

Sideways

poetry magazine

The 'London' Issue



Sideways Poetry Magazine

London & Manchester, UK

Issue Two

Founders/Editors:

Richard Gilbert-Cross & Richy Campbell

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We at *Sideways* believe that poetry should always be accessible, with everybody having a voice.

If you've always enjoyed poetry, or even if this is your first taste of it, we encourage you to jot down the first poem that comes to your mind. No fear of rejection, no fear of judgement. Freedom to express yourself.

Please support poetry and the poets in this issue by sending around copies to your friends and discussing your favourites.

Google the poets and reach out to them if you especially enjoyed something.

'Oh, I love London Society! It is entirely composed now of beautiful idiots and brilliant lunatics. Just what society should be.' – *Oscar Wilde*

Poems

Louis Faber - 'Mid Morning Song'

Nicola Stringer - 'London Chronic'

Judith Wozniak - 'Westminster Bridge'

Ilse Pedler - 'Museum of Excuses'

Cai Draper - 'how we ever / in youngness'

William Doreski - 'The Spread of Unicorns'

William Doreski - 'A Map of Pre-War London'

Kat Dixon - 'other people are furniture (on the tube)'

James Bell - 'parachuting onto Euston Road'

Louis Faber

Louis Faber is a poet and retired attorney and college literature teacher; residing in Rochester, New York and Coconut Creek, Florida. His work has previously appeared in Eureka Literary Magazine, European Judaism, The South Carolina Review and Worcester Review, among many others, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. A book of poetry, *The Right to Depart*, was published by Plain View Press.

Mid Morning Song

He leans against the wall
outside the Prêt à Manger
witting with his dog
on the old Mexican blankets
that look uniquely out of place
on a cool London morning.
He sips the now fetid coffee
in its Styrofoam cup,
its Burger King logo
and temperature warning.
His hair is long, mostly
gray with streaks of white,
his beard white
with swaths of blond, he
looks as though he
just stepped down the plank
of the great sailing ship,
returned from a voyage
save for his tattered, stained
Manchester United sweatpants.
I put 50p in his metal box
against my better judgment

and stroke behind the ears
of the placid dog.
“May you be many times praised”
he sputters, through teeth
stained tobacco brown,
“for with more like you,
Rufus here, and I shall later
enjoy a fine repast.
May Saint Dymphna be praised.”
In the taxi to Paddington Station
I wonder who my patron
might be, if Jews
only had Saints.

Nicola Stringer

Nic Stringer was highly commended in the Forward Prizes 2018 for her first collection *A day that you happen to know*, published by Guillemot Press. Poetry and art have been reproduced in anthologies and journals including *The Forward Book of Poetry 2019* and the forthcoming *Valley Press Anthology of Prose Poetry*, *Magma*, *Structo*, *Eborakon*, *The Interpreter's House* and online at Burning House Press. Nic is also a member of the sound collective Fractured Strings and manages poetry events and collaborations as part of Corrupted Poetry.

London Chronic

The air
these days
is filthy
echoes shaped
to emerge
with the taste of
endings
parts missing
or gnawed away

Like wild things
we try to detect the heat
from major organs

When touched or disturbed
we push half-formed wings down flat
pray or hiss
and every day fifty tonnes of rock hit
reshaping the landscape
sculpting
carving
carrying
the broken pieces

Moving gradually
with a glacier's weight
we secrete dark fluids
from bristled feet
to keep attached
to the surface

Far from
our commonplaces
collect supplies
retreat
to lay monstrous eggs
in our food

Judith Wozniak

Judith Wozniak lives in Hampshire and spent her working life as a GP. She is currently in her second year as student on the MA course at the Poetry School in London. She has had poems published in *Reach Poetry*, *Poetry24*, *Ink Sweat & Tears* and the Hippocrates Prize Anthology 2019.

Westminster Bridge

March 22nd 2017

The river has swallowed its sounds
air thick as the moments before an eclipse

when the birds leave. Overhead the throb
of two helicopters circling. A man running.

The South Bank already cordoned off,
blue and white tape tangles the breeze,

Men in hard hats slide down ladders
leaving behind bones of scaffolding.

The streets smell of dust and thunder.
There is nobody to ask.

Ilse Pedler

Ilse Pedler's pamphlet, *The Dogs That Chase Bicycle Wheels*, won the 2015 Mslexia Pamphlet competition. She is the poet in residence at Sidmouth Folk Week and works as a veterinary surgeon in Saffron Walden.

The Museum of Excuses

*Of course, come in I'm glad you could find us, most people forget we're here.
Do mind the metal doors, they close quite quickly,
I'm afraid the exhibits have a habit of leaking out.
Yes, these common ones roam free.*

**He told me to do it.
I ran out of time.**

*On our left is the gallery of denial.
It's one of the larger spaces and we hang our exhibits from the ceiling.
Yes, the humming is quite usual and they do sway rather curiously I know.
Feel free to walk among them, there are ear defenders if you wish.*

**I didn't do it.
I wasn't there.**

*I agree, most people don't stay in the room for long,
the whining can become intolerable
but we find the ringing in the ears usually subsides by the end of the tour.
Please follow me.*

*On our left is the main gallery, some of the oldest exhibits are mounted here.
The gold frames are quite impressive aren't they?*

**It wasn't my fault.
I couldn't help it.**

On our right is the room of regret we have a special exhibition at the moment, a European theme.

**I didn't really think it would happen
It was only a protest vote**

*Yes, that's a book of apology, if you would care to add your name...
I'll leave you now to browse on your own.*

The building works? It's our new extension, funding has been surprisingly straightforward this time.

The walls are lead lined and there will be protective suits to wear but please stay behind the barrier, it's not quite finished yet, as you can see the exhibits are currently waiting to be hung, I agree the orange glow can be quite unsettling.

**It was only a deterrent
We had no choice**

*Yes, I feel you're right,
it may well be our last exhibition.*

Cai Draper

Cai Draper is a poet from south London, based in Norwich. His work has been published by Burning House Press, Pulp Poets Press, and *The Ekphrastic Review*, among others, with poems forthcoming in the next Bad Betty Press anthology and *leslie* magazine. @DraperCai

How we ever / in youngness

how we ever / in youngness / grazed on the day // scabbed up and
matchstick / knees among gravel splayed red and the passages /// my friend
/ your house // a slow train of safety swum off from // the world aimless and
friday // and i would say tv those days / was the extra wine your mum could
savour // if it weren't for tv i wouldn't remember / tipping the living room
door ajar / her on all fours in underwear / growling /// how swift
the stairs recalled me /// the tv hurried other worrying / the being unsafe
outdoors /// but as for swimming at peckham pulse / the pubic hair you
showed me in the changing room alone was by itself // quivering shrapnel in
the fountain / and always chips under ketchup // you // very fresh prince /
me so aquila

William Doeski

William's work has appeared in various e- and print journals, as well as several collections; most recently, *A Black River, A Dark Fall* (2019).

The Spread of Unicorns

The dentist I met in the British
Museum Reading Room assures me
that an hour or two in his chair

will result in a perfect smile,
all at public expense. Outside
London, on a small wooded knoll,

his office is a tiny cement
block fortress. Propped in the chair
while he hones his instruments,

I read in the *Herald-Tribune*
that my friend Ellen killed her husband
with the spear of a unicorn.

Examining antiques in Essex
she mistook a long metal blowgun
for a telescope and tried to peer

over the marshes. Finding her view
blocked, she tried to blow off the lens.
The spiral horn shot from the tube

and pierced her husband's forehead,
skewering his tiny brain. Later
the police admitted that several

browsers had died the same way,
but the town tax on their burial
has purchased an Apple computer

for the kindergarten, so who cares?
The dentist has read the story
and is pleased that I know the people.

He also possesses a blowgun
designed to fire unicorn horns,
but lacks the ammunition. Now,

as we laugh over the oddity
of impalement by endangered
species, he rolls my upper lip

and sticks something to it: tooth decals.
My new smile flashes in the mirror
like a page torn from a bible.

I shake the dentist's thick little hand.
Outside in the yellow light
a woman kneels by a fallen man.

A spiral horn juts from his forehead.
The woman raises her face and smiles
a decal-smile like my own.

We understand. The horn happens
from inside-out, and the blowgun's
a trick to make someone look guilty.

Already I feel a nub of horn
throb under the skin. Not much time.
The woman and I enter the woods

and press our decal-smiles together
with the enthusiasm strangers
always foster in each other.

We hope to overcome the grief
our resistance to sex will nurture,
preventing the spread of unicorns.

A Map of Pre-War London

Remember Watch Night? New Year's Eve
under St. Paul's floating dome,
survivors of the Blitz sighing
favorite hymns as the years revolved
at midnight. We spilled into streets

that raved from Trafalgar Square
up Bond to Piccadilly where
we caught a sweating underground
reeking of liquefied hoodlums
and dozed all the way to Hammersmith.

Now poring over a map
of pre-war London I note
how the streets around St. Paul's
met at sharper angles, ghostly
old buildings Charles Dickens both

admired and deplored leaning
against each other like the drunks
crowding down Shaftesbury Avenue.
German bombs, half of them duds,
blasted corridors, clearing views

of the cathedral and changing
the way Cheapside and Newgate merge,
realigning Cannon and Queen
Victoria Streets. Our walk
down Ludgate, Fleet, and the Strand

felt empty and haunted; but meeting
the mobs at Charing Cross swept us
into the New Year and smothered
the scorched memories of a war
that ended before we were born.

I fold the old map so gently
none of the bombed streets rupture;
but I feel their alignment suffer
as the houses collapse in rubble.
That stink of bombs exhumes

the ugly rage we dream away
after midnight, drowning drunk
in pools of bilious lamplight,
the drone of the bombers fading
in the humbled grays of dawn.

Kat Dixon

Kat Dixon is an emerging writer, studying with the Poetry School in London. Her poems have appeared in Southbank Magazine and Perverse. Her unpublished manuscript, *Letters to ex lovers I will never send*, was shortlisted for the Rialto Pamphlet Prize 2019. Her poem *Raising Maidens* was nominated for a Forward Prize (2019).

other people are furniture (on the tube)

paths cut through heave
gates fly the sheer volume of faces
shelves of tiredness

my father calls it fluid dynamics
in a way we are like water
currents repelling currents

a man asks an entire carriage for money
most of us pretend
we can't smell close-quartered pain

Important Solitary Narratives
imagine if all the headphones were hacked
a single soundtrack for 2.6 million ears

James Bell

James Bell is a Scottish poet who now lives in France where he contributes non-fiction to an English language journal. He has written poetry and fiction for over twenty years and is still publishing.

parachuting onto Euston Road

I parachute onto Euston Road three or four times a year
not that anybody notices - don't even notice the season

I am always ignored in the struggle with silk and line
seen perhaps as apposite or obsessive - an artist on the lam

a madman even though I find in London that
most activities are tolerated if they are not terrorist

I remember how colour of parachute used to be important
often asked about this in other quarters now left behind

I usually aim for the new British Library courtyard
take care to miss Kings Cross and Euston stations out

St Pancras is another where I could wrap up and leave the country
celebrate how I manage to leave my parachute behind

every time it is still there on the ground though nobody ever notices
as they drink coffee outside or stride in and out of the library

with purpose and traffic trundles incessantly on the road outside
there is usually space to land and apart from my initial tumble

my landing is unremarkable as I do not hit the statue
of the muscled metal man or a chair from the outdoor café

I generally do not show any purpose but this is allowed

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Call for submissions!

Get your poems published in *Sideways*

For Issue 3 we are throwing open the doors for an 'open house'.

Poems can be about any subject and in any form. Length-wise, most poems we view are up to 3 pages of A4.

We welcome poetry from both published and unpublished writers. All we ask is that each submission has not been previously published elsewhere.

Also, do include a brief biography/publication history.

Please email submissions to: sidewayspoetry@gmail.com

With thanks to our contributors:

Louis Faber, Nicola Stringer, Judith Wozniak, Ilse Pedler,
Cai Draper, William Doreski, Kat Dixon, James Bell

Sideways is a themed online and
print poetry magazine. Each issue
features poets from around the
world, often based on each issue's
theme.

It is always an absolute pleasure
welcoming submissions from
established writers, and we
especially encourage poems from
those who are yet to be published.

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