey
was so much more
than the arrival,
when belonging
was always
satisfaction enough.

Steve Thorp

The Child on the Stairs

(after Jules Supervielle)

I hear you running up and down the stairs,
but the minute I grab hold of the banister
you turn your face the other way.
I'm convinced you're my childhood
haunting a favourite place.
You hide from me, embarrassed,
but I was a kind of lodger in your house,
so now I can't help recognising you,
even though you make yourself invisible.
You prowls around me when no one's looking,
and hurry away, as from an illicit meeting.
Okay, I won't let on I know you,
but you must also keep our secret –
this constant patter of my early footsteps
on the present-day stairs.

Moniza Alvi

*(Previously published in *How the Stone Found Its Voice*, from Bloodaxe)*

Jakob

I want to tell you about what happens
between darkness and dawn's pale talent for shadows,
about the way we drown and resurface to each other.
Jakob, I have speech at my throat, something about the
particles of us,
the madness of shared sleep; how we always come back
to the thoughts we don't declare,

to those that are caught in the lip of land
between borders, between spoken and forgotten;
like you, the quiet boy a year above, whose name roared
through a wildfire of phone calls that summer evening;
how every tenth wave is bigger; how it had flooded your
waders
and tugged at your legs until they no longer replied.

Even now I see you anchored to the seabed
by your green rubber boots, the globed spectacles framing
your eyes
closed to the black water, a silent *O* caught in your mouth.
There are questions we never ask and I couldn't say
if they ever found you, if you were ever returned.

Malene Engelund

(Previously published in *The Wild Gods* from Valley Press)

Malene Engelund's debut pamphlet *The Wild Gods* was published by Valley Press in 2016. Her translation of Christel Wiinblad's collection *My Little Brother - a morning in heaven, at least in green* was published by Valley Press in Feb 2020 and it was the PBS recommended translation for Spring 2020. She is currently writing her next book *Wolf Zone*.

Maggie Mackay loves family history which she incorporates into work in print and online journals. One of her poems is included in the award-winning #MeToo anthology. Others have been nominated for The Forward Prize, Best Single Poem with one commended in the Mothers' Milk Writing Prize. Her pamphlet 'The Heart of the Run' published by Picaroon Poetry; 'Sweet Chestnut' published by Karen Little in aid of animal welfare. She is a reviewer for <https://www.sphinxreview.co.uk/>.

Steve Thorp is published by [Raw Mixture Publishing](#): *Blue Marble, Soul Meditations* (2016) and *Soul Manifestos and Pieces of Joy* (2014) – a collection of short poetic essays. He is author of several poetry pamphlets, currently available in new digital editions, and also edits [Unpsychology Magazine](#). He was recently poet in residence at Oriely Parc in St Davids, working with the theme of "poetry as transformation".

Ann Cefola is author of *Free Ferry* (Upper Hand Press, 2017), and *Face Painting in the Dark* (Dos Madres Press, 2014); and translations *The Hero* (Chax Press, 2018) and *Hence this cradle* (Seismicity Editions, 2007). A Witter Bynner Poetry Translation Residency recipient, she also received the Robert Penn Warren Award judged by John Ashbery. For more on Ann, see www.anncefol.com and www.annogram.blogspot.com.

Chris Northrop is a poet from the North East, writes free verse and haiku poetry on many subjects, and nearly always inspired by the natural world and our connections with it. Chris has a minor in creative writing from Indiana State University.

Julia Forster is an award-winning poet from mid-Wales. She has published two prose works: *What a Way to Go* (Atlantic Books, 2016) and *Muses: Revealing the Nature of Inspiration* (Pocket Essentials, 2007). She has received a K Blundell Trust Award and a writer's bursary from Literature Wales. Julia works in publishing and writer development and she is also studying for a Diploma at the UK School of Spiritual Development with Dr Brenda Davies www.julia-forster.com @WriterForster

Paul Waring is a retired clinical psychologist from Wirral, UK. His poems have been widely published in print journals including Prole, Strix, Marble Poetry and The Lampeter Review and on webzines such as Ink, Sweat & Tears, Atrium, The High Window and London Grip. He was runner-up in the 2019 Yaffle Prize and commended

in the 2019 Welshpool Poetry Competition. His debut pamphlet 'Quotidian' is published by Yaffle Press.

Olivia Brookfield is still enjoying walks in the countryside, notebook and camera to hand, whilst endeavouring to stay active in body and mind, learning to speak French, and being very grateful for a happy retirement. She is finding it easy to write copious descriptions, but less so to edit her ideas meaningfully. She is an active contributor to her village magazine, which is published monthly, and an avid reader with eclectic tastes.

Hermione Sandall has been a drama teacher and, with her husband, a long-distance sailor. She has explored west Shropshire while volunteering with the Wild Life Trust.

Sophie Depas was born in the UK to parents from London and Haiti. She was raised in Brooklyn, NY. Her mother was an English literature Professor and her father a professional artist. Sophie is an artist, empathetic and avid skater. Writing has always been a constant in her life, and has helped her survive with integrity.

Rona Fitzgerald has poems in UK, Scottish, Irish and US publications, in print and online. Highlights include featured poet in the Stinging Fly 2011, Aiblins: New Scottish Political Poetry 2016, Oxford Poetry XVI.iii Winter 2016-17. Ten poems in Resurrection of a Sunflower, Psk's Porch 2017. Recent publications are Poems for Grenfell Tower, Onslaught Press 2018 and #Me Too, Fair Acre Press, 2018.

Jenny Robb lives in Liverpool UK and has been writing poetry since her teens but only seriously since retiring. She is an ex social worker/manager and NHS Director, specialising in mental health. She has poems in The Morning Star, Writing at the Beach Hut, Nightingale and Sparrow and in a forthcoming anthology of poetry celebrating the bicentennial anniversary of George Eliot's birth, (Yaffle Press).

Karen Paul Holmes is from Atlanta, Georgia, USA. She has two poetry collections, *No Such Thing as Distance* (Terrapin, 2018) and *Untying the Knot* (Aldrich, 2014). Her poems have been featured on Garrison Keillor's *The Writer's Almanac* and Tracy K. Smith's *The Slowdown*. Publications include *Diode*, *Valparaiso Review*, *Lascaux Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*. To support fellow writers, she founded and hosts the Side Door Poets.

Cherry Doyle was born in Shrewsbury and now lives near Cannock Chase in Staffordshire. Her work has appeared in *Ink*, *Sweat and Tears*, *Presence*, *Southlight* and more. Her debut pamphlet *September* is out with Offa's Press.

Robbie Gamble's poems have appeared in *Coal Hill Review*, *RHINO*, *Whale Road Review*, and *Rust + Moth*. He was the winner of the 2017 *Carve* Poetry prize. He works as a nurse practitioner caring for homeless people in Boston, Massachusetts.

Sara-Jane Arbury is a writer, performer and workshop facilitator who has created writing and produced live literature since 1993, collaborating with Arts Council England, BBC, Oxford University Press, The Poetry Society and Bloodaxe Books. She was Voices Off Director at Cheltenham Literature Festival for eleven years. Sara-Jane has undertaken many residencies, commissions and civic projects, including Writer-in-Residence for Herefordshire. She also writes bespoke events from interactive murder mysteries to poetry-theatre shows for adults and children.

Martin White, after a working life as architect, town planner and professional actor, has in later years been developing his writing skills. Much of his writing is concerned with an exploration of his family roots, and is influenced by his meditation practice. He is a founding member of the Shrewsbury writing group, 'In the Loop', and the Green Wood Haiku group.

Robert Best is a writer, poet and shaman living in the wilds of Northumberland who has also dabbled in teaching, broking and banking. His published poems and poetry reviews can be found at www.shamanicpoet.com and he has a collection due for release in 2021 from Iron Press. In 1992 he became the first novice ever to win the Stock Exchange London to Brighton Walking Race, and in 1999 he completed a 36-day visionary fast. Om.

Charles Leggett is a professional actor based in Seattle, WA, USA. His poetry has been published in the US, the UK (*Magma Poetry*, *Firewords*, *The London Reader*, Creative Writing Ink), Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Other representative publications include *FRIGG: A Magazine of Fiction and Poetry*, *Liquid Imagination*, and *Automatic Pilot*.

Rachel Stanworth lives in North Shropshire and has only recently begun to write poetry. In the past, however, she has published on the relationship between metaphor, spirituality and end of life care with the Oxford University Press (*Recognising Spiritual Needs in People Who are Dying*). She is trained in art psychotherapy and interested in the interface between creativity and Ignatian spirituality.

Clare Crossman lives outside Cambridge. She has published 4 collections of poetry and her fifth the *Mulberry Tree* is forthcoming from Shoestring Press later in 2020. She recently wrote the poetry for a conservation film about a local chalk stream *Waterlight* with the film maker James Murray White.

Moniza Alvi was born in Lahore in 1954. She now lives in Norfolk. *Homesick for the Earth*, her versions of Jules Supervielle, were published by Bloodaxe in 2011. *Bitter Berries*, a pamphlet collection by Moniza Alvi and Veronika Krasnova of versions of Marina Tsvetaeva's later poems, was published by New Walk Editions in 2018.

COVER ARTIST - Wren Miller is a creative soul, blessed with a Shropshire country childhood playing outdoors, making dens and mud pies. She is entranced by nature and appalled at humankind's treatment of our shared world. Her giant public art works are protest art: they include 'Tsunami Wave of Plastic', and 'We're Drowning in Plastic'. Her works, are designed to make people stop and think. She has exhibited in Europe, Africa and on the South Bank, London.

EDITOR - Bethany Rivers has two pamphlets published: *Off the wall*, from Indigo Dreams; *the sea refuses no river*, from Fly on the Wall Press. A book on the creative writing process, *Fountain of Creativity: Ways to nourish your writing*, from Victorina Press. She mentors writers from the start of their project through to publication.
www.writingyourvoice.org.uk