



The Crank

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Set in Goudy Old Style.

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SIEGFRIED BABER

Cefn Hill

Forgetting the bait-box in the rain
we raced maggots across upturned palms
as old timers barbecued brown trout with rosemary
and smoked unfiltered cigarettes
long after dusk. Bobby claimed he was the third
best fisherman in South Wales, but I refused
to believe there could be anyone better.
One summer, kneeling among nets and tangled lines,
he knotted a blade of cat-grass
around my little finger, delicate as a dressmaker.
Now his touch only survives in the senses of memory.
Like the slow thread of the River Monnow
fumbling its caress all these years
beneath that medieval bridge near the border.

JAKE CLWYD ROBERTS

Yield

ashen strap
carapace'd

come hither now
towing,
peasant

from this fallow
tract

a *pantsir*,
a *pantsir*.

IRENE CUNNINGHAM

An Acquaintance with Fragility

If I were to follow the trail you left
it would set me on a path sprung with branches.

Patterns glow like scars; the weight presses me
flatter than a fitted sheet. I flail.

This love thing is more serious than party
crystal. I've been sectioned-off, triangled inside

a bowl, hemmed with silver. Already I feel the nubs
of wings sprouting. My shoulders are blue,

stiffening, leaning towards frozen; they work
as separate entities, feel like short clay hoods

cupping my torso. Veins branch deep where
the blood is darker. I'm feeding them...

I thought old age made us brittle. My body
wants to bend, writhe like a tree

in strong wind, shoulders move under new power,
taking orders from strange anatomy,

flexing muscles that know more than I do.
My stomach lurches, forcing me to unbend.

CRAIG DOBSON

Once

'The move is time's, the loss is ours'

—*Louis MacNeice*

I linger in that night,
the others in the house asleep and us so quiet.
Memory's whispered silk, the breath of touch,
our sightless urgency
lapsing tender till first light emptied the room
and took our last kiss at the station –
that sudden closeness lost
trying to embrace distances
no phone call would undo,
our fading wait
whose letters' antique comfort
dawned too late
on the cost of its faithful, long regression.

MOIRA GARLAND

You Are Ahead of Me

i.m. my big brother Kerry 1944-2006

on the mountain shale
still a young man
comically splay-footed
laughing
for me to follow

and that tan bomber jacket
creases like dark rivers now
as you stand bright-eyed
on my doorstep
so I say *coffee?*

when not fluting
clear and clean
on the penny-whistle
or shaving sycamore
to make kitchens

you chisel a seal
its nose pointing upwards
the wood solid.

LEX KWAM

Tunnel

Out of reach, but only just,
the tattered string that lifts the blind.
Tattered from a lifetime's use —
so there is hope.

And like a rusted train I board
to pull on the forbidden cord
that brings it somehow screeching from
a halt — I want

that rare propulsion, that *exult*.
But on demand would split the string,
I know. It must be left to blow
within my grasp,

as though a roaring mass flew past —

and sure enough I'm on that train
I'm lifting up the carriage blind
and looking down the darkened tracks
to where *I cannot choose* becomes
no choice... The tunnel ends — at last
the holy flame

THOMAS LARNER

Last Address

He said I am the Priest,
The better at my job I am,
The harder it seems.

My purpose was to represent
The figure so far separate from
Their lives,

Like the doctor or the soldier
I held their sorrows and
Never their joys.

Praying that I could provide
Something – the cold comfort
Of being

All that was left
To listen to their lone voice
Wondering at what they'd lost.

BRIAN LEONARD

Altitude

High above the mud-flecked squirm
of earthworms after rain,

high above the buzzing clouds
of insects loudly hovering,

high above the squawking song
of birds in urgent talk,

there is always just the gist
of things: the landscapes,

vertiginous and vague,
defined by borderlines,

faded to the bluish gray
of nature viewed from far away.

YELYZAVETA MONASTYROVA

On chestnuts

A ghastly thing – dry chestnut leaves.
They haunt me, piling underneath
My memories (that spicy smell
Is an excruciating spell –
All warm and peaceful and opaque) –
Of sunlit benches in the park
On a September afternoon;
Of our doorstep, back from school
By tram (it now drudges and clinks
Through memory – a sloppy brink
Of the impossible today);
But even home, chestnuts may
Spill leaves around – umber, dry
And peaceful – they are good to die.

PAUL MURGATROYD

Insanity

In a crowded canvas women and men
are laughing and dancing and downing drinks,
they're taking selfies and snorting cocaine,
they're kissing and groping and having group sex.

Beneath them all, completely ignored,
a manikin melts at a schoolboy's desk
in a flooded basement. His turnip-head
has a face at the front and a face at the back.
He's wearing blindfolds, his hands are in chains.
But he's holding a pencil without a point
and idly trying to put his cross
on a little lump of excrement.

A few dispute his identity,
but this strikes me as very strange.
For obvious reasons he has to be
a minister for climate change.

JACOB RIYEFF

Haight Pome

talking virgins over crepes
and macchiato gathering surface fat:
reading kerouac's "the moon"
and a tree slaps me beautifully
in the face with its falling message –
this is the diamond burliness
I've been waiting for. charmed
by the bay and god's eye.

MYKYTA RYZHYKH

every second I look in the mirror and see god
every second in the sky I see god

snowflakes flying in the air
my freckles have disappeared in the mirror image

FERGUS NAVARATNAM-BLAIR

Lying to Women in Your Area

Somewhere, there's a city on a hill that is a whale
Run-through by a harpoon that is
Not there. Eyes back, jaws loose,
The stomach contents spill towards the centre of the earth.

Would it be easier, you wonder, if the people were all
Parasites. Tapeworms, barnacles, the bugs from
Cloverfield. Stay focused.

You're a predator; keep your fingers taugt until you feel
Square circles drilled into the palm of your hand. Tap tap.
Tune out the music to hear the notes of keratin on glass.
She's fired first, so best shoot back:
Mind-Blowing Techniques To Cook This Slow Loris Ending Explained; or
We Paid A Homeless Anatoly Karpov \$500 To Speedrun The 1996 World
Chess Championship.

That's it; that's all you need.
One laugh and you can be
Catullus and
You won't believe what happens next.

ALEA PEISTER

Eucharist

I press
my blunt thumb
into dimpled
citrus skin — press
down — press
again — moving my finger
until the peel
ruptures — silky oil softening
on my skin — the scent of citrus
rising to my lips.

My fingertips
investigate its peel
until twelve willing sections
lie open in my palm
their pink flesh
sweet, open
to the tasting.

DHARMACARI DHARMAVADANA PENN

Disappearance at the Round Pond

Gripping their caps against the breeze
two officers peered in the water
for a glimpse of hair or a limb
under rafts of spore from the plane trees.

And the waves danced - who was to know
whether from mournfulness or joy? -
at the capture of a human being
for the silence of the world below.

ANDREW SENIOR

Night at the beach

Discarded scrap suspended
in swaying waters.

Flies buzz adventure over oil slick seaweed.

A million remains
beneath the feet

of our endless dog and ball chasing,

furrowing the sands
with dead wings unfurled,

waiting to tread
the tide incoming,

the saltwater swell
that will soothe our every wound.

THOMAS STEWART

Llywelyn dies as an old man in his bed visited by Cyhyraeth

The first, like when my sister dropped something in the attic,
thundered the house. The second, the rattle of a snake
fallen from a tree. The third, something lost, a thorn of sound,
a thimble snatched in the dark. My family,
gathered around my bed become the bones of a shipwreck.

Salt-stained. Ambushed. The sounds ring louder here,
frothy and seeded. The emptiness of the sea at night wraps around
my ribs, tightens until I've lost all noise. And the ocean fills
with will-o'-wisp. Corpse-light. Flooded stars igniting fury-lightning
the world drinks the death of me.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Siegfried Baber was born in Devon in 1989 and his poetry has featured in a variety of publications including *Under the Radar*, *The Interpreter's House*, *Butcher's Dog Magazine*, online with *The Compass Magazine* and *Ink, Sweat and Tears*, and as part of the Bath Literature Festival. His debut pamphlet *When Love Came To The Cartoon Kid* was published by Telltale Press, with its title poem nominated for the 2015 Forward Prize for Best Single Poem. In 2020, he published *London Road West*, an ebook of poems and photographs. A new collection, *The Twice-Turned Earth*, is forthcoming.

Originally from a small farming community in North Wales, **Jake Clwyd Roberts** now resides in North London. He writes poetry alongside working at University College London, where he recently completed his MSc in Psychoanalytic Theory. He is currently putting together his first collection, but in the meantime his work can be found at jakeclwyd.substack.com.

Irene Cunningham has had many poems in many magazines and anthologies over the decades. In 2019, Hedgehog Press published *SANDMEN: A Space Odyssey*, a poetry conversation with Diana Devlin. In 2022, Dreich Press published her first solo chapbook, *No Country for Old Woman*. She moved to Brighton 2021 and is now building collections and throwing them at publishers for all she's worth.

Craig Dobson has had poems published in *Acumen*, *Agenda*, *Butcher's Dog*, *Crannóg*, *The Dark Horse*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *The Frogmore Papers*, *Ink, Sweat and Tears*, *The Interpreter's House*, *Lighten Up Online*, *The London Magazine*, *Magma*, *Neon*, *New Welsh Review*, *The North*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Prole*, *The Rialto*, *Stand*, *Southword*, *THINK* and *Under the Radar*.

Moira Garland is a Leeds-based poet and short fiction writer. She won the 2016 Leeds Peace Poetry Competition and 2015 Poised Pen Competition and has been commended in several other, including a high commendation in the 2021 YorkMix Poems for Children Competition. In 2019, her poetry appeared on the Wakefield Moonriver celebrating the 1969 moon landing. Her work has also appeared in numerous anthologies and in magazines such as *The North*, *Stand*, *The*

Adriatic, Consilience, Fragmented Voices, and Sarasvati. A poem was set to music by Freya Ireland as part of the 2019 Leeds Lieder Festival 2019.

Lex Kwam studied sculpture in the Netherlands before moving to the UK and taking up poetry. Their day job is as an assistant in human rights law.

Thomas Larnar is currently an archivist based in Bedfordshire. He has been previously published in *The Littoral Magazine* and his piece 'The Home' will be published in the forthcoming anthology *New Contexts 4* from Coverstory Books. His favourite poets include R.S. Thomas and Lawrence Raab.

Brian Leonard is a poet who lives in Baltimore, Maryland. He has been published in *Maximus, APOCALYPSE CONFIDENTIAL, Misery Tourism, and Version 9.* He is afraid to admit that he has never in his life been 'devastated' by a poem, but he does really love when they're good.

Yelyzaveta Monastyrova is a PhD student based in Milton Keynes. She has written poems in English, Spanish, Ukrainian and Russian, and had a collection published in Kyiv in 2021.

After a long career as a professor of Classics specializing in Latin and Greek literature, **Paul Murgatroyd** retired six years ago and took up creative writing. So far, he has had published/accepted for publication 49 short stories, 8 poems in English, over 60 Latin poems, and performance versions of 2 Roman tragedies.

Jacob Rieff is a translator, teacher, and poet. His work focuses on the western contemplative tradition and the natural world. Jacob lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin's East Village with his wife and three growing children.

Mykyta Ryzhykh (Никита РЪЖИХ) was the winner of the international competition Art Against Drugs, bronze medallist of the festival Chestnut House, and laureate of the literary competition named after Tyutyunnik. She was also longlisted for the Lyceum, Twelve, and awards named after Dragomoshchenko. She has been published in the journals *Dzvyn, Ring A, Polutona, Rechport, Topos,*

Articulation, Formaslov, Colon, Literature Factory and Literary Chernihiv; on the portals; in the literary newspaper of the *Ukrainian*; and in the almanac *Syaivo*.

Fergus Navaratnam-Blair is a research director and writer from Brighton, now living in South London. He is a former winner of the Foyle Young Poet of the Year award and has been longlisted for the Stockholm Writers Festival's First Five Pages prize.

Alea Peister's poems and essays have been featured in *Whale Road Review, Relief, Ekstasis, The Curator*, and *Art for the Isolated*. She lives among the palm trees, traffic, and sunshine just south of Los Angeles. You can follow her writerly escapades on Instagram at @alea_peister.

Dharmacari Dharmavadana Penn's poems have appeared in *The North, Under the Radar, Prole, The Interpreter's House, Poetry Salzburg Review* and elsewhere; short stories in *Scribble* and *Litro*. He is poetry editor of the Buddhist arts magazine *Urthona*.

Andrew Senior is a writer of short fiction and poetry based in Sheffield, UK. His poems have appeared, or are forthcoming, in the *Frogmore Papers, The Heartland Review, Abridged* and *The Honest Ulsterman*. You can see more of his published work at andrewseniorwriting.weebly.com.

Thomas Stewart is a Welsh writer based in Edinburgh. In 2021, he was a recipient of a New Writers Award from the Scottish Book Trust. He is the author of two poetry pamphlets: *Based on a True Story*, published by *fourteen poems* in 2022 and *empire of dirt*, a Poetry Book Society spring selection published by Red Squirrel Press in 2019. His work has been featured in *Poetry Wales, Butcher's Dog, fourteen poems, The Amsterdam Quarterly, And Other Poems, Ink Sweat & Tears, The Stockholm Review*, and *The Glasgow Review of Books*, among others.

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